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In Search of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers' Knowledge of Vocabulary Instruction

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IN SEARCH OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) TEACHERS'
KNOWLEDGE OF VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

by

WEIMIN ZHANG

Under the Direction of Dr. John Murphy

ABSTRACT

Researchers have explored second language (L2) teachers' knowledge focusing not only on their prior language learning experience, previous L2 teacher education, and teaching practices, but also on specific curricular areas, such as teaching L2 grammar, teaching L2 reading, and teaching L2 writing. This line of research has contributed to L2 teacher education, particularly how to develop an effective knowledge base for teacher candidates. This dissertation was conducted to investigate English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction. Specifically, employing three qualitative techniques for data collection (i.e., interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recall), the study examined seven Chinese EFL university teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction from four dimensions: their beliefs about vocabulary learning, their understandings about vocabulary teaching, the relationship between their knowledge of vocabulary instruction and vocabulary teaching practices, and the sources of their knowledge about vocabulary instruction.

The findings of the study indicate that Chinese EFL teachers have well-developed content knowledge of EFL vocabulary. They also have well-established belief systems about how to learn and teach vocabulary. Moreover, their beliefs about vocabulary teaching tend to be consistent with their vocabulary teaching practices though some inconsistencies have been identified as well. It was also found that Chinese EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction is derived from a variety of sources, of which formal EFL education and teaching practices are considered as the two most influential. EFL teachers' individual differences were also identified to impact their beliefs about vocabulary instruction.

This dissertation has at least three potential contributions. As one of the first attempts to investigate teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction in the field of L2 teacher education, this research expands studies on L2 teachers' knowledge base. It also provides information about L2 teachers' knowledge in one less studied context, i.e., Chinese EFL vocabulary teaching. Finally, the use of observations, interviews, and stimulated recall to collect data in this study serves as an impetus for enriching techniques to examine Chinese EFL teacher knowledge.

INDEX WORDS: EFL Teacher Knowledge, Vocabulary Teaching, Chinese EFL Context, Second Language Teacher Education, Teacher Cognition, Teacher Beliefs, Teacher Practice

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WEIMIN ZHANG

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in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2008

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Second language (L2) teacher education has increasingly aroused researchers' interest since the last decade although it is a relatively recent development (Day, 2000; Richards & Nunan, 1990; Roberts, 1998). Numerous models of L2 teacher education have emerged around the world (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnston & Irujo, 2000; Murphy, 1994) and a plethora of literature also has been produced in this domain (e.g., Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1997; Crookers & Lehner, 1998; Freeman & Graves, 2004; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Grenfell, 1998; Guntermann, 1993; Randall & Thornton, 2001; Richards & Nunan, 1990). Matching the growing interest in this field, researchers have awarded great attention to exploring L2 teacher education and teacher development in different contexts of language teaching (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnston & Irujo, 2000).

Since the 1990s, the research focus of L2 teacher education has shifted from teachers' behavior in classroom practices to the knowledge and beliefs that support teaching practices (Freeman & Richards, 1996; Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 1999; Williams & Burden, 1997; Woods, 1996). Along with this shift, teacher learning and teacher knowledge are envisioned as two core attributes of teachers' mental lives (Freeman, 2002). There are three fundamental assumptions underlying the research into teacher learning and teacher knowledge. The first assumption is that enhancing teacher learning can improve student learning in that teachers are central mediators of what and how students learn in classrooms (Prabhu, 1990). Another assumption is that teacher learning can take place both explicitly (i.e., through formal teacher training and

professional development) and implicitly (i.e., through personal and professional socialization of individuals into teaching) (Freeman, 2002; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001). Finally, it is assumed that with the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of students in many L2 contexts, L2 teacher learning is a critical link in supporting this diversity through educational reform and systemic improvement (Freeman, 2002). As a result, teacher knowledge and teacher learning represent two clusters of research issues in L2 teacher education. Research in teacher knowledge in particular has become one of the central concerns in the field of L2 teacher education (e.g., Fradd & Lee, 1998; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Golombek, 1998; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 1999). For this line of enquiry, Cole and Knowles (2000) posed two questions, “What do teachers know? What do teachers need to know? These two basic questions ... have formed and continue to form the basis of teacher educators’, educational researchers’, and theorists’ work” (p. 5).

Research in L2 teacher knowledge focuses on four different areas of language teaching. First, some researchers have examined the impact of L2 teachers’ prior language learning experience on their knowledge development (e.g., Almarza, 1996; Bailey *et al.*, 1996; Golombek, 1998; Johnson, 1994; Woods, 1996). Second, many other researchers have explored the impact of L2 teacher education on teacher knowledge (e.g., Bailey, 1990; Gregory, 2005; Lo, 2005; MacDonald, Badger, & White, 2001; Peacock, 2001; Poynor, 2005; Richards, Ho, & Giblin, 1996). Another research area lies in studying the symbiotic relationships between teacher knowledge and classroom practices (e.g., Bailey, 1996; Breen *et al.*, 2001; Gatbonton, 1999; Johnson, 1992b; Nunan, 1992a; Richards, 1998; Smith, 1996). The final focus of L2 teacher knowledge research

