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Ethnographic Descriptions of English Corners in Shanghai

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USE OF THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the phenomenon of English Corners (EC) in Shanghai. These are informal communities formed for the purpose of practising English. In 1978, just after the death of Mao Ze Dong and the fall of the 'gang of four', many eager Chinese people gathered together to practise their oral English in the Shanghai People's Park. Many of these were old men and had been educated in English at missionary schools in Shanghai in the early 20th century. Today we see many successors to such groups in the ECs which meet in different locations throughout the city and which comprise people ranging from young children through to octogenarians.

The persistence of the English corner phenomenon over more than 20 years suggests that, despite Shanghai's massive modernization, there is still a perceived need for language learning support at a community level. It seems that for many Chinese learners today the use of English in an informal setting is an important support to the learning of the language.

In this study, the ECs were explored on the basis of questionnaires, interviews, observations and ethnographic descriptions. The focus of collecting data was from 20 informants from four ECs in Shanghai. Also four other ECs were visited and ethnographic observations were recorded. To supplement the description of ECs in Shanghai I interviewed four English native speakers and six Chinese English teachers.

The research into ECs in Shanghai demonstrated benefits and limitations lent by context to EFL. The major benefits for the local Chinese were that the EC communities provided places to practise their spoken English, make friends, and exchange information.

The limitations with the corners were firstly the lack of fluent and accurate English speakers and secondly the low level of English language competency to which the learners had access in a society that demonstrates massive modernization.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i)   incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

(ii)   contain any material previously published or written by another except where due reference is made in the text; or

(iii)   contain any defamatory material.

Signature.

Date......23/7/2003

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND

This chapter will give background knowledge about English Corners in general and the circumstances of their development. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the history of Shanghai and the past and present education systems in China and Shanghai.

Background of English Corners

In the early 1980s English Corners (ECs) became popular places to practise oral English (Huang 1998). Chinese English learners became highly motivated to attend English Corners ECs in Shanghai and other parts of China.

Hertling (1996) reports that Chinese English learners are highly motivated to attend ECs and to learn oral English. The main motivation that I observed was the desire to practise their oral English, exchange information and make friends. I felt a great sense of enthusiasm amongst the learners to communicate in English within the EC communities. These communities had a spirit of friendliness and welcomed people from diverse backgrounds and all ages (Wright 1994 and Fox 2000).

Most ECs are run weekly and some Chinese are regular members of the EC communities. (Alarcon 2002, Mavromatis 2000, Magistad and Zwerdling 1998, Slay 1999 and Simpson 2002). Often the same faces were seen at different ECs around Shanghai and these people were eager to speak English. For these English Corner enthusiasts the weather did not dampen their eagerness to participate and practise their English.

EC communities in China are primarily concerned with oral English. However, it has been reported that other English language skills have been developed at the EC. Huang (1998) reported that one EC in China had a writing focus. His article describes the function of writing within the EC context in China. This environment encouraged students to write better and was seen as a successful place to enhance the learners' skills in writing English. Poreh (1980) tells how grade 6 students in Israel wrote English articles for the EC section in the school's newspaper. These activities encouraged and enhanced writing and reading of English within an EFL context.

A glossy magazine called 'English Corner' produced in Beijing and sold all over China is focused on helping the Chinese English learners with their English skills. This resource has interesting topics to read and helpful hints on oral communication ("China's first leisure,"...2001).

ECs are found on the Internet in the form of 'chat lines' and 'websites', which have been created by Mainland Chinese and overseas people. The Internet can help Chinese learners to broaden the network of resources for English language learning. The Internet gives helpful hints on oral communication, exchanging information and making friends.

The EC activities that have been mentioned above (ECs on the Internet, reading and writing skills and EC magazines) are not part of my research, although they are worth investigating. My research is based on oral English within the EC communities in Shanghai.

Additionally, on the Internet there are reports of ECs throughout Asia in countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Macau and Korea. Most of these ECs outside of China were oral English communities. No academic research has been done on these ECs and their influence on EFL in these countries. Again, these ECs are not part of my research.

EC environments have general acceptance, despite the fact that, as the Chinese authorities are aware, they can be vulnerable to exploitation by foreigners in a number of ways, for example for purposes of religious proselytization (YWAN 2002).

Foreign participants can also seek to use contacts made at the ECs to influence the Chinese mindset to desire political and social change within China. The motivation of the native speaker who attends the EC will be a factor included in the present investigation.

It must be remembered that authorities can move in at any time to dismantle an EC if they suspect it having become a forum for anti- Communist Party Propaganda. The political authorities are observing ECs from a distance. However, broadly speaking the Communist Party and the Ministry of Education support Chinese attending ECs. (Beijing 2000)

ECs have a variety of names. *English Tea House* was the name of one EC in Kunming in the late 1980s (Eubank 1988). Slay (1999) attended an EC called *'Little Red Hat English Corner'*. Participants had to wear a red hat to be identified as a member. In Shanghai I noticed two *Children's English Corners* that met in McDonald's every Saturday morning in Gubei District at 9.30-11.00am. and Lu Xun Park every Sunday morning at 9.30-11.30am. during school terms.

It was my experience that ECs were found in many places around Shanghai for example, under a canopy of trees in parks with chess players, in music bars, fast food places, restaurants, pedestrian malls, Chinese Tea houses and educational institutes.

Chan (1999) and HK students (2002) emphasize the importance of the ECs in secondary schools in Hong Kong for learning English. They state that the ECs need to be organized so as to provide students with the opportunity to speak English. Today many schools and universities have ECs not only in Hong Kong but also in Mainland China.

Some Education organizations and universities encourage, or have in their contract for, foreign teachers to attend the local EC. This does not make the EC an organized institution but it shows that officialdom recognises the perceived role played by ECs in promoting knowledge of English. This gives ECs some credibility by recognising the fact that this type of setting may be beneficial to the Chinese learner (Simpson 2002).

As has been noted by Ashmore and Cao (1997), and as I also observed, many Chinese learners attending ECs have given themselves English names. This could be perhaps some evidence of the modernization of Shanghai and China today. As China begins to modernize, the new generation of Chinese English learners see the ECs as

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an opportunity to speak English and practise the oral language skills that they have already acquired from formal instruction.

History of Shanghai

To provide a background to the development of ECs I will comment briefly on the history of Shanghai and then the education system of China and specifically Shanghai.

The history of Shanghai goes back to the 11th Century when it was a fishing village. By the mid 18th Century it was becoming an important area for growing cotton and other agricultural products. In the 1800s Shanghai was becoming the largest city in China. (Shanghai 1969)

In the 19th Century Western entrepreneurs were convinced that China had the world's greatest market and they were very eager to break into that market. After the first Opium War (1839 –1842) foreign trade increased, bringing with it the first foreign settlers to Shanghai. The British, Americans and French were allowed to live in certain territorial zones without being under Chinese law. After the treaty of Nanjing in 1842 the Chinese were forced to concede foreign residence and free trade rights in the so-called "treaty ports" of Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Ningbo, Xiamen and Shanghai.

Wood (1999) explains how, with the influx of foreigners, Shanghai became greatly influenced by Western culture. With the grand European buildings along the Bund and Shanghai's affluence early in the 20th Century it was often referred to as the "Paris of the East."

The Japanese invasion and occupation between 1937-1945 caused more changes to the once vibrant city. After the Second World War the Treaty ports, including Shanghai were handed back to China. A century of foreign domination was over. The Nationalist Chinese government was then given control of the city.

After World War II the Chinese Communist Party claimed victory and took control of China. Shanghai under the Communist government outlawed prostitution and other activities seen as decadent in its efforts to transform parts of the Shanghai

population. Also another part of the transformation that took place in Shanghai was that foreigners left, so businesses were left behind and slowly one by one the government took them over (Dong 2000).

The Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976 caused Shanghai to lose ground as an international economic trading port. Shanghai became an exclusively industrial centre and the city was gradually integrated into the national economy to meet the needs of the internal market. It wasn't until Deng Xiaoping's Open Door Policy in the 1980s that Shanghai began its move back into the international business and finance world.

From 1990 until the start of the 21st century the Shanghainese could see the skyline of the extravagant Pudong opposite the Bund growing before their eyes, giving them the feeling the Shanghai would once more be one of the world's great cities.
The symbols of modernization in Shanghai today are the economic developments and the education reforms relating to English as a Second Language. The workforce, especially the middle class, are rapidly requiring English to maintain their jobs and push China into the 21st century (Cleverley 1991, Dong 2000 and Wood 1999).

Education in China
The traditional roots of Chinese education and learning come from Confucius. Bond and Hwang (1986) note that Confucius was a renowned scholar and teacher during the Eastern Chou Dynasty in China (551-479 BC). His teachings gradually became recognised as the official philosophy of the country. This philosophy teaches respect and obedience to elders, loyalty to rulers and social harmony.

Confucian education philosophy was not challenged until after China's humiliating defeat in the first Opium War (1840 -1842). Western education gradually began to take root in China, especially in the Treaty ports where western teaching methodologies were introduced. With the adoption of western methodologies came the beginning of educational change in China.

In 1905, the The Qing Dynasty dismantled the old education system with its civil service exams and reorganized it into a modern system of primary, secondary and

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tertiary levels of education. The grammar- translation approach to learning foreign language was also introduced at the same time. (Celce-Murcia 1991)

After the Communist party victory the government in the early 1950s decided to reform its education system in a way which was going to influence the learning of English as a second language for the next thirty years in China. The new educational policy discouraged and stopped the use of English as a second language and sought to replace it, for economic and political reasons, by encouraging the Chinese to learn Russian as their second language . Consequently, English was not used or relevant in China until the open door policy in late 1978.(Chen 1998 and Dong 2000)

The years between 1966-1976 were a backward step in formal Chinese education The Cultural Revolution caused school infrastructure to decay and there was no organised curriculum. Revolutionary struggles were very disruptive both for Chinese society and its education. Also the Cultural Revolution had no place for foreign language education as China had broken diplomatic ties with the west. People were not allowed to learn another foreign language apart from Russian. (Chen 1998)

In the late 1970s, after Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping made further changes to the education policy. Once again the Chinese looked abroad for some direction for educational reform. It was not until after the Tiananmen Square event that the Chinese made laws which clearly showed commitment to universal education (Cheng, Jin and Gu 1999, Cleverley 1991, Fairbank and Reischauer 1989)

Ashmore and Cao (1997) describe how Deng Xiaoping emphasised the modernization of science and technology. They report that Deng thought that training scientists and technicians rested with education and teachers. The Chinese saw their education system as becoming more mature and refined in the future to help them underpin their modernization drive.

Hertling (1996) talks about the main obstacles of English proficiency in China. He describes the lack of competent teachers, primitive instruction methods and the focus on passing tests rather than speaking. Ashmore and Cao (1997) also suggest that politics could be interfering with real progress of English education in China.

Confucian ideology still clearly shapes contemporary China in many ways. Cleverley (1991) Rafferty (1994) and Yu and Atkinson (1988) observe that Chinese learners still follow the Confucian method of rote learning and memorisation of lessons.

The Confucian tradition places a high value on education with a particular emphasis on educating members of the community in the ways people should relate to and interact with each other (Nelson 1995). Even today this is evident with Confucius's sayings still governing the behaviour of learners in China and other Asian countries. One famous Confucian saying is, 'By reviewing the old, one learns the new.' This means what was learnt can be forgotten, if not reviewed. The most effective way for reviewing was recitation (Rao 1996)

Confucian teachings about memorization of text affect the way Chinese teach and learn. The Chinese people have formed distinct learning styles and habits. Some Confucian sayings also discourage oral communication in the classroom:

'It's easier said than done;'   'Silence is golden' Leng (1996).

This brings us to the teacher's authority and the students' passive role. The Chinese teacher is the centre of the classroom activity. Chinese teachers are viewed as holders of knowledge. They have an obligation to 'pass on knowledge' by explaining passages and giving answers to controversial questions. This is in contrast with the communicative approach where the students are at the centre of classroom activities and are expected to discover for themselves (Rose 1999, Biggs 1996 and Penner1995).Rao (1996) claims that pedagogical approaches used by native Chinese-speaking teachers of English in an educational environment are grounded in Confucian precepts for teaching. She goes on to say that the limitations of Chinese students' learning of English stem from their experiences in a traditional teacher-centred classroom and their use of rote-memory strategies. The Chinese teachers who have tried to implement communicative approaches face opposition from proponents of the traditional Chinese approach. This dilemma of forcing western culture education values on an old education system within China seems to be a task that

will talked about and debated for some time within the political and economic context. (Kramsch, 1993)

China generally has struggled with the implementation of Western teaching practices since the introduction of missionary schools in the mid 19th century. Today the Chinese English teachers and students find some of the western educational ideas difficult to implement fully and feel that they have limited possibilities in the Chinese context (Chen 1998, Hird 1995 and Rao1996).

The Chinese tradition of education places an important emphasis on human striving for perfection. The view is maintained that any thing can be achieved by effort, diligence or will power, notwithstanding one's ability and level of intelligence. In Chinese tradition one must keep on working hard or trying until success comes (Nelson, 1995 and Biggs, 1996).

Today the Ministry of Education has a policy providing nine years of compulsory education from primary to middle school (Chen 1998 and Cleverly 1991). It has been reported in one newspaper that the English teaching focus is on listening and speaking in some primary schools in the major cities in China.("China to start"... 2001). The Ministry of Education in China is putting oral communication skills ahead of phonetics and grammar in the early stages of EFL learning in the primary schools. It appears that the policy for EFL learning for China is changing to a more modern approach to teaching English (Cortazzi and Jin 1996).

Shanghai education yesterday and today
Many missionary schools influenced the modernization of education in Shanghai and throughout many parts of China by using English as the medium for education. In the late 19th Century elite foreign schools like Saint John's Missionary University in Shanghai taught a secular modern curriculum in English. It can be said that Western missionaries introduced modern schools to China. (Cleverley 1991)

Missionaries were granted the right to build churches, schools and hospitals in 1844 under the Treaty of Tianjin. The early missionary schools were anxious about the Chinese dying without knowing God so they thought it was their duty to spread the

word through the conversion of the Chinese people to Christianity. (Cleverly 1991) Fairbank and Reischauer(1972) interestingly point out that in the middle of the 19th century missionary schools were popular in Shanghai. Students learning English in these schools were encouraged by the missionaries. If Chinese students performed very well then they were sent abroad to America to study with missionary support. The biggest influence at that time was the missionaries' Western- style education in Shanghai.

Shanghai is now trying hard to reform English-language education. The Shanghai education system is leading the way with reforms in the field of English Language teaching. These days Shanghai has its own set of textbooks and is now able to set its own English Matriculation examination. Shanghai sets the trend with English educational reforms in China and it plans to make EFL compulsory in the first year of primary schools (Hird 1995;"Shanghai Leads," 2001)

I know through my observation and conversing with educators in Shanghai that the Ministry of Education recently called on all schools in Shanghai to teach English in Year 3. It wants bilingual education to be a major feature of teaching in future. Students in the past have been learning for exams. The local education authority in Shanghai wants students to be able to speak fluently in English to each other and foreigners by the end of middle school. The new curriculum will put more emphasis on oral English. This will result in greater demand for bilingual English teachers who are qualified to teach the language English. The teachers' colleges and universities will have to adjust their programs to meet these demands ("Shanghai leads in English Education," 2001).

The Purpose of the Study

The EC is a naturally occurring feature of the Chinese EFL context not previously studied. While much information is on the Internet relating to ECs no academic research has been conducted into the potential influences ECs may have on EFL teaching and learning in Shanghai. The purpose is to research ECs in a more formal way, which will give us a clearer understanding of the EC phenomenon in Shanghai.

Research questions

General questions

1) Why do Chinese learners of English as a Foreign Language attend a language – learning environment called English Corner in Shanghai?

2) How are the English Corners in Shanghai perceived by those who attend them?

3) What types of interaction take place within the English Corner environments that contribute to EFL learning in Shanghai?

4) What potential does the English Corner have to contribute to EFL learning in Shanghai?

Abbreviations

The following terms will be used in this study:

EC English Corner

EFL English as a foreign language

NNS Non-native speaker

L2 Second Language

ENS English Native speakers

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Literature Review will be divided into two sections. The first section will examine the factors affecting the learning of foreign languages. This section will identify some important background knowledge of EFL that will provide a theoretical context against which the practices observed in the ECs can be evaluated with respect to their potential contribution to the learning of English. The second section will examine English Corners in an EFL context. Up until now very little research has been done on ECs in the context of oral communication and its influence on EFL.

Section One: Principles of EFL

1. Internal factors

Motivation

Motivation in second language learning has been researched in some detail and has been shown to be a key to learning. Definitions of motivation refer to the effort the learner puts into the learning.

Ellis (1994) observed that motivation is commonly thought of as an emotion, inner drive or desire that moves one to a particular action. Learning a foreign language clearly requires some of these levels of motivation.

How the learners are motivated varies from individual to individual, and most of the time learners have different motives, goals, ideals, and dreams. To maintain or increase motivation to acquire L2 the learners will want to achieve a particular goal and devote considerable effort to achieving that goal (Dornyei and Csizer 1998). Motivation is clearly a variable factor. Ellis (1994) Gardner and Macintyre (1991) and Gardner (1985) have stated that the strengths of an individual learner's motivation can change over a period of time and are influenced by internal and external factors. The attitude of the learner towards the target language and speakers undoubtedly will play an important role in learner success.

Integrative motivation

Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985) describe integrative motivation as the desire to be esteemed and identified in a foreign setting, to be like the people in this setting, to understand their culture and participate in it. Integrative motivation is basically a desire to be a member of a target society in a foreign setting but it also includes motivation coming simply from an interest or a favourable feeling towards a target culture or people. (Deci and Ryan 1985)

The motivation of ESL learners in a real-life situation is likely to be integrative and their use of the language may well be 'interactive'. These learners will be in an environment that has the target language around them constantly. In countries like Australia, U.S.A, England, Canada and New Zealand, where English is the first language, the ESL learners will become more interactively motivated as it becomes a part of their lives.

Instrumental motivation

Gardner and Lambert (1972) described "instrumental motivation" as a motivation to acquire some advantages by learning a second language. A foreign language learner with instrumental motivation regards the target language as an instrument to obtain a reward.

Although "instrumental motivation" also influences second language learning, to the extent that an instrumental motive is tied to a specific goal, its influence tends to be maintained only until that goal is achieved.

Most research on motivation has been carried out in second rather than foreign language learning contexts in studies in North America or European cultural settings and this has limited the understanding of why some learners are spurred on to extra efforts in language learning (Schmidt, Boraie and Kassabgy 1996). In the early 1990s instrumental motivation research was focused on the EFL context. EFL in Asia is particularly instrumental as many students just want to pass their entrance examinations. The pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency in Shanghai today seem to be motivated by the possibility of receiving a better job or higher salary. Generally learners are more instrumentally motivated in EFL settings.

It has been my informal observation that the NNS who attend the ECs today have instrumental motivation. This is in contrast to twenty years ago when learners attending the EC were basically interactively motivated. It must be said again that the motivation of a few old Chinese men who wanted to practise their oral English in People's Park in 1970s was merely recreational and interactive. Banyu and Cheng (1997) also found from their research in Hong Kong that 96.4% of Chinese students were instrumentally motivated to learn English.