involves examining L2 teacher knowledge with respect to specific curricular areas. In recent years, this latter area has been awarded considerable research attention and much literature has emerged. Specifically, the literature highlights three curricular areas in language teaching: grammar (e.g., Andrews, 1999; Berry, 1997; Borg, 1998a, 2005a; Burgess, & Etherington, 2002; Eisenstein-Ebsworth, & Schweers, 1997; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Schulz, 1996), reading (e.g., Graden, 1996; Johnson, 1992a; Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 1999, 2001; Tercanlioglu, 2001) and writing (e.g., Burns, 1992; Katz, 1996; Tsui, 1996). As Borg (2003) argues, research of L2 teacher knowledge focusing on specific curricular areas can “lead to findings which are of unique relevance to our field” (p. 105) in that each curricular area has its own characteristics in terms of its linguistic properties, how to learn it, and how to teach it. Borg (2003) also points out that L2 teacher knowledge needs more focused research on different curricular aspects of language teaching, particularly regarding those unstudied areas such as the teaching of speaking, listening, and vocabulary. Referring to the studies on L2 teacher knowledge in different curricular areas, the current study is designed to expand L2 teacher knowledge research by investigating EFL teachers’ knowledge of vocabulary instruction. This study’s significance will be discussed in the following section.

Significance

Teacher Knowledge

Education performs many social functions. Its central purpose concerns learning and the generation of knowledge (Hegarty, 2000). Teaching is a complex and personal expression of knowing and knowledge rather than “an application of a set of disembodied, acontextual principles or theories” (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p.1). Cole and Knowles

suggest that teachers are knowledge holders and developers but not solely knowledge users. What teachers know and how they express their knowledge is “central to student learning” (Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997, p. 666) and determines their classroom performance to a great extent. Freeman (1996) also argues that it is crucial for two key questions – what teaching is and what people must know in order to teach – to be placed at the center of the classroom research agenda.

Moreover, teaching is a process of learning. Teacher learning is usually viewed as a process of knowledge acquisition and knowledge construction (Carter, 1990; Winitzky & Kauchak, 1995). Freeman (2002) posits that teacher learning is the central activity of teacher education and “any improvements in the professional preparation of teachers... need to be informed by this research” (p. 1).

Teaching also is a diverse and complex activity (Hegarty, 2000). Sherin, Sherin, and Madanes (2000) state that “investigating the knowledge that teachers possess is critical to understanding the complexities of teaching” (p.357). First, teacher knowledge research (e.g., its acquisition, its dimensions, and the social context of its construction) can enhance the development of the teacher knowledge base in teacher education (Grossman, 1990, 1995). As Carlgren and Lindblad (1991) argue, “the meaning of describing teachers’ knowledge is that this may contribute to the development of a theoretical knowledge base for teaching practices, and as a consequence to establishing a systematic relation between theory and practice so that practice can be controlled by, rather than control, teachers” (p. 515). Furthermore, studying teacher knowledge can not only help raise teachers’ awareness of their current knowledge but also promote their reflections on their teaching (Bartels, 2005b).

Findings of teacher knowledge research, therefore, should be the basis of teacher education practices (Cole & Knowles, 2000). Galluzzo (1999) asserts that the development of teacher knowledge to ground teacher preparation is a task that teacher education must meet, regardless of the philosophical stance of teacher educators. Connelly, Clandinin, and He (1997) also emphasize that “those concerned with improving education need to be concerned not only with what it is they wish to happen in learning but also with teachers’ knowledge”(p. 674). To sum up, a common agreement that has emerged in the literature is that understanding teacher knowledge is of great significance to understanding teaching and learning how to teach (Fenstermacher, 1994; Grossman, 1995; Shulman, 1987). As regards L2 teacher education, Murphy (1994) also considers “becoming well informed”, which involves the issue of teacher knowledge, as a starting point in L2 teacher education programs. Educators and researchers need to know how teachers learn, what sorts of knowledge and levels of knowledge acquisition are necessary to become effective teachers, and what contexts are most contributive to learning how to teach. For this purpose, the present study, which explores Chinese EFL teachers’ knowledge of vocabulary instruction, will shed light on how to establish an effective knowledge base for Chinese EFL teacher candidates.

Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary has been recognized as central to both native and non-native language acquisition (Gass, 1999; Knight, 1994; Laufer, 1997; Lewis, 1993; Read, 2000; Sokmen, 1997). Harmer (1991) argues that “If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh” (p. 153). Wilkins (1972) also puts it, “Without grammar very little can be conveyed; without

vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (p. 111). McCarthy (1990) adds that “No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way” (p. viii). Therefore, vocabulary “may be the most important component for learners” (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 270). Some empirical studies also indicate that L2 learners and teachers perceive vocabulary as the number one priority in L2 learning and teaching (Knight, 1994; Marcaro, 2003). According to Read (2000), most learners view L2 learning as “essentially a matter of learning vocabulary”, and “they devote a great deal of time to memorizing lists of L2 words and rely on their bilingual dictionary as a basic communicative resource” (p. 1).

In the field of L2 teacher education, there is a rich research tradition that explores the development of teacher knowledge in specific curricular areas (e.g., teaching grammar, reading, and writing). One basic assumption underlying this research is that L2 teacher knowledge is composed of various types of curricular knowledge (Borg, 2003). This line of research contributes significantly to L2 language teacher education, particularly regarding how to develop an effective knowledge base for L2 teacher candidates in specific curricular fields. To my knowledge, however, few researchers have examined teacher knowledge of L2 vocabulary instruction although vocabulary teaching is starting to assume a more important role in L2 teaching and learning (Lewis, 1993; Marcaro, 2003; Schmitt, 1997, 2000) and vocabulary learning is considered central to language learning. To develop an effective knowledge base for L2 teacher education, researchers need to explore L2 teachers’ knowledge of vocabulary instruction in addition to other curricular areas. Without taking into account L2 teacher knowledge of

vocabulary instruction, the knowledge base for L2 teacher candidates is not complete. To fill this gap, this study will provide useful information to add to our understanding of this underexplored land from Chinese EFL teachers' perspectives.

The Chinese EFL Context

Researchers argue that teacher education is context-specific (Carlgren, & Lindblad, 1991; Freeman, 2002; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Tedick, 2005). Freeman and Johnson's (1998) reconceptualization of L2 teacher knowledge base, for example, concentrates on the impact of social, cultural, and political contexts on teacher knowledge development. As they propose, the new knowledge base for L2 teacher education must focus on "the activity of teaching itself – who does it, where it is done, and how it is done" (p. 405). Johnston and Goettsch (2000) also suggest that language teacher education programs "should above all acknowledge the situated, process-oriented, contextualized nature of the knowledge base" (pp. 464-465). Thus, it is important and necessary to study language teacher knowledge within specific contexts.

China, the most populous country in the world, has a correspondingly enormous number of English learners. Since the 1980s, China's "open door policy" toward the outside world, particularly toward non-Asian countries, has triggered an explosive interest in English language learning and demand for English study (Boyle, 2000). To date, China boasts one of the largest populations of English learners. In Chinese universities, almost all students have to take regular English courses twice (4 hours) a week, 18 weeks a semester for 4-8 semesters at university (Wu, 2001). EFL teaching, as a result, has become a huge profession in China.

Research, however, has found that most university graduates, having studied English for nearly 10 years from junior through senior school to university, remain incompetent in communication in English (Yen, 1987; Zou, 1998). The reasons for this lie in several factors (e.g., EFL curriculum, teaching materials, and instructors). One essential factor, according to Zhou (2002) and Zeng (2002), involves qualifications of EFL university teachers. Researchers (e.g., Lu, 2003; Zeng, 2002) argue that the system of Chinese EFL university teacher education is inadequate and that an effective knowledge base for Chinese EFL teacher candidates needs to be established. Moreover, compared with teacher knowledge research in English as a second language (ESL) contexts, teacher knowledge research is largely ignored in Chinese EFL teacher education (Wu, 2005). For this reason, the present study will contribute to a better understanding of Chinese EFL teacher knowledge within the curricular aspect of vocabulary instruction.

Research Methodology

EFL teacher education research in China was usually conducted using the techniques of questionnaire and survey (Yang, 1999). To the best of my knowledge, limited research has examined EFL teachers' knowledge in naturalistic classroom settings. Further, interpretations of data in previous studies were mostly based on researchers' perspectives. Teachers' own perspectives on their knowledge are largely neglected though, as numerous researchers (e.g., Borg, 2003, 2005b; Burns, 1992; Woods, 1996) argue, what teachers do in their teaching is shaped by what they believe. In teacher knowledge research, ignoring its main practitioners, the teachers, will not provide us with a realistic picture of teachers' knowledge development. Information gathered in such a way will, therefore, not be appropriate for classroom teachers. This is probably why a

considerable number of Chinese EFL teachers complain of the inappropriateness of many methods and techniques suggested by Chinese teacher educators (Bi, 2003).

This dissertation research documents Chinese EFL teachers' knowledge development in the place where they work, i.e., their classrooms. In order to obtain the teachers' perspectives on their own teaching instead of the researcher's, this study employs the data collection techniques of classroom observations, interviews, and stimulated recall. Because of the use of these techniques, I believe that the present study not only provides useful information to the study of Chinese EFL teacher education in particular and the study of L2 teacher education in general, but also enriches the techniques used to explore Chinese EFL teachers' knowledge.

Research Framework

Defining Teacher Knowledge

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990) defines knowledge as “awareness or familiarity gained by experience (of a person, fact or thing), a person's range of information, a theoretical or practical understanding of a subject, language, etc, the sum of what is known, true, justified belief, and certain understanding” (p. 656). Regarding teacher knowledge, there are various terms to describe a specific aspect of teacher knowledge. The most commonly used terms include “action oriented knowledge” (Carter, 1990), referring to the knowledge for immediate use in teaching practices; “personal practical knowledge” (Black & Halliwell, 2000; Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997; Golombek, 1998; Marland, 2001; Tamir, 1991), indicating that this knowledge is dialectical, situated, and dynamic; and “professional craft knowledge” (Shimahara, 1998), viewing a specific component of knowledge as the product of teachers' practical

experience. The employment of various terms signals the relevant aspects of teacher knowledge that researchers consider the most important and provides an overview of how these researchers have studied teacher knowledge.

Researchers have also provided various definitions for teacher knowledge. According to Carter (1990) and Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer (2001), the term “teacher knowledge” refers to the total knowledge and insights underlying teachers’ actions in practice. Fradd and Lee (1998) present a similar definition of teacher knowledge as “the repertoire of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers require to effectively carry out classroom practices” (pp. 761-762). These definitions indicate that teacher knowledge is an inclusive concept, covering various cognitions and understanding, from conscious viewpoints to unconscious intuitions. Despite the various terms and definitions in the literature on teacher knowledge research, such diversity does not mask the considerable overlap among popular terms and definitions. For example, they highlight the personal nature of teacher knowledge and the significance of experience in the development of this knowledge.