Today English is the medium of communication in the business and computer world. As English becomes an instrumental element of the global community and communication industry, Chinese learners see a need to become innovative in their strategies for learning the English language. ECs might well be the place to help motivate the Chinese learners to develop their English proficiency skills.

Culture

Gardner (1985) sees that cultural beliefs influence the basic levels of second language competency. His social-education model highlights the role of culture and its meaningfulness in helping to develop language skills. He details how culture might make up culture of learning. The level of language acquisition is linked to the degree that the learner feels an affinity for the target language and culture. Schmidt, Boraie and Kassabgy (1996) mention that cultural influences do have some effect on motivation to learn a foreign language.

Chen (1998) has shown that Chinese learners need knowledge about the foreign culture to help them understand the target language. Chinese teachers and Chinese learners have only a limited number of foreign language experts in China to help them with their language and cultural understandings.

The importance of teaching culture in foreign languages is significant as it can motivate learners to understand the target language and cultural knowledge. The fact that the English Corner is a social and interactive place for the local Chinese, it also gives them the opportunity to communicate with the ENS for the purpose of cross-cultural understanding and to acquire knowledge about western culture. This concept

of cross-cultural communication works in a positive way for the NNS and the ENS where both can explore differences in each other's culture (Chen 1998 and Kramsh 1993). Teaching cultural meaning within a second language requires the learners to be initiated into its social and cultural meanings. A practical way in which this can be facilitated is by attending an EC for the purpose of exchanging cultural information.

Learners' beliefs about language learning

Language teachers as well as language learners themselves have attitudes and beliefs about language education. These attitudes and beliefs are the result of socio-cultural and schooling experiences. In the EFL classroom in China foreigner teachers often feel second language learning should be learner-centred and experiential while the Chinese learners feel it should be teacher directed.

Non-native speakers enter any English setting with many preconceived ideas about language learning. Wendon (1986a, 1987a,) used a semi-structured interview to elicit students' beliefs about language learning. It included beliefs about the importance of 'learning in a natural way', 'use of the language' and 'importance of personal factors'. Wenden found that her learners varied greatly in their beliefs.

Horwitz (1987) used a questionnaire to elicit the beliefs about language learning from students. The results showed that (81 percent) of those surveyed felt that people were born with a special aptitude for learning foreign languages, and that the best way to learn English was to memorize vocabulary and grammar rules; 94 per cent believed you needed to know something about the English speaking culture. Many stressed the importance of repetition and practice. Finally the main belief was that you needed to speak English fluently.

The local Chinese at ECs in Shanghai will be asked for their perceptions and their responses will be discussed in relationship to their beliefs of how best to learn English in an EFL context.

2. Social and pedagogical contextual factors

Interaction

The importance of interaction in second language learning has been supported by some studies, for example Gass & Varonis, (1989. 1994); Pica, Young, and Doughty, (1987). A picture arrangement task from the research of Pica, Young and Doughty (1987), showed that comprehension was superior when negotiation was allowed as opposed to when it was not.

Gass and Varonis's (1986) research presented data from non-native speakers who interacted with other NNS. These results showed that a correctly modelled form produced by one NNS resulted in changes by the other NNS.

Littlewood (1992) states that "Social interaction is a collaborative process in which both (or all) participants are creatively involved". Socialization and the ability to communicate are very important in any interaction in EFL especially the social interaction what takes place within ECs. This should benefit the learners' ability to converse in English and to improve their oral speaking skills.

Ellis (1994, p 716) states that

> "Communication involving L2 learners often leads to problems in understanding and breakdown. Frequently, one or more of the participants - the learner or the interlocutor - attempts to remedy this by engaging in interact ional work to secure mutual understanding. This work is often called ' negotiation of meaning'. It is characterized by interact ional modifications such as comprehension checks and requests for clarification"

Long (1996) makes the claim that modified interaction is necessary for the ongoing development of L2.

Ellis (1999) maintains that learning a second language through interaction is evidently more desired by the learner, provided the interactions contain social functions. Ellis arrived at this conclusion by observing and studying children in bilingual situations. Further effects of a positive influence of communication are

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supported by reports and analyses on the effects of education setting and instructor- and peer type interaction. (Oxford, 1996)

To enable students to 'go out', teachers should include social and communicative activities. Kress (1989) proposes that such interactions should extend from the domain of immediate exchange and later expand to other domains of communication. However, for learners of EFL in Shanghai, the first choice in a spoken domain will be their most immediate environment such as the school, family setting and other natural settings such as the local E.C.

Conversational Analysis

Conversational analysis looks at the details of social interaction and it is a formal way to analyse conversation. (Coulthard 1977,1985). It is based on observation, gathering and analysing data, in particular with respect to the language of real life situations.(Mey 1993)

Conversational analysis can be carried out at two levels:
First, the conversation can be reviewed (with the help of transcripts and audio- or video- tapes) and analysed into topics. The way in which topic is managed may provide cues as to the functions and the 'overt' or 'hidden agendas' behind the conversation. Both the choice of topic and the maintenance of topic have implications with respect to the respective power relations of the participants.]Topic needs also to be analysed in relation to the non-linguistic context, since, as Wardhaugh (1992) suggests, conversation is mostly prescribed by cultural setting. Non-verbal aspects of the interactants' behaviour are highly relevant, since the conversation proceeds as each participant picks up cues from the other with respect to such matters as comprehensibility, relevance, appropriateness and acceptability of contributions.

Secondly, conversational analysts focus on the formal aspects of conversation. This involves observing the rule-governed ways in which participants co-construct their interaction, sharing turns and minimising overlap. In the course of a turn, a speaker will reach, perhaps on a number of occasions, a point where the meaning is complete and another speaker could legitimately take the floor. Such points are technically called transitional relevance places or TRPs. It can be potentially a violation of the

current speaker's turn if another speaker takes over before a TRP is reached (i.e., interrupts). However, overlap is not always competitive in nature: it can be supportive, as when it consists simply of providing non-intrusive feedback signals. Support can also be shown by latching, where a second speaker synchronises closely with the first, by completing a turn for them. Coherence must always be maintained, and overlapping utterances do not necessarily damage conservational coherence. Utterances of participants need to be orderly and flowing in sequence for good communication, something that may involve 'repair' strategies when things go wrong.(Mey 1993 and Coulthard 1977, 1985). 'Back Channelling' (e.g., I see, yes, right and so on) is an essential support to the effective management of turns. (Mey 1993)

Finally laughter is not usually considered a linguistic feature, however it often plays an extremely important role in indicating that people in the conversation have 'got the point' or it is a signal that conveys that people are enjoying the conversation. (Mey 1993)

Natural Setting
The natural setting (i.e. outside the classroom) is a place where informal learning occurs with a strong emphasis on the social significance of what is being learnt. Littlewood (1992) and Skehan (1991) note that in this context the nature of L2 motivation is always dependent on who is learning what language where.

We know that the learners' affective states can vary dramatically and have a significant impact on their ability to learn. Ellis (1994) states that anxiety can produce poor performance; tests and fear of negative evaluation are likely to hinder L2 learning. Krashen and Terrel (1983) explain how creating an environment where the affective filter is lowered will be a positive way for helping speakers to acquire another language. Creating a low anxiety situation will in some degree give the learner self confidence. Lowering the affective filter for the students or learners will encourage them to express their desires, opinions, ideas, feelings and emotions, thus bringing in more challenging language use.

The EC is a natural setting where groups are formed naturally and authentic speaking tasks are carried out. Long (1989) argues that groups can increase motivation, learner speech, and social interaction and reduce anxiety. This can help members within the EC groups to engage in meaningful communication. Good and Brophy (2000) attribute the increasing popularity of small group learning to the fact that this interaction can produce meaningful learning with authentic tasks in a social setting. However, they do point out that some members of the group who are low achievers might be at risk.

Abraham and Vann 1987, cited in Ellis (1994), show that learners believe that it is important to create situations for using English outside the classroom and to practise as much as possible. In the classroom there is conscious attention to linguistic form. Outside the classroom learners of a foreign language have a motivation that drives them towards real-life situations. The desire to practise their English in a natural setting is supported by research. (Dornyei 1994)

The EC is a natural setting outside the classroom for Chinese learners of EFL to attend. This environment should help fulfil the students' aspirations to practise their English speaking skills. For the Chinese learner to enhance their spoken English, and fulfil their aspirations some learners are forced to the EC.

Communicative approach

Researchers in EFL are asking the question why the Communicative approach is not successful in China. Senior and Yu (2001) suggest that we must take into account the cultural contexts within which we teach. They further say that it might be appropriate to modify and adjust teaching practices.

Rao (1996) and Cortazzi and Jin (1996) believe that English teachers in China need a combination of the old and new approaches to teaching. They both say that the language teaching methodologies need to be reconciled or interwoven to benefit all learners. Rao (1999) suggests that, though the grammar-translation method is out of favour, it still must be considered as the students and teachers are accustomed to this method. She also goes on to say that it is the modernization of teaching methods and not westernisation that's going to help Chinese learners acquire English better. (p,27)

When teaching oral English to Chinese learners in Shanghai one must be sensitive to the needs of the students but equally importantly one must have some background knowledge of the Chinese education system and its culture (Chen 1998).

Ellis (1996) argues for the communicative approach to be adapted for Asian conditions. He also calls for cultural sensitivity and acceptance of differences. This information is relevant and useful to the ENS and English native teachers who attend ECs on a regular basis to help the local Chinese with their English.

During my three years of teaching experience in China I found that Chinese students who experienced authentic materials in the classroom or faced real life situations in a language learning setting had no difficulty in developing communicative competence in English. Knutson (1997) and Penner (1995) found that communicative approaches in foreign language classrooms that provide authentic material stimulate the students' performance in listening and speaking. The purpose of authentic material and real life situations is to enhance communication.

Learner autonomy

Learner Autonomy is used to refer to an approach where learners are motivated to assume personal responsibility. Garrison (1997) suggests that through this process the learner can control and decide what they want to learn and how to learn. The self-directed learner has the ability to learn on his or her own (Wenden 1991). In general a good learner who is self-directed or has individual autonomy will take responsibility for his or her learning.

One of the pivotal issues of self-directed learning is motivation. Motivation plays a significant role in the maintenance and initiation of effort toward learning and the achievement of educational goals of learners.

Reath (2000) observed that students who help each other give valuable peer assistance. Autonomous learning can be in the form of students helping each other with language difficulties and understandings that arise from conversations. This is another aspect of autonomous learning that can take place in an informal setting

when talking is constructive. Peer assistance in classrooms and in social settings is an effective learning strategy.

Malcolm (2001) explains that today the emphasis is on the view that learning a language is the responsibility of the learner and we must take into account their attitudes, beliefs and cultural ideas. He also suggests giving learners room to learn in the way that is best for them.

Malcolm (2001) points out that autonomy and authenticity can go hand in hand and thereby can enhance students' language learning. The students who are in control of their learning situation and at the same time communicating with real people will have the ability to achieve their desired results.

Learners who have an intrinsic desire to explore and to understand their environment also have an inherent motivation. This comes from within themselves and causes them to become self-directed learners (Deci and Ryan 2000).

3. Patterns of learner behaviour

Code switching
Code switching is commonly defined as the alternating use of two or more codes in the same speech event. Myers-Scotton (1997, p.1) explains code switching this way: "Code switching of languages offers bilinguals a way to increase their flexibility of expression"

The Chinese learners who are bilingual at the EC will be able to code switch in the event of communication difficulties. The interlocutors can share an understanding of social mechanisms of negotiation as they communicate in code switching.

My research on ECs in Shanghai incorporates a focus on the sociolinguistic aspects of conversational code switching between English and Mandarin (i.e., the language of education, not the local dialect, Shanghainese) The conversational code switch was a concept that Gumperz (1982) developed. Although code switching during a conversation may be disruptive to learners when Chinese is spoken in support of L2

due to inability to convey their message, it does give an opportunity for language development. Clarification and meaning can be achieved, saving time and allowing the conversation to be continued thus providing a learning experience for the low level speaker. (Johnston 1997)

Hird (1995) reports that small groups of Chinese in the classroom used the code switching strategy for learning content material. He states that the group discussions are for the development of collaborative learning strategies rather than communicative language strategies.

However, my research in Shanghai is confined to informal EC settings where learners in groups are socializing and practising their oral communication skills. Code switching within the EC setting will contribute to an understanding of why the local Chinese use this communication strategy.

Code switching is a complex phenomenon in its own right, thus the major insights of code switching are outside the scope of this thesis. General conversational code switched comments will be analysed and reported for the overall description of interactions at the EC between the Chinese learners.

Finally, Heller (1988, p.267) explains conversational code switching this way: "By accomplishing conversational tasks through code switching, interlocutors accomplish social relationships."

Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is characterized by positive interdependence, which is the condition in which individuals are come together so that a positive outcome is attained. This form of communication promotes positive interaction within groups. A cohesive group that is cooperating will be obligated to contribute to the group's success and promote the group's goals. Also peer motivation can influence cooperative learning. The EC participants will be influenced by group cooperation and cohesion. These achievement strategies could influence the language learning outcomes within the EC communities. (Ehrman and Dornyei 1998)

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Schmidt, Boraie and Kassabgy (1996) found it unclear from many studies whether motivation is the cause or result of successful learning. Schmidt made it clear that motivation was related to learning strategies like cooperative learning. He cites a Finnish study (EFL context) that out of three types of learning situations investigated individualistic, cooperative and competitive, the cooperative learning situation emerged as the best learning situation for all students in terms of its effects on motivation.

Nelson (1995) notes that in Confucian tradition students learn through cooperation by working for the common good. This is done by helping each other but not by promoting themselves above others. Flowerdew (1998, p.324) states:
"Members have a strong sense of duty towards each other."

In view of its effectiveness, cooperation could assist learners at the EC to enhance their English learning. In the EC environment the learners could attempt to solve communication problems through collaboration and encouragement.

Summary

Motivation is one of the crucial factors determining success in language learning. Within the language learning setting of the E.C, where English is spoken as a second language, there are two essential conditions for motivation. The first is the opportunity for exposure to English in a real-life situation. The second is the opportunity for interaction with other highly motivated English learners.

In general, we can say that EFL learners desire to make contact with people who speak the English language and who have the same beliefs about learning. The importance of English to the Chinese learners in Shanghai is due to the fact that in the scientific and technological age English has become probably the world's most widely used language of international communication. Chinese learners want instant oral English speaking skills because of the international importance of English. These enthusiastic learners are seeking places and opportunities to practise their spoken English in natural and informal setting.

It might be expected that learners who take full responsibility for their own learning might seek an authentic and communicative environment for their educational goals in an EFL context. The ECs in Shanghai might be expected to provide self-directed learners with such an environment to achieve their educational and social goals.

Most of the factors reviewed so far in this section might well be expected to play an important role in the success of the EC regarding EFL learning in Shanghai. EC learners may well be exposed to western culture when attending the EC. Perhaps, also the Chinese English learners will have many opportunities for interaction in the L2 at the EC, more than in the L2 classroom. The informal setting of the EC is probably the natural setting recommended by Krashen and Terrel (1983) and Long (1989). These communities also promotes the communicative approaches to language learning and negotiation of meaning. Finally, the EC may probably promote learner autonomy, code switching, and cooperative learning which can also be factors that influence second language learning.

Section Two: English Corner Literature

The 'English Corner' is an informal place for learners to practise their oral skills and socialize in their spare time. (Huang 1998 and Buyer 1999) Huang and Buyer both claim that the desire to practise spoken English and meet people was what motivated people to attend ECs. Fox (2000) states that she is 'stunned' by the enthusiasm that the Chinese have for learning English. She uses words like 'passion' 'eager' 'enthusiastic' to describe the Chinese attitudes towards learnin oral English.

The first and main reason given in the literature why the Chinese English learners attended the EC was the overwhelming desire to practise and improve their oral English skills. (Buyer1999, Huang 1998, Beijing 2000, Mavromatis 2000) Simpson (2002) Magistad and Zwerdling (1998)

The second reason as Buyer (1999) observed was that many learners just listened while a few of those more fluent in English spoke and tended to dominate the

conversation. Many learners were prepared to be passive participants while only a few were actively involved in communicating in English.

Thirdly, Heng (2001) describes how the armed police in Shanghai attended ECs in their workplace to learn everyday expressions in English for the APEC meeting in Shanghai 2001. These Chinese learners were able to extend their vocabulary for occupational purposes.

Fourthly, The Hong Kong Education Department has provided resources for establishing 'English Corners' in their secondary schools as an extra-curricula activity. They were developed to enhance the students' English learning and speaking skills. There are English learning materials and aids for teachers to use in ECs to help motivate students to speak English. (Chan 1999 and English Corner Kit 2000) Huang (1998) also suggests that ECs are an extra curricular activity where the Chinese learner can reinforce the oral skills learnt in class.

The fifth reason was to socialize and make friends. Buyer 1999 and Eubank 1988 reported that EC communities were places where learners had fun and connected with people from different backgrounds and occupations. It was my observation that EC participants enjoyed themselves while attending the EC. People were happy to converse in English with people of any age or background, while at the same time acquaint themselves with old friends or make new friends.

A sixth reason for attending ECs was that many Chinese English learners wanted to exchange information (Magistad and Zwerdling 1998 and Buyer 1999). Eubank (1988) reports that learners wanted to exchange information in an informal environment.

Seventh, Buyer (1999) and Cao (2000) describe how Chinese learners are posing ENSs diverse questions while attending ECs. The local Chinese often gather information about western civilization and cross-cultural communication. Cao reports that English native teachers expressed more ideas about cultural issues outside the formal classroom than inside it.

The idea or thought of talking to a native speaker of English is one of the reasons that motivate Chinese learners to attend ECs. However, opportunities to talk to ENS at ECs are rare, so Chinese learners will show great delight if an ENS has volunteered to attend their E.C.

Finally, Buyer (1999) and Wright (1994) talk about the freedoms of discussing a wide range of topics in English at the EC. Wright and Buyer explain that the Chinese talk about topics like gun control in America, politics, ethics, sports, leisure and issues relating to the economy. It must be remembered that only twenty years ago Mainland Chinese were fearful of government surveillance and retribution. Today people are talking freely in the EC in Shanghai without fear.

These learners are outside a formal learning environment and have the freedom to express themselves in an all English environment. ECs are seen as relatively safe places for communicating in English on topics varying from politics to sports.

It was reported that some ENS look forward to the EC gatherings. The ENS that attend ECs often find themselves asking many questions about China and its culture (Sharing stores, 2002 and Wright 1994). An EC is a convenient place for foreigners to volunteer their services, exchange information, practise their Chinese words and make friendships.

Summary

In countries like China where English is a foreign language learners have limited chances to converse in English. ECs offer an opportunity to speak English in a social context. They could be seen as providing an ESL enclave within an EFL setting. Richards, Platt and Weber (1990) define second language as a language other than one's mother tongue used for a special purpose in making the new language one's own. ECs are special places for communicating only in English, even though outside this enclave we are in an EFL setting.

The advertisement about an EC in the Shanghai Star (2003, p32) summarizes these communities in this way.
"Exchange ideas, socialize and boost your English skills while meeting new friends."

This is one example of how the local media see and promote the role of EC's in Shanghai today. There are many questions to be asked and answered about ECs in Shanghai. This research represents an endeavour to find out first what drives Chinese learners to attend these unique communities, second what their perceptions of these language-learning settings are, and thirdly the nature of the interaction between EC participants and finally to assess the potentially positive implications of participation in the EC for all Chinese learners.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The methodology to be used for this study reflects an ethnographic perspective on a second language acquisition situation. The ethnographic approach falls under the category of qualitative or descriptive research. This process-oriented approach to the investigation of interaction points to a rigorous tradition, which demands good recording and interpretation skills on the part of the researcher. The present study draws in particular on the sociolinguistic research approach of the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1968, 1972; Saville-Troike 1982 and Nunan 1992).

Ellis (1994) lists a number of characteristics of ethnography, which I have used in my research: 'Ethnography makes use of procedures such as detailed observation, interviews, and questionnaires to collect data that are 'rich' and that afford multiple perspectives.' p. 701

Ethnographers themselves need to enter into the setting on which the research is focused. This enables them to observe the operation of communicative processes with minimal intervention. It has been suggested that ethnographers, by their involvement in the situation, would be more motivated to draw on the results of their research. This involvement by the ethnographer will lead to research applications, which is the goal of ethnography. (Ellis, 1994 and Nunan, 1992)

It is essential that ethnographers enter the relevant speech communities on a regular basis. It must be taken into consideration that speakers move in and out of the speech communities, which also need to be viewed as communities for communication and social interaction.

Eckert (2000) has highlighted the need for the ethnographer to be totally immersed in the target community for authentic qualitative results to occur. In the process the researcher can have the opportunity to develop relationships and collect valuable information within the speakers' communities. Eckert points out from her research that the day-to-day life of an ethnographer researcher consists of many things.

'I never gave up walking around'

'Taking notes of what was happening in different parts and corners of the school'

'Sitting and hanging out with people'

'I hung out in fast food places'

'And I networked endlessly'

(Eckert 2000, p.75)

Ethnography is a process of collecting all the information and making sense of it. The researcher builds up his/her resources relevant to the community's history, its perceptions and its people. Eckert (2000) and Agar (1996) suggest that in group settings, with constant contact with the researcher, participants will eventually begin to understand and take some interest in what the study is about. Direct contact with the people who are actually providing the data is crucial to the success of the research. This rapport will develop ongoing relationships. Without such rapport the members of the speech community will not allow the ethnographer into their world.

The researcher needs to be direct and honest with the informants and to explain to the local community in simple terms what they are going to do within the community. This is a requirement of research ethics (Agar 1996) For this research my informants were asked to sign a document stating their willingness to participate in the research. The ethics committee of Edith Cowan University approved my research proposal before I proceeded with my data collection in Shanghai.

Descriptions of ECs, perceptions of the EC from the participants' viewpoint and patterns of social interaction among members of a cultural group were researched ethnographically. Generally ethnography of communication involves a close study of face-to-face interaction. The first focus is on the understanding of the rules of social interaction. This might involve looking at the cultural patterns of the organization. There is a need to explore the 'how', 'why' and 'outcomes' of the social interaction observed.

Participant observation researchers generally seek to understand the participants' culture in context. The investigator participates in events and simply observes and records the activities and behaviour of others. Although the researcher may exercise

some selection and control over what is being observed and recorded, the emphasis is on gathering as much information as possible, so that later analysis (often the 'finding patterns/categories' type) will have sufficient detail to operate on. Sources of data include recordings (tapes or notes), diaries, questionnaires, interviews and case histories (Nunan 1992).

In summary, the ethnographer's overall purpose is to acquire some knowledge that has not previously been found.

Instruments of Design

First I prepared a pilot study in the form of a semi-structured interview. This pilot study was conducted in Shanghai in June 2001 as preparation for the formal construction of the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews for December 2001(See Appendix A). Next I prepared the questionnaire and semi-structured interview for twenty informants at the ECs from the knowledge of the pilot study. (See Appendices B and C respectively). Finally I prepared five semi-structured interview questions for six Chinese teachers and four ENSs (See appendix D).

Data Collection Process

Pilot study

In June 2001 I commenced my pilot study in Shanghai by visiting Jing An Park EC, People's Park EC and Jiao Tong University EC. I also made contact with several EC participants from Shanghai Teachers University. These four ECs were to become the major focus of my research and were the places in which I chose to trial the semi-structured interviews that I had prepared in Australia. Feedback from these interviews would enable me to write the design instruments for my research. (Trial Interview: see Appendix A). This also gave me an idea of what questions to ask the Chinese learners in the semi-structured interview. A number of interactions were videotaped for subsequent analysis in Australia as part of the process of finalizing the definitive proposal for the research.

Going into the EC community gave me the opportunity to make contact with the participants and develop a relationship with some of them. During the visit I was able

to write down the names and telephone numbers of people whom I could contact on my return to Shanghai in November 2001 to carry out my research.

Start of data collection

Data collection for this study started on 25th November 2001 and ended in late February 2002. During this time many students were preparing for examinations, which they would sit in January 2002, and workers were working hard to ensure they received their end of year bonuses for the 2002 Chinese New Year. These unsettling factors did not have any effect on the collection of data as many eager participants still attended the ECs weekly.

At the outset of this study boundaries needed to be set because, although the EC phenomenon is wide- spread in China this would appear to be the first time oral English corners have been studied in Shanghai. This research is focused only on oral English spoken at ECs in Shanghai. The main focus of my research is on four ECs in Shanghai, which I have titled 'the major four ECs'. The other four ECs that I visited regularly are called ' the minor four ECs.'

The major four ECs include two parks and two universities. I selected these environments because they are some of the most popular ECs in Shanghai. The four ECs that were researched in detail are as follows: Jing An Park on Nanjing Road in Jing An District, Peoples Park on Nanjing Road in the Centre of Shanghai, Jiao Tong University and Shanghai Teachers University.

It must be made clear that a set timetable for attending the ECs was not possible because of weather, holidays, transport, and poor communication. On some weekends I would visit two ECs if time permitted and the weather was favourable.

Table 1.1: Observation schedule for the 'major four ECs'

Place	Time	Day
Peoples Park	8.00am - 4.00pm	Sunday
Jin An Park	8.30am - 11.30am	Sunday
Jiao Tong University	6.30pm - 9.30pm	Wednesday
Shanghai Teachers Uni	6.30pm – 8.30pm	Every second Tuesday

All the ECs in table 1.1 were visited more than six times with the exception of Shanghai Teachers University, which was visited three times. However, to extend the data base, I visited four other ECs, the 'minor four ECs' in Shanghai, and made observational reports on these settings. This extra information would confirm and throw more light on the findings from the 'major four ECs' in Shanghai.

Table 1.2: Observation schedule for the 'minor four ECs'.

Place	Time	Day
McDonalds	9.30am-11.30am	Saturday
Lu Xun Park (All age groups)	8.00am-11.30am	Sunday
Lu Xun Park (Only Children)	9.30am-11.00am	Sunday
YMCA	7.00pm-9.00pm	Thursday
Yew Wah	7.00pm-9.00pm	Friday

All the minor ECs were visited two or more times throughout the research.

Procedure

A total of twenty Chinese at the 'major four ECs' were interviewed and given questionnaires to complete. All the interviews were audio recorded. Five informants were interviewed and given a questionnaire at each EC. I also observed and had general discussions with many members of the 'major four EC communities', which

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gave me an overall perception of the participants' involvement. Also the interaction between NNS to NNS was audio recorded at the major four ECs.

During the first week I visited the 'major four ECs' to observe what was happening and to develop a rapport with the Chinese participants. I wrote some observational notes and asked some Chinese learners if they would like to return the following week for an interview and to answer a questionnaire relating to my research. They willingly agreed to this request.

In the second week I started interviewing the Chinese learners who were willing to participate in this activity and handing them out questionnaires. This process continued for eight weeks and I carefully chose the informants so as to give a balanced view of ECs in Shanghai. Before starting interviews I recorded all informants' full names and telephone numbers in case I needed extra information from them in the future.

After Chinese New year I revisited a number of the ECs to confirm information already collected and to say good-bye to many of the participants that I made friends with. I also made several telephone calls to people to confirm information or ask follow up questions.

In the months of December and January 2001 I interviewed six Chinese English teachers: two Primary schoolteachers, two Middle school teachers and two University teachers. I arranged the interviews and visited their educational institutes. The interviews focused on five semi-structured questions and were audio recorded (See Appendix D).

In the months of December and January 2001 I also interviewed four expatriate ENS who attended the ECs. At the ECs I found few ENS who were just visitors to China. One of the expatriates that I interviewed, who was not a teacher, had volunteered to attend the EC in the park on a regular basis when he was in Shanghai. The other three ENS were teachers, and attending the EC was part of their job descriptions. These interviews were conducted at the ECs. All ENS were Americans apart from one who was an Englishman. They were asked several semi-structured questions and

audio recorded (See Appendix D) Two ENS attended the 'major four ECs' and the other two attended an EC which was run by a private school in a McDonald's Restaurant on Saturday mornings. It was difficult to find an ENS to interview at the parks and universities mainly because it was the start of winter.

Selection of Subjects

When selecting the four ENS, the six Chinese teachers and the Chinese informants I took into consideration their age, gender and occupation as well as their willingness and cooperation. All the informants were given full details of why I was doing the research.

All subjects were interviewed at the ECs except for four Chinese teachers who were interviewed at their schools or universities. A Chinese national, who signed a document of confidentiality, translated all tapes with conversations containing code switching.

The parks had a wide age group to select from and the university participants who attended EC were mostly young adult university students.

Table 1.3 Spread of age groups in the 'major four ECs' of 20 members

	Parks	Universities	Total
Teenagers	3	0	3
Young adults	1	8	9
Mature Aged	3	2	5
Elderly	3	0	3

The twenty people I interviewed were put into the following age groupings: teenager, young adult, mature aged and elderly. In this study the gender spread was equal in both the parks and universities.

Table 1.4 Occupations within 'the major four ECs'

	Parks	University	Total
Middle school students	3	0	3
University school students	2	7	9
Workers	1	3	4
Unemployment	1	0	1
Retired	3	0	3

The participants' occupations were also an important consideration because many of them were students. From the table 1.4 we can see that 12 of the informants were middle school and university students. I was able to interview 4 workers, 1 unemployed and 3 retired people who were over 65 years of age.

Christmas EC

All informants that I interviewed and gave a questionnaire at the ECs were invited to my home in Shanghai to participate in a Christmas Eve EC. This was to say thank you for their assistance in my research, to develop relationships and also to further observe how NNS communicate with other NNS in a different setting outside the parks and universities. The evening incorporated several communicative games, the singing of Christmas carols and plenty of free talk. Only one other ENS, a teacher, was present.

Data analyses

The data analysis was based on observations from field notes, questionnaires, interview transcripts and diary readings. Observations from field notes and diary entries were summarized and findings were arrived at by a process of induction and

written up in Chapter 4. The interview and questionnaire data were collated and recorded in tables shown in Chapter 5 with the discussion of relevant findings. The interactions between participants at the ECs were recorded and transcribed (See Appendices E, F, G, H, I, J) and an analysis of the interactions was carried out with a view to determining their significance for foreign language acquisition, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Ethical Considerations

All the participants were informed of the nature and the purpose of the study. The researcher also explained why it was necessary to audio record the interviews. The participants were required to sign a statement of Disclosure and Informed Consent for the audio-recorded interviews. All collected data is and will be confidential. The participants for this were chosen according to their willingness to co-operate.

CHAPTER FOUR: ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS OF ENGLISH CORNERS

In order to understand the English Corner phenomenon I observed and participated for three months in these communities in Shanghai. The constant interaction with Chinese learners at the corners enabled me as a researcher to examine more deeply the history and the fundamental workings of the EC. The EC community in Shanghai has for the first time been the focus of applied linguistic research and this will shed light on the significance of the EC for EFL in Shanghai and China.

Four ECs will be discussed in detail and there will be a short discussion on another four ECs, which are also significant in EFL learning in Shanghai. It must be pointed out that many ECs in Shanghai are not named or discussed in this research. Whenever there is a need for oral English practice the Chinese learners will create their own ECs in schools or the local communities. An EC can be found or is created somewhere in Shanghai on any weekday or weekend.

It was observed that at each EC there was a core of Chinese learners that attended regularly. The loyal participants would generally return to the same EC week after week seeking the benefits from attending the EC. I did observe familiar faces at different ECs around Shanghai during a week. These EC 'learner enthusiasts' exemplify the hunger to learn English in Shanghai.

It must be pointed out that the 'craze' to speak English might well have started back in the early 1970's. Diary readings from an 86-year-old man who attended Saint John's University in Shanghai said that he had frequent English meetings, which were called English Clubs, with his friends in homes around Shanghai. His core of friends would also engage in social activities together like dancing and sports.

Four Major ECs

People's Park

People's Park is the most famous EC in Shanghai and China as it boasts the first recorded meeting in 1978 at the time of the initiation of the open door policy. Before 1949 People's Park was a racecourse, which was built by the early Western settlers. The racecourse was converted into a public park soon after the Communist party took power. Through interviews and general discussions it was discovered that in 1974, mainly older gentlemen from educated backgrounds, would sit and practise their English in the park. As the Cultural Revolution was losing its dominance and diplomatic ties with many English speaking and Western countries started to develop, the fear of speaking English in public places lessened. Some young men who were unemployed or from rich families would join the older gentlemen for English lessons and quite often in the mid 1970s they would meet every day. It was said that the level of English was low because many people had not used the English language for a long time because of the fear of persecution.

After the Open door policy in 1978 the EC started to function regularly on Sundays as people had one day free to relax. From this time on English was once again becoming the most popular foreign language to learn because of the demands of more knowledge in science and technology.

It was in the early 1980s that the first native speaker attended the EC at People's Park. With China opening its door to the world once again Westerners were coming to China as tourists or on business. Some Chinese tourist agencies promoted the EC at People's Park as a place to visit while in Shanghai. It is a surprise to many visitors that an entrance fee of 2 yuan is to be paid at this park. Today the ENSs visitors are welcomed with open arms as they enter the EC. The Chinese participants are eager to hear and learn from them.

Still today in the EC old men can be seen helping students with their English studies. Small groups of primary school children eagerly listen to the Chinese sages telling them how to speak English. Some Chinese people who are fluent in English, or English teachers, are on the outlook for new students to tutor for financial rewards.

The EC at People's Park starts around 8.00am every Sunday morning and continues until around 4.00pm. The morning is the busiest time with all age groups attending from kindergarten to men in their 80s. The numbers are from 200 to 300 in the morning, dwindling to less than 100 in the afternoon. The afternoon participants are often business people or young adults.

The weather plays a role in determining the number of Chinese learners that participate on any given day. If the weather is wet the people will move to an undercover area only ten metres away from the open area.

The EC is in an open area with only a few seats but most of the participants remain standing. People move from group to group freely depending on who they want to talk to or what they want to talk about. The participants' real purposes for attending the EC will be discussed later.

I observed on several occasions a few Chinese and ENS coming to ECs to promote their schools, English camps and English clubs. They would give out leaflets and talk to the Chinese learners about their programs that they were trying to sell. This soft promotion did not distract the EC meetings as nobody protested and people generally were trying to find new ways to improve their English.

One man that attends the EC regularly claims to be the main organizer of this EC. He has been attending this EC for more than five years and he invites ENS to attend. This man's purpose is to help motivate and encourage the local Chinese English speakers to open their mouths and to communicate in English.

Jing An Park

Jing An Park was a foreign cemetery before 1949. After the communist party took power they had it demolished and made into a park for the local residents. It was always a fee-paying park until September 1999 when the local government had it reconstructed and made into a free park. The local authorities were very keen to establish an EC in the park and in one corner they have erected a plaque "Multi-

language corner" meeting time of 8.30am to 11.30am Sunday morning. It was obvious after one or two visits that only English was spoken at this EC.

The local district of Jing An has decided to encourage students to practise their English in the local community. The local district has invited student leaders of the senior schools in the Jing An district to organize a program each week at the EC in Jing an park. The senior schools in the local Jing An district are rostered during the school semesters to create an atmosphere of learning. These schools will often display writing, idioms, jokes, proverbs and give performances or read poems. Their teacher or someone from the school will generally accompany them.

Many primary and middle school students seem eager to attend this EC. The Chinese learners have a genuine desire to converse in English and are generally very curious to learn new things about the world they live in. The majority of the participants are young and groups of participants surround the older or more fluent Chinese English speakers. If a native-English speaker attends Jing An Park then the Chinese learners will surround them looking for the chance to practise their English.

The corner is in an open area with cement tables and chairs within the park. During the week and weekend most of these tables and chairs are taken up with old men gambling, playing cards, playing Chinese chess or just sitting and talking. On Sundays all these leisure activities happen naturally side-by-side. Most of the EC participants stand in small groups ranging from two to twenty. If it is raining participants can stand under a small shelter that used to be part of a British home. The numbers are much smaller when it rains but regular faces appear in all weathers and are happy to greet each other for their leisure activities.

Jing An Park is located in the down town area that was occupied by foreigners in the early 20th Century and is also near the Famous People's Parks. The Jing An district is one of the wealthiest districts in Shanghai and it is common for well-to-do men and very few women, to attend the EC. It was discovered that some of these older gentlemen were fluent in English. These men and women were well-educated and attended English speaking universities like Saint John's before 1949. The older

generation, mainly gentlemen, who have good English speaking skills, are helping today's generation with their oral skills.

There are a number of big hotels in and around Jing An Park, so tourists are often walking through the park during the week or at weekends. It is not surprising to see foreigners being asked to join in the EC activities on Sundays. Some tourists make friends with the locals and this friendship can lead to exchange of information and even a free tour of Shanghai. In some cases long and lasting friendships or relationships occur.

The Jing An community has four adult English groups that meet during the week. One has been active for at least fifteen years with old men volunteering their services to teach the people that attend. This service is free to local community members. Again most of these people are retired and learning English as a hobby or brushing up their oral English skills. The level of oral English is low but their enthusiasm to learn is great. The learning style is traditional with the teacher doing most of the talking and the students listening. They use an old textbook called the 'English 900' published in 1971.

Jing An District Middle and Senior schools have ECs once or twice a week, which are normally organized by the Chinese English Teacher. The teachers give topics of discussion and they try to motivate the students to open their mouths and express themselves at the EC. At some schools in this district the English Chinese teachers are semi retired and have fluent and accurate English. They were educated in English schools, colleges and universities in the 1940s

Jiao Tong University
Jiao Tong is one of the top five universities in China and one of the country's best engineering universities. It is centrally located in Shanghai and is easily accessible by public transport. The Foreign language Department started an EC over ten years ago to help students practise their oral English. It has been the enthusiastic student leaders that have organized the meetings over the years. Student leaders need to be members of the Student League Union, which has some political connection to the Communist Party.

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In the year 2000 an Educational Organization on the Jiao Tong campus decided to put a native-English speaker in charge of the EC. This was part of his job description and he was paid to attend and organize the EC. Each week the native-English speaker prepares a topic for the EC and this is distributed to the Chinese learners. It is introduced first to the whole group and the participants are encouraged to form their own groups for further discussion. This is seen as an icebreaker to start the EC meeting and to create some atmosphere.

This EC is held outside in the open area in the middle of the campus. On Wednesday evening the official starting time is 6.30pm but people seem to arrive around 7.00pm. Generally people start to drift away after 9.00pm but some people are talking in English well after 10.00pm.

If the weather is fine numbers at the EC can swell to over two hundred university students and workers with a university education. In the case of inclement weather the Chinese learners and the native-English teacher gather under cover. Bad weather might cause numbers to halve but the participants' enthusiasm to speak English isn't dampened.