Teacher knowledge also appears as a multidimensional concept. As Verloop, Van Driel, and Meijer (2001) conclude, “in the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably intertwined” (p. 446). Johnson and Goettsch (2000) also acknowledge that components of teacher knowledge “are melded together in complex and indeed inextricable ways to produce multifaceted, holistic accounts of, and actions in, language teaching” (p. 461). In studying teacher knowledge, therefore, the major focus should be on the complex totality of cognitions, including how they develop and how they interact with teacher behavior in practice.

For this study, I follow the definition of teacher knowledge proposed by Borg (1998a, 1999, 2003, 2005b), whose research focuses on L2 grammar instruction. According to Borg (1999), teacher knowledge refers to “the beliefs, knowledge theories, assumptions, and attitudes that teachers hold about all aspects of their work” (p. 9). In his view, teacher knowledge involves implicit personal understandings of teaching and learning which teachers develop through educational and professional experiences in their lives. This definition, however, does not mean that all the knowledge teachers possess is realized in classroom settings. The fundamental idea is that there exists a reciprocity between the whole of teachers’ cognition and their classroom actions, activities, and behaviors.

Categorizing Teacher Knowledge

Researchers have generated a number of models of teacher knowledge and several categorizations of the components of teacher knowledge have emerged in the literature. These components, as researchers (e.g., Golombek, 1998; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001) argue, are inextricably intertwined in teachers’ classroom practices.

One model of teacher knowledge, for example, is established by Elbaz (1983). Elbaz classifies teacher knowledge, which she calls “practical knowledge”, into five categories: knowledge of self, knowledge of the milieu of teaching, knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of curriculum development, and knowledge of instruction. Another model is developed by Shulman (1986, 1987), who highlights the role of teacher knowledge as content knowledge. Shulman divides teacher knowledge into seven categories:

- subject matter content knowledge (the knowledge of the content of a subject discipline, involving the major facts and concepts in that discipline and their relationships)
- knowledge of curriculum (knowledge of the programs and available teaching materials designed for particular topics at a given level)
- general pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of principles and skills of teaching and learning that are generally applicable across subject disciplines)
- knowledge of learners (knowledge of learners' backgrounds, characteristics, particular strengths, weaknesses, and motivation)
- pedagogical content knowledge (i.e., the representation of a subject by the use of analogies, examples, illustrations, explanations, and demonstrations in order to make it comprehensible to students)
- knowledge of educational contexts
- knowledge of educational philosophies, goals, and objectives

According to Shulman, teachers draw upon all seven categories of knowledge when they make decisions about their content teaching. The central questions in teaching involve how teachers' understanding of the subject matter affects the quality of their teaching, how teachers transform their subject knowledge into a form that is comprehensible to students, how teachers handle curriculum materials, and how teachers use their subject knowledge to generate explanations and representations.

In this study, I employ Shulman's framework to investigate the development of Chinese EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction. There are three main reasons

underlying this selection. One is that Shuman's work has set up a theoretical and epistemological framework of teacher knowledge base (Tsui, 2003) and his conception has become influential in the study of teacher knowledge. Research across different subject areas (e.g., mathematics, science, social studies) has provided wide support for Shuman's theoretical framework (Fradd & Lee, 1998). Another reason is that Shulman's framework provides a way to test the contributions of different types of knowledge in teachers' practices. The third reason is that Shulman's framework also has been widely applied by researchers in L2 teacher education (e.g., Grossman, 1990; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Tsui, 2003).

Sources of Teacher Knowledge

To understand teacher knowledge, it is also important to understand its sources because these influence the development of teacher knowledge and shape teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning (Tsui, 2003). There are four possible sources from which teacher knowledge is constructed (Grossman, 1990; Richards, 1998; Tsui, 2003): apprenticeship of observation, disciplinary background, classroom teaching experience, and teacher education.

Apprenticeship of observation refers to teachers' previous experience of being a learner (Borg, 2004; Grossman, 1990; Lortie, 1975). Experiences as learners often leave teachers with an image of what teaching is and what teaching should be like. This source is hypothesized to exert a strong impact particularly on teachers who begin teaching without professional training (Tsui, 2003). The apprenticeship of observation contributes to teacher knowledge in various ways. For example, it provides teachers with memories

of strategies for teaching specific content. It can also influence teachers' knowledge of student understanding.

Another source is the disciplinary background teachers possess. Teachers rely on their disciplinary knowledge to shape their knowledge and beliefs about teaching subject matter. Disciplinary knowledge may contribute to teachers' selection of particular curricula and to their critiques of specific curriculum materials. Studies (e.g., Grossman, 1990; Tsui, 2003) indicate that teachers who have more confidence in disciplinary knowledge are more inclined to depart from the organization of content in textbooks.

Teachers' classroom teaching experience is a third important source of teacher knowledge. Actual teaching practices provide teachers with opportunities to test the knowledge that they have gained from other sources. Generally teachers consider actual teaching experience to be the most important source of knowledge about teaching (Grossman, 1990; Tsui, 2003).

Finally, teacher education represents another potential source of teacher knowledge development. Studies of the relationship between teacher education and teachers' beliefs and classroom practices have revealed that teacher education courses have a powerful impact on teachers' future teaching (e.g., Attardo & Brown, 2005; Borg, 1998a, 2005a; Johnson, 1994, 1996; Poynor, 2005), though some specialists call into question the effectiveness of teacher education courses (e.g., Crandall, 2000; Johnson, 2000).