Shanghai Teachers University.

Shanghai Teachers University is one of the city's best teacher training universities. The English section of the Foreign Language department has encouraged students who are majoring in English to attend the EC on campus, which is every Tuesday 6.30 to 8.30pm. Student leaders who are members of the Students League Union organize the EC. It is their responsibility to report back to the Student League on the types of activities that take place within the EC setting.

The participants gather in a large classroom with the seats and chairs rearranged. The meeting is held in the same building each week, which is convenient in the event of inclement weather. The leader tries to organize fun activities such as drama, singing and small presentations at the start of the EC. The leader will ask students to form small groups by sitting in their seats. Students are encouraged to speak about any topic. Only students from this campus attend this EC with the occasional friend from

outside the campus attending. It is only on rare occasions that native-English speakers attend this activity. The native-English speaker needs to be asked before he/she will attend.

Some of the English major students at Shanghai Teachers University have volunteered their services to the local community to help people with their English. These ECs in the local neighbourhood are held in middle schools or some community building for any age group. This activity is seen as a chance for the university students to use their English in a practical way and benefit the community.

Four Minor ECs

McDonald's EC

ECs can be found in many places around Shanghai these days. As the 'English craze' continues, some people attend fast food outlets to practise their English rather than eat hamburgers. McDonald's fast food restaurant in Gubei has an EC that meets every Saturday morning from 9.30 to 11.00am during school terms. This was initiated by a private school, which employs native-English teachers. The Principal has made an arrangement with the manager of the McDonald's restaurant to teach English free of charge. There are obvious commercial benefits for both organizations.

This corner is very well organized into three separate groups. The preschool children, teenage and the adult groups all have one native-English teacher. It is part of their contract that the teachers attend the EC on a regular basis. Teachers are rostered on during the term and will prepare conversational activities for their groups.

Part of the restaurant is reserved for the English corner. Participants sit in small groups, they seldom move from group to group to share their learning experiences.

It was the Christmas in Shanghai at the time of my research and the theme of Christmas was everywhere. McDonald's restaurant were giving out Christmas packages to children who attended the EC and reinforcing the festive season with piped Christmas carols in their restaurants.

It is reported on the Internet that evangelistic activities are well organized by some Christian organizations at several Western fast food places. In the ECs and fast food places that I attended over the 3 months, I did not see or hear of any proselytization by local Chinese or ENS. Also no written material was issued about Christianity.

Lu Xun Park

Lu Xun Park EC is in the Hong Kou District of Shanghai with a history of over fifteen years. This is a multi-language corner as Japanese and English are spoken here every Sunday morning between 8.00am and 11.30am. This park is opposite the Shanghai International Studies University, which has been the main learning centre of foreign languages for the past twenty years in Shanghai.

People of all ages practise their languages at this park in the open area. Those who stand speak English or Japanese. Many groups of Chinese learners practise their English but only one or two small groups practise Japanese.

It was only in the mid 1990s that English became the preferred language to practice at Lu Xun Park EC as English was then becoming an important tool for communication and the Government's education policy switched to teaching English as a second language.

In 2001 a children's EC was started by a private school inside a public building in Lu Xun park. These Chinese learners are invited to attend an EC run by teachers from a Chinese private school in the Hong Kou district for a small membership fee. The program runs from 9.30 to 11.00am Sunday mornings with a variety of activities for the children to participate in. Parents would accompany their child and sit around the outside of the building to observe their child participating in the activities.

YMCA

YMCA EC started back in the mid 1980s. It was closed for a short time in the late1980s and reopened in 2000.This EC is located in downtown Shanghai and is easily reached by all forms of public transport. The Chinese learners meet in a large room that is air-conditioned and very comfortable. The leader hopes the EC will

promote the YMCA and increase its membership. Many YMCA members do attend the EC, which is held on Thursday nights between 7.00 and 9.00pm. The participants, who number around twenty or thirty, sit in a circle and talk about any topic. The leader works for the YMCA and tries to invite native-English speakers to the corner. The group is mainly made up of young adults who are studying at University or working.

Yew Wah EC in Wu Jiang Road

Yew Wah is the name of a Foreign Language School, which teaches English to all ages. The EC was started by Yew Wah in July 2000 at the request of the Metro subway station at Shimen. The EC is held in a newly developed pedestrian lane called Wu Jiang Road near Nanjing Road, which attracts many tourists and it is located between Jing An and People's Park.

It is my observation that this EC was created for commercial benefits and at the same time giving Chinese learners the opportunity to practise their English. The Principal of Yew Wah EFL school is the organizer of the EC and he makes sure there are three or four ENS present every Friday night between 7.00and 9.00pm. The teachers are requested to attend the EC as part of the job description. All age groups attend this EC with a large proportion of primary and middle school students eager to talk to a native-English speaker. It is held in the open air on the side of the road near a small stage with people standing in small groups. If it rains at the EC all participants can move into the classrooms of Yew Wah, which are in the same road.

Environments of ECs

With respect to physical environment, each EC varies in size, location, space and aesthetics. The biggest EC communities are in parks in the open air. Such locations are very pleasant if the weather is not too cold, hot or wet, but unsuitable weather may discourage learners from going outside to practise their oral English. Generally when the weather is wet or very hot, attendance at ECs is more than halved.

ECs with indoor environments are able to maintain a steady attendance even during inclement weather. Some participants had an interest in knowing more about English environments in Shanghai, so that they could set up their own EC at work or in their

community. The learners were seen to be enthusiastic enough to create new EC environments if it was going to enhance their oral English.

Shanghai Overseas Chinese

Overseas Chinese who were born in Shanghai are attending some ECs on a regular basis. These overseas Chinese are attending People's Park, Jing An Park and Lu Xun Park. I never met an overseas Chinese from other parts of China. My observation and general involvement within the EC communities over the three months enabled me to note these reasons for the Shanghai Overseas Chinese attendance:

a) To practise their English
b) To see old and make new friends
c) To see what's going on in Shanghai
d) To help locals with their English
e) To look for business prospects and exchange of information.

The Shanghai Overseas Chinese returned to Shanghai for a number of reasons: First for work, second to visit family or friends for a short time and third for doing business. The underpinning motivation for the Shanghai Overseas Chinese to attend ECs was mainly to communicate and help the locals with their oral English.

Summary

The information gathered from the ECs was conducted by myself by collecting data from eight different EC communities in Shanghai which gave me an overall view of these learning environments. Information gathered from the eight ECs indicated that each community was unique within itself but the common thread was that all the Chinese learners were eager to communicate in English.

The most famous EC in Shanghai and probably China is Peoples Park. The first recorded meetings were in 1978 but my research has found that a few Chinese learners, mainly gentleman from educated backgrounds, would gather regularly in Peoples Park in the early to Mid-1970s to converse in English.

In Shanghai today ECs are everywhere including parks, restaurants, universities, pedestrian lanes and inside large organizations like YMCA.

EC started from small beginnings but has now blossomed into a phenomenon that has spread not only in Shanghai but throughout China.

ECs in the parks attract learners ranging from kindergarten to 86 years of age. The level of English varies greatly within the parks. Some people only listen or say just a few words compared to the more competent speaker who is fluent and accurate English.

Sunday is a day of rest for many people so it is a good time for parents with their children to attend the EC. Parents often push and at the same time encourage their children to improve and practise their English. Some children speak to their peers or listen to an older or more fluent Chinese speaker. Children are encouraged by their parents to talk to the ENS by asking questions and listening.

The ECs at universities attract university students and a handful of workers in professional jobs who are eager to practise their English. The two university ECs observed were well organized by their leaders. A general observation was that university learners' level of spoken English is generally higher than that at other ECs.

I observed that participants who stood rather than sat had more freedom of movement from group to group. If participants remain seated during EC sessions they tend to stay with one group. The indoor EC participants at McDonalds and YMCA were sitting in chairs and this caused a lack of movement within the meetings. People were free to move but this did not happen as frequently as compared with people who were standing or in an open area. People who were sitting in their chairs did not move until the leaders ask them or someone took the initiative.

The ECs that were organized with topics or set programs created the most noticeable response from their participants. These leaders appeared to have taken a real interest and seemed to be committed to the development of the EC community. EC leaders are recognizing and demonstrating the importance of ECs for improving the ability

of Chinese learners to communicate in English. This is now done in the form of giving discussion topics or activities for participants to be involved in.

The older men within the EC community are attending for many different reasons. These older men in Shanghai have free time to attend such meetings on the weekends. This is a recreational activity and gives them the opportunity to meet old and new friends. Many of these older gentlemen are attending the ECs to volunteer their services to help the younger Chinese learners with their English. It was common and a well-known practice that some of these old men would find students to tutor for a set fee.

Within the ECs some organizations are promoting their schools and activities. Some ECs are being used for commercial purposes by using the soft promotion strategy. Native English Teachers are being asked to attend an EC to help promote their organization as part of their contract and at the some time help Chinese learners with their oral English. We also see some Chinese fluent and accurate speakers looking for students to tutor in English who are mainly Chinese English Teachers.

The overwhelming theme for the Chinese learner within the EC environment is to speak and improve their oral English. The ECs are lively communities with information being shared freely amongst members. The thought of communicating in English is the goal that drives the Chinese learners to attend an English Corner in Shanghai.

CHAPTER FIVE: PERCEPTIONS OF THE EC FROM PARTICIPANTS

To further understand the 'Descriptions of ECs in Shanghai' I undertook an emic study in the EC communities. The perceptions of EC in this section are taken from the participant's viewpoint. Firstly I interviewed twenty mainland Chinese NNS from the four-major ECs, six Chinese teachers and four ENS. Secondly the twenty NNS of the four major ECs were also given a questionnaire to complete. All the subjects were selected according to their willingness to participate and cooperate with this research. (See Chapter 3) Questionnaires and interview descriptions and interpretations for the NNS have been collated into tables. The Chinese English teachers and ENS responses will be found in Appendices J and K with relevant quotes from these sections in this Chapter. The findings of this section will help throw new light on ECs in Shanghai.

Reasons for attending

Table 1 Questionnaire data: Reasons why EC participants' come to ECs.

Responses	Frequency
To practise oral English	20
To speak to more advanced learners	12
To get someone to correct speaking errors.	5
To meet a Chinese friend	9
To make an ENS friend	12
To find information about Western culture	10

Language skills

Reponses to the questionnaires showed that 100 % of those who participated stated that one of their main purposes for attending the EC was to enhance their oral

English. 60% stated that they attended the EC in order to speak to more advanced learners with better language skills whereas only 25% stated that they attended in order to have someone correct their errors. These results show that Chinese learners are looking for an environment to enhance their language skills in oral English.

Seeking friendships from EC

In Shanghai it is common for people to meet outside their homes to discuss daily life. Going to public places like parks to meet new and old friends is part of social interaction within Chinese communities. This social activity has extended to the ECs and possibly explains why this is one of the reasons given for attending the EC. Making friends in the EC was a popular activity. Also making new ENS friends were especially sought after.

Finding information and cultural issues relating to EC

In table 1 the data shows that one of the main reasons for the Chinese learners to attend the EC is to seek more cultural information about the west. Finding information about western culture today is seen as an important reason for attending the EC.

Chinese learners are curious about foreign cultures and the presence of an ENS gives EC participants an opportunity to ask questions relating to the culture of the ENS country. Chinese English teachers in the classroom today only teach explicit cultural information (for example population, geography etc...) about foreign countries. The open door policy which brought with it technology and science has also brought with it an interest in Western culture.

Table 2: Interview data: EC participants' best experiences at the ECs

Best experiences at the EC	Frequency
Talking on topics	4
Speaking to ENS	10
Listening to ENS pronunciation	1
Talking to people	8
Making friends	1
First attendance	2

The interviews revealed that the most frequently reported best experience gained from attending the ECs was the opportunity to talk. The strongest response was to seek an ENS to speak to. Another popular response for the best experience was again talking, this time on topics. It is interesting to note that making friends was low on the list of reported best experiences at ECs.

Benefits of the EC

Table 3: Interview data: EC participants' views on the benefits of attending an EC.

Benefits of attending EC	Frequencies
Achieving improvement in oral English	4
Facilitating thinking in English	3
Providing experience of how an ENS sounds	3
Achieving greater oral English fluency	3

Having opportunity to express ideas freely in English	4
Developing interpersonal skills	2
Developing confidence and courage in speaking English	1
Being able to talk to people who are more fluent	2
Learning idioms	1
Learning pronunciation	1
Learning vocabulary	1
Making friends	6
Exchanging Information	4
Learning more about different cultures	3

The EC participants claim to have derived numerous benefits from their involvement in the EC communities. In terms of benefits EC participants have first listed the acquisition of language skills, second being able to make friends and finally having good opportunities for exchange of information. The informants indicating the advantages of attending the EC suggested a total of 12 language skills. The participants who attend EC communities agreed that the opportunity to practise oral English was an important benefit. Developing the ability to express themselves freely in English was also an important benefit for the participants. Also the other benefits like thinking in English, achieving greater oral English fluency, developing interpersonal skills etc. Table 3 gives a clear indication of the perceived advances for the Chinese learners. The second benefit from the EC is that friendships can be made. This benefit motivates the participants to communicate with each other in English. If ENSs attend the EC there is an added desire on the part of the locals to

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befriend them, as being able to talk to an ENS who has Standard English is seen as a benefit of attending the EC. The third benefit is the opportunity of exchanging information in the context of an EFL setting. Western and eastern cultures were often talked about when an ENS was present as the local Chinese saw learning more about the western culture as a benefit.

Perceived differences between ECs and formal classrooms

Table 4: Interview data: EC participants' views on how the formal classroom is different from the EC.

Perceived advantages of the EC	Frequencies
Active involvement	1
Mixed age groups	1
Free expression of ideas.	2
Freedom to make mistakes	3
Experiencing different backgrounds and experiences at EC	4
Freedom to talk	12
Range of language levels	1
Freedom to ask and answer questions	1
Interest	1
Opportunity to ask foreigners questions	1
Relaxing atmosphere	1
Variety of topics	1

Opportunity to learn something valuable	1
Opportunity to Make friends	1
Teachers speak a lot	1
Teachers explain the text rather than encourage communication.	1
Requirement to listen to teacher	2
Most Chinese teachers don't speak English in class	1

Table 4 shows four negative aspects to teaching in the formal classroom which are referred to by the Chinese English learners. They are that (1) Chinese English teacher stands in front of the class and explains the text. (2)The learners are expected to listen and answer set questions. (3)The Chinese English teacher speaks a lot. (4) Most of the time it is not in English. Scholars who have studied EFL in Hong Kong and China support these negative influences.

Interviewees mentioned sixteen ways in which ECs differ from formal Chinese classrooms. The participants viewed ECs as places where they could express themselves freely. The other two most frequently mentioned differences were that participants felt free to make mistakes at ECs and also felt they were able to meet people from different backgrounds and share experiences. In their responses to the interviews these Chinese learners are affirming the differences between the EC and the classroom. Also the Chinese learners expressed the view that ECs were more interesting than the formal classroom and they saw EC communities, as places were the learners could gain confidence in their ability to speak English. (See Table 13) They felt that that they had fewer opportunities to speak English in the classroom but a better chance to communicate at the EC because the EC environment gave the Chinese learner freedom to speak and express their ideas in English.

The participants liked mixing with people from different backgrounds, different age groups and different work places. Also people were free to express themselves and give varied answers to discussion topics

Chinese English teacher's perceptions of ECs.

Chinese English teachers see the EC as an extension to the classroom. This extract from Appendix K shows that these speakers have positive comments about ECs and the role they have in the community.

> *Speaker A. Oh, yeah. In our formal classroom, we can't speak freely. They just sit and listen. At the EC, they feel happy and not to feel nervous.*
> *Speaker C. In the E.C. Students are active role*
> *Speaker D. Yes. People at the EC are more willing to open their mouth than in the classroom. This is a real skill-learning situation. In the classroom it is only skill getting.*
> *Speaker E. Yes. This gives them a place to use the information learnt from the classroom. They will feel interested in talking to different people and all walks of life. Old and young and tourists from all over the world. Face to face with foreign people   to exchange information and learn more about the world around them.*

Speaker E also mentions that the EC is a place where one can use the information learnt from the classroom. Teachers see the EC as an alternative place for their students to practise their English. Speaker E stresses the importance of the EC as a place where people can exchange information and learn about the world around them.

Speaker A talks about the students' formal classroom where they just sit and listen. In the EC they can relax and enjoy the informal environment. The teacher is making a comparison between the formal classroom and the informal setting of the EC. Speaker D describes the formal classroom as a skill receiving setting whereas the EC is a place where you can open your mouth to make conversation. This causes many people to find alternative places like EC's to practise their English

Financial considerations

Table 5: Questionnaire data: One of the main reasons for attending EC is because they are free.

Responses	Parks	Universities	Total Frequency
Yes	5	8	13
No	5	2	7

One of the reasons why Chinese learners attend ECs is that this activity is free. In Shanghai opportunities for learners to practise their oral English are limited and often involve enrolling in expensive conversational English classes. However, attendance at an EC is free. This is another major motivating factor causing learners to attend ECs.

In table 5 sixty five percent of the learners view the fact that ECs are free as a reason for attending. Eight out of the ten learners from the universities who took part in the questionnaire indicated that this was one of the reasons they attended. Most of the participants were university students, while some were outsiders. University students generally, especially in China, are not wealthy enough to pay for extra English lessons. The parks attract a wider demographic population with slightly different result. In this case half gave positive responses and the other half gave negative responses. Most parks have an entry fee of 2 yuan, which is about forty cents Australian. Once inside the park everyone is free to attend the EC.

Jing An park is free to the general public but the biggest crowds attend the famous People's Park in Nanjing Road and Lu Xun Park in the Hong Kou District which are fee paying. The fee charged for entering these two parks doesn't seem to dampen the enthusiasm of English learners for attending the EC's there.

Table 6: The most important aspect of English to learn at school and university

Responses	Frequency
Grammar	4
Spoken English	13
Reading	7
Writing	5

My interviews and discussions with some English Chinese teachers point towards two main areas of concern. First is the standard of oral English spoken by the Chinese teacher in class. The students need a good model for their English. Second if the teacher is not fluent or accurate in oral English they will be reluctant to use it in class. The students will be in an environment where English is taught but not spoken.

Table 7: Questionnaire data: Regularity of EC participants' attendance.

Responses	Frequency
Weekly	12
Every two weeks	2
Monthly	3
Every three months	0
Infrequent	3

Results from the questionnaire in table 8 show that 65% of learners questioned attend an EC in Shanghai every week. This is a high percentage and it indicates the how much the Chinese value the EC communities. Some people attend once or twice a

month, and this can still play a significant role in their language development as well as bring the other benefits, which the EC offers.

English Native Speakers

The ENSs are seen as important members of the EC community. The presence of ENS at the EC gives the Chinese learners an opportunity to interact with ENSs in person. Chinese learners like to see ENSs attending the ECs because they see this as the best way to improve their English.

Table 8. Interview data: EC learners' views on the benefits of ENS at the EC

Benefits of having ENS at the EC	Frequency
To model pronunciation	8
To correct grammar mistakes	2
To model the western way of thinking	3
To be conversational partners	3
To enable learners to practise listening	3
To improve the standard of English practice	2
To help in giving better words (vocabulary)	1

Table 8 clearly shows 7 language skills that would benefit participants who attend the EC with ENS present. Nearly half of the interviewees expressed the view that ENS could help them with pronunciation. Hearing standard pronunciation of English was an important issue for Chinese learners, as they wanted to listen to the correct pronunciation of the English language.

The ENS is seen as a person who can correct their pronunciation of English at the EC. However, people in the interview also identified other benefits of ENS attending

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the EC: correction of grammar mistakes, new ways of thinking, opportunities of talking in English to ENS practising their listening and extending their vocabulary.

In tables 9 and 10 Chinese learners' responses to the questionnaire also illustrate that they saw speaking and listening to foreigners as one of the best ways for them to improve their English. The local Chinese have the perception that speaking to ENS is one of the best ways to learn English.

Table 9. Questionnaire data: EC participants' views on the best way to learn English.

Responses	Frequency
Listening to TV, radio, tapes, videos	13
Attending English classes	9
Going to ECs	9
Speaking to foreigners	14
Enlarging one's vocabulary	7

Table 10. Questionnaire data: Reasons why EC participants like foreigners to come to the EC.

Responses	Frequency
To learn more about Western Culture	15
To provide friendship	15
To help with English learning	18

The attendance of ENS at the EC gives Chinese learners an incentive and opportunity to be actively involved in the process of learning EFL. Chinese learners can listen, speak, ask questions and generally exchange information with ENS.

The disadvantage within the EFL context is that ENSs are not sufficient in numbers for all learners to make contact with them at ECs. This has created a situation where in many cases learners have little or no opportunity for cross-cultural exchange. The fact that so few ENS attend the ECs in Shanghai is perhaps the biggest obstacle for the learners who attend them.

ENSs attending EC

The ENSs were interviewed and asked to expressed their views on reasons why they attended the EC. These examples are taken from appendix J.

ENS 1. The primary purpose is to give them a chance to practise their English, but for me, it gives an opportunity to learn about what many of the Chinese are thinking. To meet the Chinese people and have an opportunity to exchange, get to know people

ENS 2 It's part of my job.

Here help people improve their English, but the same time to learn more about China, learn about the customs, culture.

ENS 3. To help people with their English. Most educators are service orientated. Giving of ourselves and trying to help others.

About culture things. Chinese to learn more about western culture.

ENS 4. I do get paid for it. I think I have other motivations and reasons.

I pass out a topic every session which I print out on a piece of paper any thing from mythology to slang

Speakers 2, 3 and 4 were teachers and it was part of their job to be present and help the local Chinese with their oral English. Speaker 1 attended the EC on his own behalf. His motivation was to help the locals speak English, meet Chinese people and exchange information.

Speakers 1, 2 and 3 state they had an interest in learning more about Chinese traditions and customs. Speaker ENS 3 could see that the EC was a place for the locals to learn more about western culture. The exchange of information would benefit both parties.

It is generally recognized that ENS who attend ECs in the parks go as volunteers and ENS who attend universities or more organized ECs on school campuses have native English teachers. Teachers who attend the EC go either because their job description requires them to or because they are promoting their school organization. Many teachers are asked continually to attend ECs but time constraints and lack of financial reward are possible causes for the reluctance of native English teachers to participate.

Often overseas tourists walking in the parks where ECs are held are invited to join in. These ENS generally stay for about half an hour and then leave. One positive result of this ENS / NNS interaction is that friendships can be made and cultural and general information exchanged. There are a very few dedicated ENSs who attend regularly, either as leaders or out of their own interest.

Topics emerging from the EC
Some students in table 2 declared that speaking on a specific topic was one of their best experiences at the EC. In table 4 the students expressed the view that the EC was a place where they could talk more freely than in the classroom. Also at the EC learners could speak on different topics.

Most EC leaders start the meeting by giving the participants a topic. Discussion topics are important for the meeting because they motivate the learners to converse in English and create an active atmosphere. Topics given at the universities to stimulate conversation were popular amongst the Chinese learners. Participants like having the freedom to speak on any topic, not just nominated topics. It must be said that the leaders imposed no apparent restrictions on topics at the EC.

The main topics of discussion in the EC depended on the group and level of English. University students generally could talk on any topic, as their English speaking skills were quite good. The learners themselves chose topics at the ECs in the park. It was observed and noted that many Chinese learners had indicated there was a need for a selection of interesting topics to choose from.

Age of learning

Table 11 shows that many of the EC participants had started learning English at an early age. 90% of them had started learning English by the age of 12 and 50% by the age of 10. However, the level of oral language varied from individual to individual. The fact that many had started learning English from an early age did not guarantee the Chinese learner oral fluency and accuracy.

Table 11. Questionnaire data: Age of participants when first starting to learn English

Age in years	Frequency
7 years	4
10 years	6
12 years	8
15 years	2

Table 12 results show that 65% of the EC participants surveyed had been studying for more than ten years and 90% of the learners had been learning for five years or more.

Table 12. Questionnaire data: Length of time the participants have learnt English.

Responses	Frequency
Less than 5 years	2
Between 5 to 10 years	5
More than 10 years	13

Best way to learn English in an EFL setting

Table 13 shows that participants consider that the best way to learn English is to practise speaking English. This shows why many Chinese learners are willing to give up their free time to attend the EC to have the opportunity to speak in English. This demonstrates the desire of Chinese learners to speak English at ECs. The

opportunities for Chinese learners of English to speak the language in the classroom are limited because of the size of classes and the teaching methods used in Shanghai.

Table 13. Interview data: EC participants' view on the best way to learn English

Best ways to learn English	Frequency
By speaking / practising English	14
By reading	6
By listening	6
By being in a good English environment	2
By learning vocabulary	1
By making it interesting	2
By thinking in English	1
By talking to foreigners	1
By devoting time to studying	1

Interviewees indicated that they believed that reading and listening made learning interesting and that a good English environment was also a significant factor contributing to learning English. Reading topics for discussion were the only reading activity that the participants would be engaged in at the EC. However, the remaining language skills listed in table 13 were being practised continually.

A high percentage of Chinese think that speaking to ENSs is one of the best ways to acquire English. (See Table 3) In Shanghai, going to the EC is also seen as an effective way to learn English. The ECs are seen as an alternative to traditional English classes.

The Chinese English teachers encourage their students to attend local ECs to help develop their oral English skills. These examples are taken from appendix K.

> *Speaker A. Our EC provides them with a good chance to communicate with others when they are young.*
> *Speaker C. I encourage the student go to the E.C to practise*
> *Speaker E. EC can arouse their interest in speaking English*
> *Speaker F. EC they can use some of what they learnt and express them freely in anyway they want.*

The Chinese teachers see the benefits of the EC and are instructing their students to attend. ECs can be seen as a good way to practise their oral English outside the classroom. Speaker C talks about the ability of the EC to arouse the interest of the learner.

The learners feel the best way to achieve the goal of English fluency and accuracy is to find an alternative place to practise English. The growth of ECs shows how learners have taken the initiative in recent years in the development of these alternative environments.

Motivation at EC

Table 14: Questionnaire data: EC participants who attend the EC by their own volition.

Responses	Frequency
Yes	19
No	1

In table 14 the results show 95% of the informants who were given the questionnaire say they were self-motivated and eager to attend the EC.

Among those participants answering the questionnaire, only one, a middle school student, claimed to be unmotivated. The other two teenage learners questioned were attending the EC of their own free will. This indicates that some teenage learners are self-motivated. Generally the parents accompanied their child to the EC and encouraged them to speak English.

Table 15. Questionnaire data: EC participants were asked why they wanted to improve their oral English

Responses	Frequencies
For work	12
For travel	12
For friendship with ENS	12
For emigration	10
Interest	1

Table 15 demonstrates that the learners exhibit instrumental motivation as the main purpose of attending the EC. The motivation for attending the EC was to improve their English, which would lead to a range of benefits such as finding a good job, meeting ENS and being able to go abroad.

Summary

Chinese learner's perceptions of ECs in Shanghai can be summarised into these three areas as listed below.

First, it was perceived by the local Chinese that the EC provided an environment to enhance their English language skills and was one of the best places to practise and improve their oral English. Chinese learners perceived the EC as an environment were they could talk freely and share their experiences by contrast with the traditional classroom. They also saw it as a place in which to make friends in an EFL setting, especially a place to find an ENS friend. These were the most popular

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and sought after friends among the EC community members and they were noted as the best human resource for helping Chinese learners with their English. The benefits perceived by the Chinese learners were that ENS could model the standard pronunciation, be a conversational partner and enable learners to practise their listening. They also saw the opportunity for the exchange of cultural info mation between ENS and NNS.

Secondly the Chinese teachers saw ECs in the community as an extension of what happens inside the classroom. The Chinese teachers have positive comments about ECs and the important role they play in their students' oral English competency. For example 'At the EC, they are feel happy and not to feel nervous, ... are more willing to open their mouth...'(Appendix K). The teachers believed that the classroom is for developing language skills but they saw the EC as an authentic place for their students to develop their oral speaking skills.

Thirdly the ENSs perception of ECs can be separated into two sections.
The first group are those who attend on a voluntary level. These ENSs are willing to help the local Chinese with their oral English. They also want to learn more about the Chinese culture and make new friends. The second group only attend because it is part of their job description. Generally these people would not attend the EC unless there was some financial reward or recognition for their services

CHAPTER SIX: DESCRIPTIONS OF ENGLISH CORNER INTERACTIONS

This chapter is concerned with the nature of the discourse which takes place in English Corner interactions in the locations studied. The analysis of the interactions between members of the EC community will help to show what significance these settings have on EFL learning. The participants were recorded at the ECs with no interference or participation from the researcher. In the light of research on the learning of English as a foreign language (surveyed in chapter 2), the EC interactions will be examined for features that are likely to favour, or to hinder, the acquisition of EFL.

Conversations between the local Chinese from the four major ECs plus a dialogue between ENS and NNS from People's Park were recorded and analysed to give an overall view of the types of interaction that took place within the corners in Shanghai. Each dialogue within the four corners will be looked at individually and some of the interaction that took place between the Chinese learners will be quoted directly from the appendices. Chinese speakers ranging from teenage to mature adults with varied English levels were recorded. Learners did not move in and out of these groups during their conversation.

People's Park

In the afternoon the people that attended the People's Park generally were young or mature adults who were university students or workers with a college or university education.

In this group there were four non-native English speaking men but throughout the dialogue only two people spoke. The other two participants only listened. It is a common phenomenon within EC groups that many participants listen. This conversation was based around an import and export business between America and China (see appendix G) and both speakers had a high level of knowledge of their topic. Throughout the dialogue Speaker E tried to elicit a lot of information from speaker F who had been to America and knew the subject matter.

Example (1) from Appendix G

10. F: Normally we have four or five people there and---

11. E: You have a team?

12. F: Have a team. Then we check, check all the device, then we have a
discussion with the---

13. E: Local people.

14. F: Local people.

In example (1) Speaker E, with the clarification request in line 11, reinforces what
Speaker F is saying in line 10 by supplying alternative vocabulary to clarify the
situation. Even though Speaker F's level of English is quite high, speaker E
completes his sentence by latching in line 13. He may be doing this in order to clarify
what Speaker F is saying and obtain the exact information. Earlier, Speaker E, by
introducing an adjacency pair, had interrupted Speaker F in line 10 The reason for
this insertion sequence is ostensibly to obtain clarification. E accepts this
clarification request and responds to it. It may, however, also have been to provide
speaker F with the lexical item he needed. We can see in this sequence that the
normal rules of turn taking are being relaxed to help the less competent speaker to
contribute, and the less competent speaker was taking advantage of this.

Example (2) from Appendix G

22. F: Yes, we have. When all the installation has been finished and we can
have a check.
23. E. Oh Yes
24. F. If the installation is need high quality, then we pay the rest of the
money to the installation company. And when all the equipment is installed.
25. E. Yes
26. F. Then we, we can have a test.
27. E: Yes, you have a test.

In example (2) both speakers are answering 'yes' to confirm that they understand each other in lines 22, 23, 25 and 27.This has the function of confirming agreement between two speakers. Also the 'yes' response demonstrates that both speakers are listening actively and fully involved in the dialogue.

Yes is also back channelling. This is important as the speakers are not certain of one another's comprehension of the language. The speakers are helping one another by giving the feedback signals, even (as in line 25) when they come in the middle of the turn.

Example (3) from Appendix G

> *32. F: The payment normally divided into several, several period.*
>
> *33. E: Items, yeah.*
>
> *34. F: First we sign the contract.*
>
> *35. E: I know, I know, I know what it is.*
>
> *36. F: Normally we pay them 10%.*
>
> *37. E: I know, I mean what is your prevailing term of payment? Jiu shi ni men de fu kuan. Zhi zhu yao de fu kuan kuai fang si shi she me? (I mean what is your prevailing term of payment?)*
>
> 38. F: That's not my business. You know, we only get the money from my government. They say: "You can use such kind of money." Then you go out to see who can provide your device.

This is an example of less effective communication. In line 32, speaker F is hesitating over the lexical item "period"(shown by his repetition of "several" before he utters it). This seems to cue speaker E, with his assent signal, to provide the recast "items", which is not taken up by speaker F and is possibly not a reflection of his meaning. As the conversation goes on, it is apparent that Speaker F is not giving Speaker E the answers he eliciting for. In example (3) Speaker E repeats in Chinese what he has already said in English.

"I mean what is your prevailing term of payment?" (Line 37)

Code switching by Speaker E indicates that he wants F to answer the question more directly. In line 38 Speaker F gives a more direct answer after hearing both Chinese and English. This code switching would appear to have helped rather than hindered communication because Speaker F states in line 38 'That's not my business'. That is, he appears to have understood the question and responded to it, but he has not allowed the switch into Chinese to be maintained.

Jiao Tong University

The EC at the Jiao Tong University campus is organised by an ENS who is a teacher employed by a self-help education College connected to the University. It is part of his duty to run the EC every week and to encourage the students to speak oral English. Each week he selects a topic likely to make the students think about issues and motivate discussions.

In this group discussion the Chinese learners were university students looking for a topic that was interesting and best suited them. These participants had already been at the EC for about an hour before recording this conversation.

Example (4) from Appendix F

> 3. *A: You should find topic*
>
> 4. *B: WTO*
>
> 5. *A: No, No, No*
>
> 6. *C: That's a big topic*
>
> 7. *A: We have already talked, okay go on. You can talk about something of your interesting stories.*
>
> 8. *C: Maybe, how do you celebrate Christmas.*
>
> 9. *B: Yeah, that's a good.*
>
> 10. *A: Celebrate Christmas.*
>
> 11. *B: Lady first.*
>
> 12. *C: No, gentleman first.*
>
> 13. *A: Lady first of course.*
>
> 14. *A: I don't think Christmas is very important.*
>
> 15. *B: This is just a free talk*

16. (Pause)

17. B: Okay I talk about something about my work experience. Because my university is Beijing University of Aeronautics, After graduate I worked in Chengdu area I like airport very much since I'm a child.

In example (4) line 3 Speaker A starts the conversation with ' you should find a topic'. This group had just come together by self selection and were looking for a topic to talk on. Being self-motivated learners they try to find a suitable topic. Speaker C indicates that WTO (World Trade Organisation) is a 'big topic' (line 6). Speaker A (line 7) indicates that they have already spoken about this topic. WTO was a hot topic at ECs while I was in Shanghai conducting this research and it has probably been discussed in depth many times. It is worth noting that Speaker A's rejection of the topic is unmitigated ("No, no, no"), which might not be acceptable in an ENS conversation, at least in some contexts. The ENS pragmatic rules are either not known or suspended in the context of this EC interaction.

The learners generally initiate topics by themselves but this example (4) shows the problem of exhaustion of topics at this EC. In this short dialogue the group starts with the topic WTO, moves to introducing the topics about Christmas and then eventually Speaker B talks about his work experience in aeronautics (turn 17). This topic creates much interest among the learners as they ask qu 'tions and make comments, and all participants contribute to the discussion. (See appendix F).

In Example (5) the group moves into talking about Christmas Day activities and religion in general. The turns are generally short although one or two people who are more fluent take longer turns, for example Speaker B (lines 40,42 and 44).

In line 11 speaker B offers the turn to another speaker 'Lady First'. Speaker C refuses speaker B's idea by replying 'No, gentlemen first'. This is being done in a kind of mock politeness. The male speaker may be using the strategy because he does not have anything appropriate to say or because he can not express what he wants to say.

Example (5) from Appendix F

39. A: How will you spend your Christmas Day?

40. B: I think Christmas is an excuse for relax yes um, we are going to dancing to celebrate Christmas.

41. C: Just for dancing. No other activity?

42. B: I think the party will a lot of activity and you can dancing and do other games in the party.

43. A: So you will go with you class mates?

44. B: Yes Yes and do you think I would go out with my family?

45. C: Sometimes it's Okay.

46. A: Will you go to a church?

47. B: Church, oh maybe I

48. C: I think

49. A: Its very romantic

50. B: Yes, but

51. C: I think Chinese are very traditional.

This conversation took place at Christmas time and Shanghai, like any modern city, exploits any opportunity to sell goods. Christmas decorations, lights, nativity scenes and music all around the city have caught the imagination of the Chinese for whom there is no Christmas tradition. Christmas was a hot topic, generating a lot of interest and discussion.

This points to the increased freedom of speech, especially on religion, in Shanghai compared with twenty years ago. Chinese people who want to speak English also find the EC enclaves a place to express themselves freely and speak about any topic.

In example (5) the conversation starts with Christmas day and progresses into talking about the Church. Students ask each other questions about the festive activities and how they might celebrate their Christmas. The topics are not well developed and they do not seem to have the language skills to express themselves clearly. Within these enclaves where free speech is observed we see that the learners can not create extended text. In example (5) it is hard to see coherence in the conversation. The fact that these university students are finding it hard to express themselves accurately and

fluently about one topic shows a certain deficiency in their communication skills and their ability to acquire a second language.

In lines 46 and 47 a confirmation check is used for understanding of speaker's preceding utterances. In this conversation there is evidence of negotiation of meaning.

In lines 46 to 48 overlapping takes place as speakers interrupt each other to express themselves. People are trying to express their opinions and before it is their turn. The rules of turn taking are relaxed here but the some topic of conversation continues.

Jing An Park

Chinese learners recorded at Jing An Park were two middle school students and a young adult who was at university studying for his Master's Degree. Speaker N had the longest turns and was a fluent speaker. Generally he dominated the conversation. Speaker O was about the same age but her level of English was much lower. Speaker M, the University student, had better oral English than the two teenagers. He was happy to listen and help the young learners with their oral English, as this conversation shows by providing vocabulary and paraphrases. (See example (6)).

Example (6) from Appendix E

3. O: Is your English mark good?

4. N: No

5. O: Why?

6. N: Because I only can speak English and I know, I can write, but I only know, the words not very useful, but they are useful in---

7. M: Spoken English? .

N: Yes.

9. M: The grammar is not very good.

10. N: Yes. And a lot of, I know the words a lot of is useful in American, in European, but not useful in, in our country. So when I write it, our teacher

don't know what did it mean sometimes.

Teenage interests dominated the conversation topics, which changed frequently. Appendix E shows that the topics of discussion included how to learn English, travel, homework, holidays, computer games, homework and Chinese teachers. The two most frequent topics were 'homework' and 'travel' It was the end of term with examinations and also the learners were thinking about their Chinese New Year.