Each of these four sources of knowledge can help teachers develop knowledge about teaching. They also interact with each other in the process of teachers' learning to teach. For example, if the source of teacher education courses has a strong impact, it may

overcome the knowledge and beliefs that teachers have developed through the apprenticeship of observation and shape teachers' knowledge from subsequent experiences in classrooms.

Other researchers view sources of teacher knowledge in a slightly different way. Fenstermacher (1994) and Kennedy (1999), for example, tend to regroup various types of teacher knowledge into two categories. Fenstermacher (1994) distinguishes two types of teacher knowledge: formal knowledge and practical knowledge. Formal knowledge, which is also described as knowledge *for* teachers, refers to the knowledge that is mainly known and produced by researchers. Practical knowledge is the knowledge that is primarily known and generated by teachers, and hence is called knowledge *of* teachers (i.e., teachers' own knowledge). Similarly, Kennedy (1999) assumes that teacher knowledge, which she categorizes as "expertise", is a blend of "expert" knowledge (the knowledge produced by researchers) and craft knowledge (the knowledge deriving primarily from teaching experiences). Teacher knowledge includes a great deal of craft knowledge, possessing such features as being dynamic, situated, private, and tacit. Teacher knowledge also is grounded in "expert" knowledge in that as teacher knowledge develops, the "expert" knowledge is reorganized, transformed into experiential knowledge, and becomes tacit, situated knowledge. Since these classifications are not widely applied by researchers, I will focus on the above mentioned four sources of teacher knowledge: apprenticeship of observation, disciplinary background, classroom teaching experience, and teacher education. One aim of this study is to explore how the four different sources contribute to the development of different types of EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction.

The Organization of the Dissertation

This research dissertation is divided into seven chapters. The first four chapters are concerned with the background and approach to the present study. Chapter 1 elaborates on the significance of the study and the framework it is based upon. Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature informing the basic questions. This includes a review of the research on L2 teacher knowledge in different curricular areas and the literature regarding L2 vocabulary teaching. Chapter 3 presents an account of EFL education in China, the broad context which this research involves. It describes the role of EFL teaching in China, the history of Chinese EFL teaching, EFL vocabulary instruction in China, and EFL university teacher education in China. Chapter 4 describes the research methodology underpinning the study and explains the methods used in data collection and data analysis. Chapters 5 and 6 report the results identified from the collected data. Chapter 5 provides an account of the teacher-participants' general beliefs of a qualified EFL teacher, through which to identify salient components of teachers' knowledge of EFL teaching. Chapter 6 reports the EFL teacher-participants' beliefs and teaching behaviors specifically related to vocabulary instruction. The reports involve five different aspects of teacher knowledge about vocabulary instruction, aiming to address the research questions of the study.

Chapter 7 presents a discussion of the major findings addressing the study's research questions. Then the implications of the study are discussed as regards how to improve EFL teacher education programs and EFL teaching programs for non-English majors. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this review is to survey the body of literature that informs the basic questions of the present study. This chapter consists of two sections. The first section involves a review of the studies into L2 teacher knowledge in different curricular areas. The second section reviews the literature on L2 vocabulary instruction, focusing on three aspects: how to learn vocabulary, what to teach about vocabulary, and how to teach vocabulary. Finally, based on the review, the chapter poses the research questions to be addressed in this dissertation research.

Research of L2 Teacher Knowledge

In the last few years, researchers have explored L2 teacher knowledge in specific curricular areas, especially focusing on grammar, reading, and writing. In this section, I will make a review of the studies about these three areas.

Teacher Knowledge of Grammar Instruction

Most of the studies of teacher knowledge regarding curricular areas are related to grammar teaching (Borg, 2003). Researchers have explored L2 teacher knowledge of grammar instruction from two primary perspectives: teacher beliefs about grammar teaching (e.g., Berry, 1997; Borg, 1998a, 2005a; Burgess, & Etherington, 2002; Eisenstein-Ebsworth, & Schweers, 1997; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Schulz, 1996) and teachers' knowledge of grammar (e.g., Andrews, 1994, 1999).

Teacher beliefs about grammar teaching. Research on L2 teacher beliefs about grammar teaching can fall into two types depending on whether teachers' actual

classroom practices contribute to the research process. The first type of research uses real classroom events as the basis for discussing and exploring the process of teachers' knowledge development. For example, using the research techniques of classroom observations and interviews, Borg (1998a) conducted a detailed case study of one EFL teacher to examine his pedagogical system of grammar teaching. One of the key findings was that the decision for explicit formal instruction of grammar does not necessarily reflect a teacher's belief that such instruction promotes language learning. As the participant explained, he integrated some explicit work into his teaching because he felt such instruction meets students' expectations and that the students would respond to it positively. Another major finding was that in grammar teaching, teachers do not necessarily adhere exclusively to one particular approach. Overall, as Borg concludes, the teacher's pedagogical system consists of a belief in the importance of work on grammar in terms of applying grammatical rules and awareness-raising, the needs of the actual students in the class, meeting students' expectations, and the need to engage the students actively in their own learning.