Speaker N's overuse of vocabulary in example (6) 'know' 'useful' 'lot' 'but' indicates that he has a limited vocabulary. The EC is providing him with an environment in which to practise his English and, potentially to increase his vocabulary since, as we see in Speaker M's latched completion in line 7, the environment is conducive to speakers helping one another.

In example (6) the Chinese learners are conversing in English at a level that enables all participants to be fully involved. The learners confirm their answers by saying 'yes' or 'no' in lines 4,8 and 10. They receive help from Speaker M whose English is fluent and quite accurate (Lines 7 and 9). This is an example of generational support. It was observed several times that the more fluent and accurate speakers often correct and help the learners with poorer oral language skills.

Example (7) from Appendix E

> *23. O: Which game do you like to play?*
> *24. (Pause)*
> *25. N: Red Record 2.*
> *26. M: Red Alert, Hong (Red Alert, the name of a game) right?*
> *27. N: Yes. But sometimes it's very slow, but it's exciting.*
> *28. N: I don't like play it, because I always Shu ze shuo (How to say lose in English29. N Lost*
> *30. M: Lose, lose.*
> *31. N: lose, lose.*
> *32. M: Lose the game.*
> *33. O: I always lose the game.*

Speaker O asks for help in example (7) line 28 by saying in Chinese 'how to say lose in English'. The learner was code switching for the purpose of seeking help. Speaker N answers first in line 29 with 'lost'. Speaker M corrects Speaker N's translation of the Chinese in line 30 with 'lose'. In Line 33 speaker O then completes the sentence accurately. 'I always lose the game'. This demonstrates that speaker O has benefited from this experience. This is an achievement strategy, which suggests that the speaker is not ashamed of showing what she does not know. In this conversation the fluent Speaker M helps the younger two learners. It appears that there is a willingness on the part of the older and more fluent speaker to help the two teenagers with their English

Speaker M code switches in line 26 to make sure that he and all interlocutors understand that 'Red Alert' is a computer game. In line 27 Speaker N confirms Speaker M's reply by saying 'yes'. In section (7) the learners prefer to understand every word and know the full meaning before moving on. In this environment the learners have the time to learn at their own pace and cooperate as a group which enables continued interaction in English.

Cooperation between the group members enables continued interaction and negotiation. Although the errors were frequent in the conversation (see appendix E) the learners were able to communicate in English and understand each other with the help of Speaker M who had a good metalinguistic knowledge of the English language.

Shanghai Teachers University

This conversation involved four university students and focused on topics relating to English over a thirty-minute period. The topics included in this discussion were as follows: education, best ways to learn English at ECs, foreign teachers, pronunciation, vocabulary and ECs. ECs were mentioned several times throughout the discussion, which indicates that they view the EC environment as significant

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enough to figure as a conversation topic. These participants are eager to practise English in an authentic environment as they are majoring in English at this university.

Example (8) from Appendix H

5. I: What's your major?

6. K: English. Major? Yeah.

7. J: You too self-taught. Self-taught course?

8. I: Self-education. I think self-education.

9. K: Education

10. I: Self-education.

11. K: Self-education? I don't know. I ask the teacher, but he didn't tell me.

12. (Laughing)

13. K: And in our class also have an EC and we want to speak English, but we couldn't to express our thinking.

14. J: Why?

15. K: I don't know. A lot of, a lot of my classmates they like to talk in English, but they think, they couldn't talk, talk out.

16. J: Oh, Yeah. They just can't get it out, just something. Just on the top of their tongue.

17. K: Maybe they have some shy, feel shy.

18. J: Yeah.

19. K: No, I am also shy.

20. J: The more you speak, the more the better

These university students are talking about issues that are affecting them. Talking about education and the problems they are having with speaking English.

Self-education is mainly for adults (Adult Education) who attend a college or university for their own interest and pay for this service. Self-education is discussed in example (8) several times. Speaker K states that she has asked the Chinese English teacher a question but he did not know the answer.

"I ask the teacher, but he did not tell me." (Line 11)

The lack of knowledge is evident in this case, as the Chinese teacher cannot help the Chinese learner. At the EC Speaker B is able to talk about this issue and hopefully find the answer she is seeking.

Speaker B talks about an EC at her school in which many of the Chinese learners could not speak English very well.

" A lot of, a lot of my classmates , they like to talk in English , but they think, they could not talk, talk out." (Line 15)

In this artificial environment the Chinese learners talk only with students from the same English language class. This situation can be contrasted with that of more authentic language learning communities like the ECs in parks and universities where people are from different demographic backgrounds and visiting ENS also attend.

Speaker B says. "It might be on the top of their tongue" (Line 16).

He is probably referring to Chinese learners of a second language having the ability to speak English but lacking the environment in which to develop their fluency.

Speaker J does give advice to the speaker K on how to improve her spoken English. "The more you speak, the more the better" (20)

Recasting occurs in lines 5 and 6 as the speakers try to correct their incorrect spoken structure but retain the main meaning of the utterance.

Example (9) from Appendix H

35. K: I think foreigner teachers, their pronunciation is very good. P-u-r-e(
spelling a word) How to

36. I: Pronunciation.

37. K: Yeah. P-u-r-e.

38. I: Pure.

39. K: P-u-r-e, pure, yeah.

40. K: What's the meaning?

41. J: What do you mean?

42. K: Fei Chang Chu Zheng (very pure) Because he is a foreigner.

43. I: Foreigner. Native speaker, we are foreigner.

44. (Everyone Laughing)

45. J: But sometimes Australia, Australia accent, American accent, English
accent is different.

46. K: Yeah.

47. J: So maybe you wanna to study American English. So maybe you talk more
with the Americans.

In example (9) Speaker B spells the word pure, as she cannot pronounce it. Speaker A says the word then asks: "What's the meaning?" Speaker J asks: "What do you mean?" The students were able and willing to help each other with pronunciation of the word 'pure' and to discuss its meaning. Throughout the conversation negotiation is taking place with the purpose of making the dialogue comprehensible all interlocutors. Cooperation is evident throughout this conversation with the three Chinese learners helping each other to negotiate meaning. In lines 40 and 41 the Chinese learners are asking each other questions to clarify information about the word 'pure'.

In example (9) Speaker I code-switches to make the meaning clear to the other listeners. Where she is unable to express herself in English, she switches to Chinese to compensate for this deficiency. This code switching benefits communication between the learners by clarifying the pronunciation and vocabulary of one word. Speaker J in example (9) gives advice by saying:

" So maybe you wanna to study American English. So maybe you talk more with the Americans" (line 47)

This speaker is willing to give some suggestions on how to improve oral English skills. In example (9) it exhibits characteristics of participants helping each other and specially in the area of advice and information about the form of the English Language. Speaker K wants to know how to pronounce 'pure' so the other Chinese participants help.

Also in this example (9) speaker I uses the word 'yeah' several times for supporting conversations. She is giving feedback on the topic spoken which indicates that she is engaged in the dialogue even though she her utterances are short.

English Native Speakers to Non Native Speakers

This conversation was recorded at People's Park between two ENS and about 15 Chinese learners. It resembled a press conference in which the Chinese learners fired numerous questions at the ENS.

Example (10) from Appendix I

> *13. Q. Merry Christmas*
>
> *14. ENS. Merry Christmas*
>
> *15. Q. Are you a Christian?*
>
> *16. ENS. Yes*
>
> *17. Q. Is she your daughter?*
>
> *18. ENS. Yes she is my daughter*
>
> *19. R. How many children in your family?*
>
> *20. ENS. One daughter. One child policy*
>
> *21. R. Think your wife is Chinese. Joking, joking. Would your congress pass this kind of policy? One child policy?*
>
> *22. ENS. Never*
>
> *23. S. Where are you from?*
>
> *24. ENS. I'm from San Diego, San Diego?*
>
> *25. S. Say something about San Deigo*
>
> *26. ENS. It's real pretty down there. But I live in Shanghai now*

27. S. How many years in Shanghai?

28. ENS. One year now. My mother and brother are down there.

The Chinese participants started to interact with the ENS once they entered the EC environment. As the two American ENSs approached the EC about 15 Chinese learners from all ages descended upon the man and his young daughter. The questions came quick and fast and small talk was maintained with short answers and a large amount of information was exchanged.

In example 10 there are 5 topics discussed in 16 lines of conversation. This also shows that the local Chinese are very interested in finding information about other cultures and how foreigners think.

"Would your congress pass this kind of policy? One child policy? (Line 20)

Speaker Q asks for some information about San Diego in line 25. Speaker Q (line 15) was interested in knowing if the ENS was a Christian. We do not know what prompted this question but maybe it was the Christmas season and people were interested in talking about Christian customs and traditions.

It was been recorded several times in my research that Christianity was a topic of discussion at most ECs in Shanghai at this time of the year. In Shanghai it appears that the authorities now tolerate people talking about religion, as people seem to feel free to express themselves about religious issues and ask questions about them.

It must be concluded that no in depth conversation about one topic was discussed and that the spoken sentences were short. A good deal of information was exchanged and it gave the locals an opportunity to converse with a foreigner.

Example (11) from Appendix I

40. ENS. What do you do?

41. Y. I'm a student

42. ͞ ͺ. Are you at University?

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43. Y. Yes, A freshman

44. ENS. This is a very good time of the year. Are you on holidays or not?

45. Y. No holidays

46. ENS. No holidays

47. Y. Just weekends

48. ENS. No Christmas holidays. New Year's Holidays

49. Y. Yeah only three days

In this short dialogue the ENS is initiating the questions and is trying to elicit information from the Chinese learner. In Line 40 Speaker ENS asks what Speaker Y does. This generates a conversation about universities and holidays. This exchange of information enables the native speaker to learn more about Chinese holidays. Native English speakers and the local Chinese learners both seek information from each other and the EC communities provide a place for these people to exchange inter-cultural information.

Thought out this conversation the Chinese participate is actively engaged in the dialogue. Speaker Y is able to maintain a good and coherent conversation with the ENS.

Summary

The interaction that took place in these four corners between participants demonstrated the advantages and disadvantages of the EC communities in relationship to EFL. These features will now be summarized.

Exchange of information was evident in all conversations from examples1 to 11. Examples 1,2,10 and 11, participants showed a strong motivation to communicate because of the desire to obtain information relevant to international exchange. In

examples 10 and 11 there was a strong interest by the Chinese learners to take advantage of ENS at the ECs by exploring the Western culture and its customs for example Christmas, Christianity and the city of San Diego. Also the ENSs were seeking information about Chinese customs while they were at the EC. When the ENS were present at the EC some conversations would engage in the exchange of Western and Eastern cultural differences.

A good deal of peer learning took place and speakers with a greater competence of English in some cases took the responsibility to help those of lesser competence in examples 6, 7, 8 and 9. It was common to find a person with good English language skills helping other learners with their oral English. Some of the better speakers saw themselves as mentors by giving advice or helping where it was needed.

Cooperation between the learners themselves within the EC communities helped enhance the learners' ability to acquire EFL. The fact that the participants were willing to help each other and give advice shows a clear indication of collaboration between members. This is in contrast with the competitive environment of some classrooms.

Negotiation of meaning is frequently used throughout the interactions in examples 1 to 11. Chinese learners negotiate with each other the meaning of words or phrases either by code switching, rephrasing parts of speech, or asking metalinguistics questions. These EC settings allowed negotiation of meaning to take place and was used for the ongoing development of learning a Second Language.

These settings allowed code switching to take place, which enabled meanings to be clarified where necessary. The speakers only switched momentarily into Chinese. Learners at times switched codes while interacting usually because they did not know a particular word in English. This gave them the ability to communicate their meaning. At other times learners code-switched for the purpose of clarification. They would say something in English then repeat it in Chinese because some Chinese learners' listening and speaking skills were known to be poor.

The learners themselves initiated the topics in all examples 1 to 11

In examples 4,5,10 and 11 the topic of Christmas was discussed in some detail because it was the month of December. We see in examples 10 and 11 that the Chinese learners are very interested in asking the foreigner questions about Christmas.

The setting itself stimulated communication (see appendices E and H). The EC itself was a newsworthy topic probably because of its popularity amongst the Chinese learners and also because it is a place to find out information about other ECs.

In Examples 6, 7, 8 and 9 the learner takes the opportunity to focus on form and they repeat utterances until they get them right. The Chinese learner is still influenced by the grammar method of teaching. The learners were still interested in the forms of language and generally would not move on until they solved their linguistic problem.

The Chinese learners had a tendency towards superficial skimming over topics because of their lack of linguistic competence to develop ideas at any depth. (see Examples E,F and H) They often had a lack of consistent conversational partners. This meant that same topics were re-cycled. Some subjects were often discussed many times so learners were struggling to find new and exciting topics. This could lead to members becoming bored and wanting to move onto other groups.

There was a good deal of laughter (see Example 8, 9 and 11) suggesting that participants were enjoying themselves. This indicated that English learning within the EC settings was not a chore but an enjoyable experience. The learners were able to establish negotiation of meaning in a relaxed atmosphere. This was a common observation of mine while visiting all EC's in Shanghai.

The pragmatic features of ENS interaction may not be acquired at the EC. The absence of a teacher could be a disadvantage to the Chinese learners who want to acquire English competency. Some language problems that the local Chinese are having cannot be revolved without a Chinese English teacher, English native teacher or English native speaker. The problem of having a good role model of Standard English is compounded by the fact that ENSs are generally infrequent participants at

EC communities. This is contrast with ECs where English native teachers are frequent attendees because of their job description or contract commitments.

The miscommunication that took place in Example 1,2,3 and 4 shows that the Chinese learners who acquire a second language require good language skills for successful communication to be effective. There seems to be a lack of language skills in the area of vocabulary (see Example 7 and 8). It might be 'on the top of their tongue' as one informant suggested. This demonstrates that some learners just cannot express themselves. These limitations within the EC community have negative implications on some members who are acquiring EFL competency.

In examples 1,2,5 and 9 in this chapter turning taking was interrupted with overlapping, back channelling and feedback. Generally the speakers were supportive when interrupting conversations and this did not damage the coherence of conversation. These interact ional modifications often occurred at the EC. When a communication problem arose the participates seem eager to engage in the interact ional work to overcome their communication problems.

In conclusion, EC communities can be seen as places for promoting EFL and on the other hand we must be objective and understand their limitations. The authentic EC with good role models of Standard English will promote EFL in Shanghai.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

General review of English corners in Shanghai

The ethnographic description of ECs in Shanghai had three purposes: to find out what motivates Chinese learners to attend the corners, to find out how those who attend ECs perceive them and finally to find out what influence ECs had on EFL learning in Shanghai.

English corners in Shanghai are informal places for learners to practise their oral English speaking skills in their spare time and to socialize by meeting new and old friends and exchanging information. These corners are open to the whole community and can be found in different locations around Shanghai on weekdays and weekends

There are several important reasons why Chinese need to speak English in Shanghai today. First, English is one of the four essential subjects in the University Entrance Examination. Second, most people regard a good command of English as a passport to a successful life and career. Third, English is a global language and plays a dominant role in business and on the Internet. Since English is such an important communication tool in Shanghai and China today, we need to understand the reasons why the EC phenomenon is so popular and how it influences EFL learning.

This research on ECs in Shanghai, which is on a limited scale, cannot be used to give sweeping generalizations about ECs in China. However, some interesting results have emerged from the data in relation to the linguistic and non-linguistic benefits and limitations from the ECs in relation to the EFL.

People's Park was the first EC to become popular after the death of Mao Ze Dong in 1976 and the fall of the 'Gang of Four'. I discovered during my research that small groups of old men would meet in People's Park to speak English in the early to mid 1970s as a recreational activity and to practise their oral English.

As the Cultural Revolution lost its dominance and diplomatic ties with many English speaking and Western countries returned so did the motivation to speak English once again. After the open door policy in 1978 an increasing number of Chinese were instrumentally motivated to learn English. Today English is officially the second

language in China and the Chinese English learners are eager to learn English at the EC.

ECs are seen as authentic environments for Chinese learners to practise and improve their oral English because people from all social groups attend these settings. Also ENSs attend some ECs, which gave the corners even more authenticity. English is not widely spoken in Shanghai but many wish to be fluent and accurate speakers of English, and they see attending the EC communities as a means of achieving this aim.

The non-linguistic benefits of the ECs in Shanghai highlight the importance Chinese learners place on these communities which are to meet old friends and make new ones. In Chinese culture people often socialize outside their homes and in parks, so the EC has a dual function for many local Chinese English Learners. They have the opportunity to socialize and make friendships at the EC while at the same time practise their English.

The exchange of information was an important feature of the EC for all participants, especially between the Chinese and ENSs. English medium was used at the EC to communication inter-cultural differences between Chinese learners and the ENSs. Participants were happy to exchange knowledge about any topic or give advice.

How English corners are perceived by those who attend them.

One of the major reasons why people attend the EC is to practise their oral English and thus improve their speaking skills. The present study shows that Chinese learners who attend the EC in Shanghai come voluntarily, and that they view the ECs as significantly enhancing their oral English, enabling them to speak more fluently, express their ideas in English with greater facility, increase their English vocabulary and generally develop their confidence in their ability to communicate in the English language. The insatiable urge to speak oral English is noticeable in all age groups that attend ECs. This is demonstrated by their desire to spend time at the EC and their willingness to participate in EC activities.

Chinese English teachers see the EC as an extension of the classroom and encourage their students to attend. With class sizes of around 40 students and limited numbers of English classes, Chinese teachers agree that the ECs play an important role in the ongoing development of oral English in Shanghai.

The ENS that volunteer to attend these settings see the EC as places where they can encourage and help the local Chinese with their oral English skills and learn something about the Chinese culture and make friendships. Many that do attend are attending because it is part of their work agreement or contract. Others only attend to promote the organization for which they are working.

English corner contributions to EFL learning

Conversational analysis of the interactions that took place as a part of this study within the EC showed that topics were discussed relating to the learners' needs and cultural setting and the functions performed were mainly expressing advice, making requests and showing agreement. Also the learners had the opportunity to manage turn taking which sometimes involved overlapping, back channelling, insertion sequences and giving feedback. Interruptions to turns quite often took place but were generally supportive and did not damage the coherence of the dialogues. It was apparent that the atmosphere of the EC was conducive to uninhibited interaction, involving, where necessary, clarification requests, code switching and the use of achievement strategies to aid learning.

ECs have the advantage and attraction that they are not compulsory, which is in contrast with English lessons at schools in Shanghai. Most Chinese English teachers still use the grammar-translation method, which is very teacher-directed. This contrasts with the informal environment of the EC where the learners have few or no time constraints and the freedom to speak any time about any topic. They are not told by teachers when to start and stop their conversation. They are also free to come and go and in and out of groups at any time while the EC is operating. Those who attend ECs have taken responsibility for their own learning, except in the case of children who on most occasions are obliged by their parents to attend.

At many corners there was a good deal of peer learning taking place.

 This cooperation and collaboration between EC members encouraged negotiation of meaning which appears to have helped learners of a second language at the ECs. The focus on form was a topic of discussion at the ECs. Some Chinese learners were still interested in solving linguistic problems and they saw the EC as one place to discuss these issues throughout the examples in Chapter 6 the Chinese learners would often superficially skim over topics and not develop in depth conversations because many learners lacked linguistic competency.

People appear to listen actively, even when not speaking. This was a recurring practice throughout the EC. The learners had no compulsion to speak, so learners felt free to just listen to others who were more fluent and accurate. Reiss (1985) reported that many successful classroom listeners were 'silent speakers' even when not speaking.

It was apparent that group speakers or leaders would often switch to Chinese if they wanted to make sure everyone understood the conversation. Those participants who code switched would have benefited in their language development because the more fluent and accurate speakers would help them or give advice in their mother tongue. It was observed that code switching in the EC context generally took place in groups where oral language skills were poor and was used for negotiation of meaning and achieving communication goals.

The desire of Chinese learners to see more ENSs at the EC is one issue that is central to their EFL learning. The ENS is seen as the one person that can help them improve their English in a variety of ways such as modelling Standard English pronunciation, correcting grammar mistakes and vocabulary, and generally giving learners opportunities for talking. Once ENSs enter the EC environment Chinese learners surround them and question them intensely on cultural, personal, economic, political and many other issues. Chinese learners are confident that the ENSs will bring a high standard of English to the corner, and that this will help them speak better English.

In the EFL context participants at EC communities in Shanghai come together to communicate in English and to seek competent speakers with whom to practise their

oral English. Since Chinese educational institutions provide limited opportunities for practising oral English, Chinese learners who are motivated to learn English seriously have been forced to find alternative ways to achieve this end. The local Chinese seek out the EC communities, regardless of the benefits and limitations of these settings as a means of practising oral English.

Implications

In the longer term, Shanghai and China generally will have to raise the standard of English teaching, improve educational materials and provide more opportunities and support for language training. The need for China to have quality education in English language has never been more important as the country seeks to become a major player in world markets (Cortazzi and Jin 1999).

The social and economic changes in Shanghai will influence the students' need to learn English. Shanghai is China's main commercial centre and its international status is creating a great demand for English especially since China has become a member of the WTO (Raymond 2001). Instrumental motivation for learning oral English is growing rapidly, and this is causing Chinese English learners to seek ECs and the benefits which they offer.

Having intensive immersion experiences and personal communication in English with close friends, EC community members and ENSs at the EC can be seen as a beneficial and proactive strategy for language development in an EFL setting. Chinese learners need to attend busy, stimulating, organised and interactive ECs to make real progress in their English language. These ECs will also need to be authentic and communicative if the learner is to gain any language benefits (Kerr 2002).

The Education Department of Hong Kong has taken the initiative to have the British Council produce an EC kit for Native English Teachers to use when facilitating English Corners in supporting the English teaching in Hong Kong Secondary Schools. This package contains approximately 120 hours of language games and activities produced on hardware and it is backed up with a floppy disc. It includes communication games, a teachers' resource book, a grammar and vocabulary pack, a

drama pack, a Hong Kong pack and CD-ROMs. This EC kit is significant in terms of EFL as it promotes the idea of making the corners more exciting, challenging, stimulating and places the major emphasis on oral English (English Corner Kit 2000).

ECs in Shanghai could look at the EC package initiative from Hong Kong and adapt these ideas into ECs where suitable, especially in middle and senior schools. Educators in China see EC communities as an extra-curricular activity supporting English language taught in educational institutes. With many Chinese teachers still favouring the grammar-translation method of teaching, it could take some time to introduce communicative activities to ECs. This is a real challenge for these special language communities.

Native English teachers and Chinese English teachers could use the EC kit to enhance the oral speaking skills of the Chinese English learners if they lack experience or skills in EFL teaching. Teachers and ENS who lack ideas or confidence in facilitating oral English could find the EC package a most useful resource. Unfortunately at the moment it is not for sale.

Many Chinese English speakers' desire is to live in an authentic environment or community where English is spoken. ECs with good role models of Standard English are needed to provide such authentic communities. Also meeting ENSs in China and befriending them is a practical way for the Chinese to practise their English in an authentic way. In Shanghai where authentic English speaking communities are difficult to find, the local Chinese are seeking out EC communities to fill this void.

Chinese learners inside the EC communities can cooperate and collaborate with each other for the common goal of developing oral language skills. Together they can achieve this by communicating in English and encouraging each other. This is in contrast with the competitive nature of the classrooms and old teaching practises. EC communities give participants the freedom to learn from one another without the pressure of educational institutions and high tuition fees.

The function of Chinese and native English teachers or leaders at the EC is to be an independent participant with the objective of facilitating and organizing communicative activities which engage the learners to speak English. These people with Standard English can offer many benefits to the learners of EC communities.

Rao (1999) expresses the view that the Chinese learners in an EFL setting need much practice to acquire the language. Consequently, learners attending ECs need to be prepared to talk and make mistakes if they are serious about learning English.

ECs will be an important feature of EFL in Shanghai for years to come. Shanghai being a modern and progressive society could look to ECs as being an alternative way to learning English in the future. In time of rapid and social development in Shanghai and China this may cause the Chinese learners to change their way of learning. The culture of learning will probably change in response to social and educational changes.

As the Shanghai community advances into the 21st century the ECs might take on new roles and forms as the 'English craze' continues to grow. Students, educators and researchers will watch the future developments of the ECs and its influence on EFL with much interest.

Finally, Rose (1999) believes the biggest hurdle to developing pragmatic competence in EFL settings is that learners have little or no opportunity to converse or interact with an ENS. Having few or no ENSs at an EC in Shanghai could pose a real problem within these communities for the language development of the Chinese learners.

Suggestions for Future Research

This present study is a first step towards describing and giving an account of ECs in Shanghai. ECs in Shanghai are mushrooming everywhere as the hunger for learning English and specifically oral English continues to grow. Despite the popularity of ECs, the extent to which their contribution to learning is integrated with formal learning is patchy.

The level of individual learners' language competence at the ECs within the EFL context could be examined in a controlled way over a set length of time and compared with that of comparable learners not participating in ECs.

More research needs to be carried out and hopefully this present study can be a starting point for such research in ECs in Shanghai and throughout Asia.

Limitations.

This study, like all ethnographic research, extends the knowledge of the community studied but we cannot extrapolate from it to make definitive statements about English corners in general either in China or elsewhere. It is also limited by the choice of English corners studied, which meant the public and university based English corners were focused on, rather than the many other kinds which are known to exist.

What has been presented here is an ethnographic foundation for further investigation of the English Corner and its possible advantages and limitations as a resource for the English learner in an EFL context.

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Appendix A   (Pilot Study July 2001)

Interview with the Chinese Participants at the E.Cs

1) What is your name?
2) Why do you come to this E.C?
3) How do you think the E.C is different from the formal classroom?
4) How would you run the E.C if you were the Leader?
5) What other places do you speak English?
6) What have you learnt from the E.C?
7) When you speak English at this E.C do you feel at ease or uneasy? Why?
8) Do you come here to make friendships?
9) Do you prefer to talk to more fluent speakers?
10) What do you think is the best way of learning English?
11) Would you change your learning style if you were studying abroad?
12) How can native speakers help you speak better English at the E.C?
13) What do you think about the standard of English spoken at this E.C?
14) What help would you recommend for learners who speak 'Chinlish'?
15) What is the best time you've had at EC?
16) Why was it so?

Questionnaire

You can circle more than one answer

Name_____ Name of English
Corner_____
Age _____ Single or Married _____ Sex _____ Occupation
_____

Education Background: Primary, middle or senior school, college, university
Name of present college or university
_____
What city are you from? _____ What Province are you from?

_____

How long have you lived in Shanghai?

_____

1) What is your main purpose in attending the E.C ?
 a) Meeting a foreign friend   b) Meeting a Chinese friend
 c) Practise your oral English   d) Find information about Western culture
 e) Speak to more advanced learners   f) someone to correct your speaking errors
 Other _____

2 How did you first get to know about the E.C in Shanghai?
 a) advert in newspaper b) friends c) family d) posters at universities
 e) Other _____

3) E. C. are free. Is this one reason you come here to learn English? Yes or No

4) Which foreigner would you prefer to listen and talk to at the E.C.?
 a) Any native English speaker b) America c) Australian d) British
 e) European f) other _____

5) How often do you attend this E.C ?
 a) weekly b) every two weeks c) monthly   d) every three months
 e) other _____

6) How old were you when you first attended the E.C ?
 a) primary b) middle c) college or university d) after formal education

7) How long do you usually stay at the E.C?
 a) less than 1 hour   b) 1-2 hours   c) more than 2 hours

8) How long have you been coming to this E.C
 a) first time   b) 1- 6 month   c) 6- 12 month   d) more than 12 month

9) Do you attend other E.C in Shanghai?
   a) Peoples Park b) Jing an Park c) Hong Kou d) Universities e) other_____

10) Was it by your own motivation that you first attended the E.C? Yes or No
    If no, who encouraged you? _____

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11) Was it by your own motivation that you attended this E.C today? Yes Or No

12) How do you come to the E.C?
    a) us   b) subway   c) bike   d) walking   e) taxi

13) What topics do you like to talk about at the E.C?

   _____

14) Why do you like foreigners coming to the E.C?

   _____
    a) learn more about Western culture   b) make a friend
    c) help with your English   d) other _____

15) How long have you learnt English?
    a) less than 5years   b) 5 - 10   c) more than 10

16) How old were you when you first started learning English?

   _____

17) Why do you like to learn oral English ?
    a) job   b) travel   c) meet a foreign friend   d) going abroad
    e) other_____

18) Are you learning English somewhere else?
    a) self study   b) weekend classes   c) evening classes
    d) other _____

19) What do you think is the best way to learn oral English?
    a) listen to T.V radio tapes videos   b) English classes   c) E.C
    d) speak to foreigners   e) enlarge vocabulary   f) other _____

20) What other places do you use oral English?
    a) social places   b) companies   c) other _____

21) What English level are you now?
    a) Band 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8   b) TOEFL   c) GRE   d) IELTS
    e) Other _____

22) Today, what is the most important thing in learning English at schools and
    universities? a) grammar b) spoken English c) reading d) writing

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Appendix C

Interview with the Chinese Participants at the ECs

1) What is your name?

2) Why do you come to this E.C?

3) How do you think the E.C is different from the formal classroom?

4) How would you run the E.C if you were the leader?

5) What other places do you speak English?

6) What have you learnt from the E.C?

7) When you speak English at this E.C do you feel at ease or uneasy? Why?

8) Do you come here to make friendships?

9) Do you prefer to talk to more fluent speakers?

10) What do you think is the best way of learning English?

11) Would you change your learning style if you were studying abroad?

12) How can native speakers help you speak better English at the E.C?

13) What do you think about the standard of English spoken at this E.C?

14) What help would you recommend for learners who speak 'Chinlish'?

15) Why when speaking 'Chinlish' is it seen to be in need of help?

16) What is your best experience at this or any E.C?

17) Will you go to other E.Cs this week? If yes, which ones?

18) At the E.C do you think in English or Chinese? Why? If yes, how long have you thought in English?

Appendix D

D:1 Interview with Chinese Teachers

The interviews planned in this research should draw out the perceptions the teachers gave relating to E.C in Shanghai.

1) Do you go to the E.C? How often? When was the last time you attended the E.C?
2) Do you encourage your students to attend the E.C? Why?
3) Do you go with them?
4) How can E.C influence students learning?
5) Do you see the E.C as an extension to formal English classes?

D:2 Interview with native speakers

The interviews planed in this research should draw out the reasons why foreigners attend the E.C in Shanghai.

1) How long have you been in China?
2) Are you an expatriate or visitor? Who told you about the E.C?
3) What is you main purpose in attending this E.C?
4) Are you here to share a special message or topics with these Chinese Learners?
5) How often do you visit E.C in Shanghai or China? Would you come again?

1. **Appendix E**

2. NNS to NNS at Jing'An Park (two teenagers and one adult)

3. O. Is your English mark good?
4. N. No
5. O: Why?
6. N: Because I only can speak English and I know, I can write, but I only know, the words not very useful, but they are useful in---
7. M: Spoken English?
8. N: Yes.
9. M: The grammar is not very good.
10. N: Yes. And a lot of, I know the words a lot of is useful in American, in European, but not useful in, in our country. So when I write it, our teacher don't know what did it mean sometimes.
11. "Pause"
12. N: And do you like travel?
13. O: Travel?
14. N: Yeah.
15. O: Yeah, I do. I go to, at last summer holidays, I go to WuHan, JiuJiang.
16. N: Nice place.
17. O: LuShan.
18. N: Too many. I only have go the, a little place to see some fountain, some big lakes. And I think that's enough because I have a lot of homework to do. And I think I must to find where I should go the beautiful place, and then choose the beautiful place go with my father.
19. O: My classmates always do their summer holiday's homework in, in last day.
20. N: Oh!
21. O: They, and during the holidays they are going to swimming and so on. What about you?
22. N: I in last summer holiday I have play computer games about "pause" four days, for 10, four times, 24 hours. And then I have a swimming about three times a week. And I do my homework everyday. Without the days I go to travel.
23. O: Which game do you like to play?
24. "Pause"
25. N: Red Record 2.
26. M: Red Alert,*Hong* (Red Alert, the name of a game) right?
27. N: Yes. But sometimes it's very slow, but it's exciting.
28. O: I don't like play it, because I always *Shu ze me shuo*☐(How to say lose in English?)
29. N. Lost
30. M: Loss, loss.
31. N: loss, loss.
32. M: Lose the game.
33. O: I always lose the game.
34. N: Yes, game over. I like, I don't like play, sometimes like play it because that's, it's very exciting and all of the boys talk it or the Pocket Monster in

our classroom. So if I don't play it, I don't know what should I talk with them.

35. "Pause"
36. O: Teacher is kind.?
37. N: Yes.
38. O: But my teacher isn't kind. He always---
39. N: Tell you to do much homework?
40. O: No, no, no. My math teacher always tell me, tell us do much homework. My class teacher is very very very very----
41. M: Serious?
42. O: *Xiong* (fierce)
43. "Pause"
44. O: Always---*Ma ze me shuo*(How to say curse in English?)
45. "Pause"
46. M: Curse or say some bad words.
47. O: Yeah, say some bad words, yeah. And always "pause" beat
48. M: Beat?
49. O: No, no, *Jiu er duo*(Pull the ears.)
50. "Pause"
51. O: She's eye is big, like a---
52. M: Is she nearsighted?
53. O: She's eyes like a Ping-Pong Ball.
54. "Laughing"
55. N: I think your teacher's eyes like an eagle, she can say all what you do.
56. O: She doesn't like us to---
57. N: Play more.
58. O: No, no, no. Watch Cartoon. Just think that's bad.
59. N: But our teacher don't think. Only our math teacher, he always say, say some words like bad words, not bad words, very interesting words to say that you can't speak in class. And then Chinese teacher a lot of time, don't give us homework, only tell us to practice. But our, our, always will practice after class, and do homework in ourself, and then our English teacher sometimes give us some homework, but we think it's not very bad because the words she also tell us is very useful.
60. M: Yeah.
61. "Pause"
62. N: Our Chinese, our English teacher often tell us some words very useful in English or in America and this words like, for example, on the class, when the class is begin, some teacher will say: "How do you do? Boys and girls." And say: "Class begin." Our teacher she don't say: "How do you do?" because it's not very useful in European country now. and for example, like in a restaurant, if a waiter ask you: "Can I help you?" what will you say?
63. "Pause"
64. M: The waiter says: "What can I help you?"
65. N: Yes, can I help you? Should I help you? What will you say?
66. M: Who says?
67. N: You.
68. M: I say.
69. N: Yes.
70. M: I will order.

1. **Appendix F**

2. Jiao Da Corner NNS to NNS (5 University students)

3. A You should find topic
4. B WTO
5. A No, No, No
6. C That's a big topic
7. A We have already talked, okay go on. You can talk about something of your interesting stories.
8. C Maybe, how do you celebrate Christmas.
9. B Yeah, that's a good.
10. A Celebrate Christmas.
11. B Lady first.
12. C No, gentleman first.
13. A Lady first of cause.
14. A I don't think Christmas is very important.
15. B This is just a free talk
16. (Pause)
17. B Okay I talk about something about my work experience. Because my university is Beijing Uni of Aeronautics, After graduate I worked in
18. Chengdu area I like airport very much since I'm a child.
19. A really/
20. B Yeah, so I wanna be designer of airplanes. So after being graduate being a designer of our company. My major is ejection seat.
21. C Emergency cases.
22. D This seat is very useful.
23. B Yeah, so sometime when I two aircraft will fight with each other and one aircraft is damaged seriously.
24. D So what do think is the most important thing?
25. B I think the engine is really important.
26. A So the aircraft is damaged seriously, can't drive anywhere, so what do you think is the most important thing.
27. B Of cause the most important thing is safe the pilot. Do you know the word Pilot (pronunciation is wrong)
28. A No
29. D Air crew
30. B pilot, pilot
31. B The commander of the air craft. So there is a special equipment . The pilot just needs to pull bake the equipment and he will be fixed firmly a the seat and after several are about several seconds he will be ejected from the cock pit. The parachute will full of air and land safety.
32. D I think is Chinese the pilot isn't really important. The plane is more more important because I think to many Chinese their
33. B NO NO
34. The price of maybe to produce an excellent pilot is very expensive. Train the pilot is expensive.
35. D I know in abroad the pilot is very important. But I think in China

36. A No. After the pilot will die he will take care of other things such as his son, wife and so on....
37. B In such kind of cause the being pilots they are maybe teachers the number is twice students. Two teachers and one student.
38. This is my story.
39. A How will you spend your Christmas Day?
40. B I THINK Christmas is a excuse for relax yes um, we are going to dancing to celebrate Christmas.
41. A Just for dancing. No other activity?
42. B I think the party will a lot of activity and you can dancing B and do other games in the party.
43. A So you will go with you class mates?
44. B Yes Yes and do you think I would go out with my family?
45. C Sometimes its Okay.
46. A Will you go to a church?
47. B Church, oh maybe I
48. C I think
49. A Its very romantic
50. B Yes, but
51. C I think Chinese are very Traditional.
52. A Have you ever been to Church when its Christmas day?
53. B No. But when I was in usual city the church is near by. I recently come go infront of it but I've come into
54. D I have ever been to church. If you want to go to the church Christmas Day you will seldom have the chance to because there is too many people and you should go there at maybe in in the lunch. Very early you should go there and then you will have chance to enter.
55. B Are you a Catholic or a Christian?
56. D No. My mother is a Christian
57. B and you belief
58. E Yes. I belief
59. B Christian
60. D Do you think its odd?
61. E No. I think its natural.
62. B Do you pray before you lunch?
63. E I have only my belief.
64. D I think you will go to church?
65. E I do want to, but maybe have date very to many people.
66. B Yes and I think it very interesting for Chinese people to go to the church and isn't on Christmas.