Following Shulman's (1987) framework of teacher knowledge, Johnston and Goettsch (2000) employed the research techniques of classroom observations and interviews to investigate the knowledge base underlying grammar instruction of four experienced ESL teachers. Their study focused on three categories of teacher knowledge: teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, content knowledge, and knowledge of learners. Johnston and Goettsch uncovered several characteristics of experienced teachers' explanations of grammatical rules. As regards PCK, experienced teachers put more emphasis on using examples during explanations. As regards knowledge of learners,

experienced teachers paid considerable attention to students' input in order to facilitate their explanations. They encouraged students to question and initiate discussions. The general belief these teachers held was that students' active involvement supported the processes of understanding language. Johnston and Goettsch also explored the sources of content knowledge, which they defined as teachers' declarative knowledge of language. One of their findings is that two major sources of content knowledge were education and experience. They also pointed out that teacher knowledge was dynamic in nature. It was constantly changing as teachers stored, processed, reflected on, added to, and modified what they already knew. Finally, Johnston and Goettsch highlighted the relationships between the categories of teacher knowledge. In their opinion, these several categories of teacher knowledge were inextricably melded.

In contrast, some researchers have explored L2 teachers' knowledge of grammar instruction without directly studying actual teaching practices. Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers (1997) conducted a questionnaire survey involving 30 ESL teachers in New York City and another 30 in Puerto Rico about their attitudes towards grammar teaching and their personal instructional practices. The authors found that the majority of the teachers believed in some form of grammar teaching and that the exact nature of grammar teaching varied from teacher to teacher. Another finding was that teachers normally had well-defined approaches to teaching grammar for which they could provide a coherent rationale. For their rationales, the teachers listed various factors that impacted their views (e.g., student needs, syllabus expectations). Finally, Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers pointed out that "most teachers thoughtfully reflected on what they believed was effective for their students and seemed to be making principled choices" (p. 255) and

“(they) rarely justified their approaches by referring to research studies or any particular methodology” (p. 255).

Using a similar approach, Burgess and Etherington (2002) conducted a questionnaire survey to examine 48 EAP (English for academic purposes) teachers’ beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching in British universities. Their key finding was that the participants reported positive attitudes towards formal instruction of grammar. The majority of the teachers in this study reported that L2 learners preferred them to present grammar points explicitly. This finding suggests that from the teachers’ perspective, there is a match between teachers and students in terms of how to teach grammar.

In another study, Shulz (1996) explored the attitudes of 92 L2 teachers and 824 L2 learners towards the role of grammar and error correction. Shulz found a significant mismatch between teachers’ and students’ views about error correction. One example is that 94% of the students disagreed with the statement “teachers should not correct students when they make errors in class”, compared to 48% of the teachers who agreed. Shulz’ finding seems to contradict Burgess and Etherington’s (2002), as outlined above.

In summary, previous studies on teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching involving their classroom practices share at least three characteristics. First, methodologically, the research of teacher knowledge about grammar teaching directly involving classroom practices usually revealed qualitative data collection methods. Second, one common area the previous studies focused on is teaching methods in grammar instruction. Finally, previous studies have found that teacher knowledge of grammar instruction is shaped by the four different sources: apprenticeship of

observation, disciplinary background, classroom teaching experience, and teacher education.

Teachers' knowledge of grammar. There is another type of research of teacher knowledge of grammar instruction focusing on teachers' knowledge of grammar. For example, Andrews' (1994) study surveyed 82 L2 teacher educators' perspectives of prospective teachers' knowledge of grammar. He found that 50% of the teacher candidates they encountered did not have adequate levels of grammatical knowledge. In 1999, employing a 60-item test, Andrews (1999) conducted another study to compare the explicit knowledge of grammar and grammatical terminology of native and non-native speakers of English as prospective and practicing teachers. One key finding was that the non-native speakers of English performed significantly better on the test than the native speakers of English. This finding suggests that non-native speakers of English as teachers may have some advantage in the area of grammar teaching.

These studies of teacher knowledge of grammar have suggested that nonnative speakers while lacking some levels of implicit L2 knowledge compared with native speakers, may have better explicit knowledge of the L2. In other words, they are equipped with better explicit content knowledge about grammar.

Teacher Knowledge of Reading Instruction

A few researchers have explored L2 teacher knowledge of reading instruction (e.g., Graden, 1996; Johnson, 1992a; Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 1999, 2001; Tercanlioglu, 2001). A major contribution to the research of teacher knowledge about reading instruction comes from the studies by Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard (1999, 2001). Their 1999 study employed two qualitative instruments (i.e., a concept mapping

assignment and a structured open interview) to examine 13 teachers' practical knowledge about reading instruction. The majority of their participants were teachers of foreign languages (i.e., English, Latin, French, and German). In the study, six categories of teachers' practical knowledge were identified: subject matter knowledge, student knowledge, knowledge of student learning, knowledge of purposes, knowledge of curriculum, and knowledge of instructional techniques. By examining the patterns in these categories, Meijer, Verloop, and Beijaard (1999) developed a typology of practical knowledge which consists of three major types of practical knowledge about reading instruction, focusing respectively on subject matter knowledge, student knowledge, and knowledge of student learning and understanding. Their study examined the categories of teacher knowledge in Shulman's (1987) framework.

Based on their 1999 work, Meijer, Verloop, and Beijaard (2001) conducted a quantitative study to explore the similarities and differences in teachers' practical knowledge about reading instruction. A questionnaire consisting of 167 statements was used in this study. 69 teachers completed this survey by expressing their degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements. The statements were based on the data from Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard's (1999) previous qualitative investigation and related to the categories of practical knowledge identified therein. Results indicated that although there was shared knowledge among the teachers (i.e., 22 items or 13.1% of the total on the questionnaire could be identified as shared knowledge), there were large differences in their practical knowledge.