1. **Appendix G**

2. Peoples Park Corner NNS to NNS (4 young adults)

3. E: So and by the way, just like you said, and you often go to the U.S. for business trip, so if you don't mind, what kind of business does your company doing, does your company do?
4. F: Normally we import some device or equipments from the U.S. Before they ship to China, we need to make calibration. To check, if the quality is ok, otherwise when the device is shipped to China, then we find something wrong---
5. E: Something with fault, faulty.
6. F: We need to ship again to the U.S. We will go there and have a check, then we--- it's ok.
7. E: So, and I know, I understand what you say, that means you are, you have strong expertise in the device or some equipment.
8. F: We just take some responsibility.
9. E: No, I mean just like you said, you are responsible for preparation, for export some, import some equipment, and before this--- import is done, you go to the U.S. to check, to make some preparation, that means, and perhaps you are a expert in this kind of equipment or device.
10. F: Normally we have four or five people there and---
11. E: You have a team?
12. F: Have a team. Then we check, check all the device, then we have a discussion with the---
13. E: Local people.
14. F: Local people.
15. E: Manufacturer.
16. F: And finally if everything is ok, we sign the paper. This is allowed to ship to China. Otherwise we will say: "This is not ok, you need to do some improvement." And sometimes maybe you must re-do this work.
17. E: I know, I know. Sometimes, you know, you know, because my major is machinery, I know something about equipment and some instrument, just like you said your company is doing, doing the import and export. This is on the equipment and some device, for example, if you import some products and some equipment from the U.S. and one of the equipment is ship to the Shanghai, Shanghai harbor. So and you will transport these equipment to the site, I mean the companies. So who is responsible for the installation? For installation?
18. F: We, we can, we have some money and we ask, we issue some bid documents and we say here we have the installation work. And many companies will come here. They buy the bid documents and within the limited date. They submit their documents to our, then we have a group to discuss which one can get the, bid document, bid documentation, then we will open this bid, we will say: "This company get this project."
19. E. Okay
20. F. So we do, do the work like this.
21. E: So now since, because according to my understanding, when a company import some equipment, they always ask the manufacturer for help. For example, because and they will ask the manufacturer to send technician in charge of the main equipment, in charge of the installation of this equipment and in charge of

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the training of the people, operating this, operating equipment. So, does your company have this kind of program?

22. F: Yes, we have. When all the installation has been finished, and we can have a check.
23. E. Oh Yes
24. If the installation is need high quality, then we pay the rest of the money to the installation company. And when all the equipment is installed.
25. E. Yes
26. F. Then we, we can have a test.
27. E: Yes, you have a test.
28. F: Yeah, have a test. And to see the performance is ok or not. If we find the test, the foreign cannot pass the test, we can have the right to, to set some penalty.
29. E: I know.
30. F: We will exercise.
31. E: I know, I know what you means. So and, and, since you are working in, working for import and export business, can you tell me, because I, now I am starting the import and export business, now I am working in the marketing department. So can you tell me, when you do the import and export business, what kind of term and payment when you establish business relationship with a company or overseas companies? And what the prevailing term of payment?
32. F: The payment normally divided into several, several period.
33. E: Items, yeah.
34. F: First we sign the contract.
35. E: I know, I know, I know what it is.
36. F: Normally we pay them 10%.
37. E: I know, I mean what is your prevailing term of payment? *Jiu shi ni men de fu kuan, Zui zhu yao de fu kuai fang si shi she me (*I mean what is your prevailing term of payment?)
38. F: That's not my business. You know, we only get the money from my government. They say: "You can use such kind of money." Then you go out to see who can provide your device.
39. E: No, no. I am very interested in it because when your, for example, when our company establish, establish business relationship with your companies. So and we sign the contract.
40. F: We through the bank.
41. E: I know through the bank we sign the contract. And in this contract--- and this, and this, the conclusion of business is based on the, a lot of conditions such as payment, time of delivery, packaging, package, for example, now the prevailing term of the payment is LC, LC.*Lin wan yi ge shi DA shi ba?* (Another is DA, right?) And Document Against Payment. And Document Against Payment, Document Against Payment. Except it, but it's, if you do this kind of things, if you use the Document Against Acceptance, you have to take a lot of serious risks.
42. F. Yeah
43. E. So particularly the new clients, your company establish business relationship with this company the first time, and the prevailing term of payment is irrevocable.
44. F: Irrevocable.
45. E: Irrevocable, conformable and conformable.
46. F: At site, at site. If in Chinese we say *bu ke che xiao de* (Irrevocable)

1. **Appendix H**

2. Shanghai Teachers University Corner NNS to NNS (4 University students)

3. I: Yeah, I major in English.
4. "Pause"
5. I: What's your major?
6. K: English. Major? Yeah.
7. J: You too self-taught. Self-taught course?
8. I: Self-education. I think self-education.
9. K: Education
10. I: Self-education.
11. A: Self-education? I don't know. I ask the teacher, but he didn't tell me.
12. "Laughing"
13. K: And in our class also have an E.C. and we want to speak English, but we couldn't to express our thinking.
14. J: Why?
15. K: I don't know. A lot of, a lot of my classmates, they like to talk in English, but they think, they couldn't talk, talk out.
16. J: Oh, Yeah. They just can't get it out, just something. Just on the top of their tongue.
17. K: Maybe they have some shy, feel shy.
18. J: Yeah.
19. K: No, I am also shy.
20. J: The more you speak, the more the better
21. "Pause"
22. J: Do you think, do you think the best way is live in the foreign, in the foreign country? And can improve your English?
23. I: Yes, of course. I think English, if you want improve your English in short time, you should go, should talk with the foreigner, foreigner frequently, so I think this is the best way, the key to improve your English. So I think in China campus, the students', the students' grammar is very ok, he can satisfy the examiner, but his spoken English is not poor, so if he, if he take part in the self oral test, oral test, he faced a lot of questions. Something, something wrong with it. So I think it's called dumb, dumb oral English.
24. J: We just like an exam machine. And I think the, the, the headmaster, the head of our school, our college, our university can take the question, take the problem into consideration. Increase, increase some of the lessons about listening comprehension or speaking. Maybe the, sometimes your, your department invite some foreign teacher and teach you—
25. I: Teach our oral, oral English.
26. "Pause"
27. J: Do you think it's a good way?
28. I: Yes, of course.
29. J: And I just heard "pause" the, the foreigner teachers *Dao jiang hu* (A Shanghai slang, which means one person did something curtly.)
30. I: No.
31. J: No.
32. I: They teach very well.

33. J: Oh, yes.
34. "Pause"
35. K: I think foreigner teachers, their pronunciation is very good. P-u-r-e(
    spelling a word), How to?
36. I: Pronunciation.
37. K: Yeah. P-u-r-e.
38. A: Pure.
39. K: P-u-r-e, pure, yeah.
40. I: What's the meaning?
41. J: What do you mean?
42. K: *Fei chang chu zheng* (very pure) Because he is a foreigner.
43. I: Foreigner. Native speaker, we are foreigner.
44. "Laughing"
45. J: But sometimes Australia, Australia accent, American accent, English
    accent is different.
46. K: Yeah.
47. J: So maybe you wanna to study American English. So maybe you talk more
    with the Americans.
48. K: I---, sometimes, I, I talk about German.
49. J: German? In English or in Germany, Germany? In English? You said how--
    -, not---
50. K: In English, yeah. "pause" The person with the Germany, and he can speak
    English well. And No 14, I also speak to Holland girl, he is teacher in, in the
    private school. I think if we have a lot of chance to exchange for, exchange
    to, communicate with foreigners, it can, it can do some---
51. J: Better, speak better.
52. K: Yeah.
53. J: The E.C. invite more foreigner speaker.
54. K: Invite. I know, know I think---
55. J: Invite foreigner people to talk with you and play game with you.
56. K: I think if there "pause" not invite, but they want to, they want to
    communicate with us, not we invite them, but first we must---
57. J: But sometimes if
58. K: But we must let them know we like to communicate with them.
59. J: But sometimes the foreigner maybe think, oh, I just like a test me, you just
    want to improve your English, so you talk to me.
60. K: No, no, no. I think just no use invite them to talk with us, so they think we
    just want to improve our English. I think we must let them know we'd like to
    make friends with them, not just for improving English.
61. J: So you, you actually feel just like make a friend with them?
62. K: Yeah, yeah. I think so, because I think everybody likes to make friends
    with others and everybody would like to---, everybody is very kindness.
63. J: Especially Chinese people.
64. "Laughing"
65. K: And we also---
66. J: Not kindness, we are all--- kind.
67. K: Kind.
68. J: Chinese people are all kind, hospitality and welcome all the people to our
    mainland.

69. "Pause"
70. K: I think sometimes in some place, the kind is not real kind. Just "pause" I couldn't express in English. *Xin shi shang. Xin shi shang de* (superficially) kind, not really kind to you.
71. J: From heart. Just on the face from the heart, not whole heartily, just pretend you are warm.

B: Yeah. So I think if we would like make friends with foreigner, I think it, it can "pause" advance the country, between country and country, can advance the culture, culture. So I have a lot of thought, but I couldn't speak in English. I think a lot of, a lot of person like me, they have a lot of thinking, but they, they couldn't how to express in English. Just we are Chinese, we can say Chinese, you can know my mean, but if you are foreigner, you couldn't know

72. A (nns): You want to make the E.C. a big party?
73. J: Yeah.
74. A: And we can talk everything about it.
75. J: Something interesting, any interesting topic. So I just think---
76. A: You don't nervous.
77. J: Yeah! What do you think?
78. B (nns): I think, I think it's a very good idea and I think a lot of people, they want to, they want to learn English well, so they --- activity to attend this organization. Just like from some that can provide the the environment for them to express their, their thinking in English. And they can, they can speak English to Chinese.
79. "Pause"
80. J: And do you have some suggestions for the E.C.? Do you think our E.C. more superbly?
81. B: Because I ---
82. J: Less people or foreigners.
83. B: No, because I, I first come here, so I couldn't, yeah, so I didn't familiar with this E.C. yeah, just the first time I come here.
84. J: And sometimes you go to another E.C.?
85. "Pause"
86. B: Very few, very few.
87. J: Few, which place, which place?
88. B: I went to People's, people's Park and Sunflower English Village, you know, in the Luxun, Luxun Park, near Luxun Park.
89. J: In Jingan District.
90. J: Hongkou District.
91. B: No. I, Lunxu Park, part of Luxun Park. Sunflower English Village. And there are a lot of university students just like Shanghai Caida. "pause" but that night I didn't have some communicated with the others. So maybe that time is my first time to attend E.C. in Shanghai. And I am, I am, "pause" foreign college in this university, but I not graduate student. I am a self-taught, you know, self-taught?
92. J: Self-taught?
93. B: *Zi kao* (Self-education)
94. J: Oh, yeah.
95. B: You know? I couldn't, self-taught.
96. J. Yeah
97. B. I don't how to describe it.

1. **Appendix I**

2. Peoples Park Corner ENS to NNS (over 15 Chinese learners)

3. P: You really have a California face
4. ENS. Oh yeah
5. P: Don't you think so?
6. NS. Oh don't know. She really has a California face. I've blonde hair
7. P. You must eat a lot
8. ENS. Yeah we do eat a lot
9. P. Your daughter is clever
10. ENS. She is clever, thank you
11. Q. What is her name?
12. ENS. Helen
13. Q. Merry Christmas
14. ENS. Merry Christmas
15. Q. Are you a Christian?
16. ENS. Yes
17. Q. Is she your daughter?
18. ENS. Yes she is my daughter
19. R. How many children in your family?
20. ENS. One daughter. One child policy
21. R. Think your wife is Chinese. Joking, joking. Would your congress pass this kind of policy? One child policy?
22. ENS. Never
23. S. Where are you from?
24. ENS. I'm from Sandeigo
25. S. Say something about Sandeigo
26. ENS. It's real pretty down there. But I live in Shanghai now
27. S. How many years in Shanghai?
28. ENS. One year now. My mother and brother are down there.
29. When you come to everywhere, I bet Chinese will surround to speak English
30. ENS. Yeah. EC is good. It's very good
31. T. Your first time hear?
32. ENS. I have been here for one year.
33. U. Your daughter has a good ear. You can speak some more. Good hearing
34. ENS. My wife has good hearing.
35. V. Can you speak in Chinese?
36. ENS. Can you speak something in Chinese Helen. Say Ni Hao / Zhia jian
37. W. Do you come from heaven? Why you face looks like angels?
38. X. He is Shy?
39. ENS. She's at primary school
40. X. She's isn't suppose to be shy
41. ENS. What do you do?
42. Y. I'm a student
43. ENS. Are you at Univerisity?
44. Y. Yes, A freshman
45. ENS. This is a very good time of the year. Are you on holidays or not?

46. Y. No holidays
47. ENS. No holidays
48. Y. Just weekends
49. ENS. No Christmas holidays. New Years Holidays
50. Y. Yeah only three days
51. ENS. Do you take the Autumn Festive off?

52. Y. No
53. ENS. National holiday?
54. Y. Yes longer
55. ENS. So its Jiao Tong you are at?
56. Y. No
57. ENS. Which University are you at?
58. Y. Shanghai International Studies University
59. ENS. Very good University
60. ENS (Child) Can I get down?
61. ENS. Oh yes you can. Go to Grandma. I think I have to go now.

1. **Appendix J**

2. **ENS interviews**
3. **What is your main purpose in attending this EC?**

4. NES 1: The primary purpose is to give them a chance to practice their English, but for me, it gives an opportunity to learn about that many of the Chinese are thinking.
5. To meet the Chinese people and have an opportunity to exchange, get to know people, for me to learn as they learn more about English. It gives me an opportunity about ideas common folk here in China.
6. Interviewer. Is it a cross-culture thing?
7. ENS 1: Yes, I'm an internationalist. Anyway, I like different cultures, nationalities. The people I meet enjoy practicing their English.
8. I only meet a certain group at an up scale hotel that like jazz. When I come to the EC I meet a cross section of Chinese community and plus it encourages international understanding. They don't get the opportunity to meet many westerners. It gives them an opportunity for them to ask me questions about America.
9. ENS 2: It's part of my job.
10. Here help people improve their English, but the same time to learn more about China, learn about the customs, culture.
11. Here talking to people in English, one of the topics might revolve around Chinese history, Chinese culture, cultural exchange.
12. I probably get more from the cultural exchange than they do, because I can guide the topics in that direction. I come to this EC once every two weeks. It's on a roster system.
13. ENS 3: To help people with their English. Most educators are service orientated. Giving of ourselves and trying to help others.
14. About culture things. Chinese to learn more about western culture.
15. I think so we talk about something that happened yesterday. Five people stared at me and we will talk about that.
16. Why did they do that?
17. Is that really polite?
18. Let people's opinion on that, eventually come to the conclusion that it isn't a nice thing to do.
19. ENS 4: I do get paid for it. I think I have other motivations and reasons.
20. I pass out a topic every which I print out on a piece of paper any thing from mythology to slang. It's usually what user jumps into my mind. I'm really their to share a message which is that these people are the victims of a very silly background education system when it comes to language. It's extremely entrenched English business in Shanghai in that I don't mean. Not in professional schools, I mean it in Chinese professors. It's a closed (community). They are inept and they are pulling this on the next generation.
21. So basically I'm out there slaying the dragon and I'm very angry about it. I can't care if their write bad books. I don't care if their sell bad books. I don't care if their make money. Or if people buy bad books. When all these bright and wonderful intelligent people and go home and spend 30 hours learning

something wrong. That's a waste of dreams. I'm out there to tell them there is a better way and that they can do it.

22. I first news about EC was when I was working for Telfort Conducting EC was part of the free duties we were expected to do. Going to a room for an hour and doing something. In a brooder view I stumbled into people square about a year ago. Then this EC was suggested by the President of Only College which is continuing or further education of Jiao Da University. I'm paid to do it. It's part of my job.
23. Both have been part of your job description.

24. Q 5 How often do you visit EC's ?

25. ENS 1: Every Sat. last year. This year I've started going every other week. We have additional staff that come.
26. EC every week Sat. 9:30—11:00.
27. G: First started with 2 groups.
28. We had an adult group and children group. That we noticed this year that so many kids older than the younger kids they didn't fit into the adults. So we decided to broke off and have the third group.
29. ENS 2: Every second or third week during school term. On a roster system with other teachers of the school
30. ENS 3:. Every week as I'm the Leader.
31. ENS 4:. When I'm in town I like to attend regularly

32. Q2 How long have you been in Shanghai ?

33. ENS 1: Just about two years.
34. ENS 2:. About 4 months. My third trip to Shanghai. I came first in Nov. 99. I enjoy Shanghai. It's wonderful. I meeting some wonderful people, specially EC, Sunday mornings. Usually Jingan in the mornings and sometimes to the People's Park in the afternoon. I meeting good friends like Ben, Billy, Mr. Chen.
35. ENS 3: 1 year and 3 months.
36. ENS 4: one year

Appendix K

Chinese English Teachers Interviews

How can EC influence students learning?

1. Speaker A. Students, Chinese students different from foreigner. First Chinese are timid to express themselves. Like me, when I was young, I was very timid to communicate with other people. Our EC provides them with a good chance to communicate with others when they are young. From our EC every week, they can develop their self-confidence. Second, they can improve their spoken English. Also think this is a social activity. They can have this experience when they are young. Also I think it can have a benefit for our nation.

2. Speaker B. About this question I think if the students come try to speak English as fluently as they can. Am----- their oral English can influence their written English, listening and written work together. Just like oral English and written English working together.

3. Speaker C. In my personal opinion, the English class is not good and enough for the students. And the opportunity for the students to open the mouths is very less. So not the everyone can open the mouth to speak in the English class. And I encourage the student go to the EC to practice. They can listen to different English accents who from United States, England, Australia. They can speak very wide English. Ok.

4. Speaker D. Am ... about twenty years age. Chinese people specially young people has show strong interesting to learning language specially is English. Now we have entered WTO. English is become more important. English is in baby life, even English is as second language in China. I don't believe that we put as the language people in HK or Singapore do that. English in those as second language. We have to say more and more people specially is young people can speak more fluent English. When you work in street, you don't worry too much, a lot of people will help you, for example, like foreigner in Shanghai.

5. Speaker E. Great influence. EC can arouse their interest in speaking English

6. Speaker F. Students learn a lot from text books. The problem is they can't always use this language orally. EC they can use some of what they learnt and express themselves freely in anyway they want. They can practise their English without the pressure of making mistakes and people laughing at them or losing face.

7. **Do you see the EC as an extension to the classroom?**

8. Speaker A. Oh, yeah. In our formal classroom, we can't speak freely. They just sit and listen.

9. At the EC, they feel happy and not to feel nervous. They say what they want to say. Here we encourage. They will combine English and Chinese, because it's informal.

10. Speaker B. Yes, I think so.
11. Speaker C. In the E.C. Students are active role. But in the class, they were passive role, they would to some something like. They were in E.C. But in the English class, teacher give the topic to they have to speak. So I think E.C give the opportunities. Of course very good thing. And, you know, I have been teaching English for six years, I find most Chinese students are not good at oral English. Their structure is very good. They can solve grammar problems is good, but the oral English is mostly bad. I strongly recommend them go to the E.C. Before they go to the E.C, I suggest them to learn like a crazy man to open their mouths, not keeping looking at the E.C. You wanna be a active person in the EC. You are not audience of the E.C. You are the participant of E.C. You must share the views, happiness, share sadness. To the organizer I want to suggest, to give the students good service because most of the E.C normally is outdoor, in Shanghai some days are very hot or cold.
12. Speaker D. Yes. People at the EC are more willing to open their month than in the classroom. This is a real skill-learning situation. In the classroom it is only skill getting
13. Speaker E. Yes. This gives them a place to use the information learnt from the classroom. They will feel interested in talking to different people and all walks of life. Old and young and tourists from all over the world. Face to face with foreign people to exchange information and learn more about the world around them.
14. Speaker F. Danny: Should be. Yes. It should be other English class, one more class. If I have time, I prepare the topics for them. It really help them to open their mouths to practice.