Johnson's (1992a) study explored the relationships between ESL teachers' beliefs and practices during reading instruction for nonnative speakers of English. One of her

findings was that ESL teachers' theoretical beliefs were consistent with their practices in teaching reading. Another key finding was that there was a relationship between years of teaching experience and teachers' theoretical orientation. Specifically, the less experienced teachers embraced the most recent theoretical stance while the more experienced teachers held the least recent one. This finding suggests that "the sources of ESL teachers' theoretical beliefs may stem from the methodological approaches that were prominent when they began teaching ESL" (Johnson, 1992a, pp. 93-94).

Graden (1996) also studied the relationship between teachers' reported beliefs and their observed practices in teaching reading. Overall, her findings were in agreement with at least one dimension of Johnson's (1992a). That is, teachers' beliefs tended to be consistent with their classroom practices despite some specific instances of inconsistency.

In summary, the studies on teacher knowledge of reading instruction, similar to those in grammar teaching, concentrate on topics such as the sources of teacher knowledge, categorizing teacher knowledge, and the relationship between teacher beliefs and teaching practices.

Teacher Knowledge of Writing Instruction

The literature searches for this study have generated three studies conducted about teacher knowledge of writing instruction (i.e., Burns, 1992; Katz, 1996; Tsui, 1996). Burns (1992) focused on examining the beliefs and writing instruction practices of six ESL teachers who taught beginning learners. Her analysis showed that teachers' underlying beliefs about L2 writing instruction involved five interrelated areas which seemed to impact their classroom teaching practices and teaching approaches. These areas consisted of 1) the nature of language as it relates to language learning; 2) the

relationship between written language and spoken language; 3) the nature of beginning language learning and language learning strategies; 4) learner characteristics; and 5) the nature of language classroom.

Using techniques of classroom observations, interviews, and participant's self-report, Tsui (1996) conducted a longitudinal case study of how an EFL teacher in Hong Kong tried to introduce a process-based approach to her teaching of writing. The author described the problems that emerged for the teacher when she applied the approach, the decisions she made to solve them, and how the teacher's understanding of the writing process itself changed as she took her students through a process-writing curriculum. This study traced and made sense of changes in teacher knowledge and practices in writing instruction and highlighted how instructional and curricular factors impact teacher knowledge development in the teaching of writing.

Katz (1996) investigated four ESL teachers' approaches to teaching college writing classes. Through interviews with the participants and observations of their classes, the author developed vivid descriptions of four different teaching styles, involving the teachers' beliefs about what is important in teaching writing, and their behaviors as they enact these beliefs in the writing classrooms.

To sum up, similar to their counterparts in teaching grammar and reading, the studies of teacher knowledge in teaching writing involve issues of teaching methodology, how teachers' beliefs impact their classroom behavior, and factors that impact teacher knowledge development.

Summary

The review of L2 teacher knowledge research in curricular areas (i.e., grammar, reading, and writing) provides a conceptual and methodological basis for future work of this kind. First of all, the main issues this line of research generally examines include sources of teacher knowledge, the relationship between teacher knowledge and classroom teaching practices, and components of teacher knowledge. Moreover, studies of teacher knowledge usually explore teacher knowledge development through analyzing teaching practices. The absence of any analysis of teachers' teaching practices in teacher knowledge research limits the implications of its findings (Borg, 2003). Finally, this line of research usually employs a qualitative method of data collection and the techniques used to collect data usually include interviews and/or classroom observations. Only a few studies used questionnaire techniques. The main reason for the frequent use of qualitative data collection techniques may be that, as Pajares (1992) argues, "beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do" (p. 207).

Despite research interest in exploring teacher knowledge in teaching grammar, reading, and writing in recent years, vocabulary instruction, one of the most important curricular aspects in language teaching, has attracted little attention. To better understand L2 teacher knowledge, more work will be needed focusing on this underexamined curricular aspects of language teaching, including vocabulary instruction (Borg, 2003). This study serves to fill this gap. The following section will discuss ways of examining L2 teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction.

L2 Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary occupies an important position in language learning and teaching. In L2 learning in particular, vocabulary instruction generally is viewed as necessary though insufficient for eventual success in L2 acquisition (Carter & McCarthy, 1988; Gu, 2005; Nation, 1990, 2001; Schmitt, 2000). The major components L2 teachers need to consider in vocabulary instruction include: how to learn vocabulary (vocabulary learning strategies), what to teach about vocabulary (learning goals), and how to teach vocabulary (teaching techniques) (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000).

How to Learn Vocabulary?

Teachers' knowledge of learning has some impact on their ways of teaching. L2 teachers' understanding of how to learn vocabulary also affects their ways of teaching vocabulary. To explore teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction, it is necessary to examine teacher beliefs and assumptions of vocabulary learning, which basically concerns the issue of vocabulary learning strategies (Gu, 2005; Schmitt, 1997).

It is well accepted that successful vocabulary learning is related to learners' use of vocabulary learning strategies (Gu, 2003, 2005; Schmitt, 1997, 2000). All language learners, when approaching a task, will adopt a different set of preferred strategies (Dickinson, 1987; Macaro, 2001; Oxford, 1990). In the last two decades, numerous studies have been conducted that compared retention effects of different vocabulary learning strategies (e.g., Hulstijn, 1992; Hulstijn & Trompetter, 1998; Knight, 1994; Laufer, 2003). The strategies L2 learners often employ in vocabulary learning can fall into five broad categories: 1) incidental vocabulary learning and contextual guessing, 2)

use of dictionaries, 3) note-taking (e.g., vocabulary notebooks, vocabulary cards), 4) rote rehearsal, and 5) encoding (e.g., word-formation) (Gu, 2005).

Both O'Malley & Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1993) propose that training L2 learners to use appropriate learning strategies should be integrated in language teaching. Much research assumes that making learners more conscious of their language learning process and their use of learning strategies will help them to become better language learners. Oxford (1993) holds that direct L2 strategy instruction is a powerful factor influencing the choice of learning strategies. Dickinson (1992) and Harris (1997) also argue that learning strategy training can improve learning effectiveness by equipping learners with tools that they will be able to use long after they leave school.

Broadly speaking, there are mainly five interrelated forms for learning strategy training in the literature:

- 1) Direct advice methodology (e.g. Cohen, 1990). This form presents direct advice on how to learn language independently.
- 2) Method based on 'good language learning' (GLL) research (e.g. Rubin and Thompson, 1994). This form aims to convey insights from observations of language learning strategies by GLL.
- 3) Open-ended method (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989). This approach, based on the assumption that there is no single set of strategies which can function best for all learners, expects learners to experiment with strategies and decide for themselves which ones best suit them.
- 4) 'Integrated' methodology (Dickinson, 1992), which regards learner training as a part of general language learning.

- 5) Self-directed methodology (Holec, 1988). It is proposed that learners should train themselves by practicing self-directed learning with the help of self-access resources and counseling.

Specifically, researchers have offered numerous ways for learning strategy training. For example, Oxford (1990) raises three types of strategy training: awareness training, one-time strategy training, and long-term strategy training. Harris (1997) holds that “whichever type of strategy is selected, the most important principle is to go about it systematically” (p. 13).

What to Teach about Vocabulary?

Many researchers have discussed what is involved in knowing a word (e.g., Gu, 2005; Laufer, 1997; Nation, 1990, 2001, 2005; Schmitt, 2000). It is generally agreed that knowing a word involves the elements as shown in Table 2.1. Ideally, knowing a word would imply familiarity with all its features, but in the reality of L2 learning, knowing a word may be partial. That is, L2 learners may have command of some of the word’s properties but not all of them. Vocabulary teaching, therefore, needs to consider how to handle these different properties of a word to promote vocabulary learning.

How to Teach Vocabulary?

According to Sokmen (1997) and Schmitt (2000), there are two general approaches in vocabulary teaching: implicit and explicit. The implicit instruction approach is featured with teaching the importance of directing L2 students to recognize clues in context and use monolingual rather than bilingual dictionaries to define words or glossing texts (Sokmen, 1997). This approach promotes incidental vocabulary learning, i.e., inferring word meaning from context. Incidental L2 vocabulary learning has been

found to have certain advantages over explicit vocabulary instruction (Huckin, & Coady, 1999). First, incidental vocabulary learning is a type of contextualized learning, which provides learners with a richer sense of a word's use and meaning. Another advantage may be that incidental vocabulary learning seems more efficient in that it improves learners' vocabulary and reading abilities simultaneously. Finally, incidental vocabulary learning is more learner-centered and individualized because learners select the reading materials that they need to learn. Learners' needs therefore are utmost met.

Table 2.1 *Knowing a word* (Nation, 2001, p. 27)

| | | |
|---------|-----------------------|---|
| Form | Spoken | R: What does the word sound like? |
| | | P: How is the word pronounced? |
| | Written | R: What does the word look like? |
| | | P: How is the word written and spelled? |
| | Word parts | R: What parts are recognizable in this word? |
| | | P: What word parts are needed to express the meaning? |
| Meaning | Form and meaning | R: What meaning does this word form signal? |
| | | P: What word form can be used to express this meaning? |
| | Concept and referents | R: What is included in the concept? |
| | | P: What items can the concept refer to? |
| | Associations | R: What other words does this make us think of? |
| | | P: What other words could we use instead of this one? |
| Use | Grammatical functions | R: In what patterns does the word occur? |
| | | P: In what patterns must we use this word? |
| | Collocations | R: What words or types of words occur with this one? |
| | | P: What words or types of words must we use with this one? |
| | Constraints on use | R: Where, when and how often would we expect to meet this word? |
| | | P: Where, when, and how often can we use this word? |

Note: R = receptive knowledge, P = productive knowledge

However, implicit vocabulary instruction is usually criticized for a number of potential problems associated with guessing words in context. First of all, heavy reliance on L2 vocabulary acquisition through inferring words from context seems to be a slow process. In natural contexts, incidental L2 vocabulary learning does not seem to contribute a lot to vocabulary retention. Researchers have found that the strategy many L2 readers use to handle the unknown words in context is simply to ignore them (Fraser, 1999; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999). Research also indicates that L2 readers' attempts to infer word meanings from context often end up with inaccurate guesses due to their lower L2 proficiency and/or inadequate context cues (Huckin & Coady, 1999; Hulstijn, 1992; Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000). Moreover, readers' correct inference of the meaning of an unknown word in context does not necessarily result in long-term retention (Hulstijn, 2001, 2003; Nation, 2001) because no further mental processing of the word occurs once the readers satisfy their immediate communicative need. Finally, research has found that reading for L2 vocabulary development cannot ensure development of the complex knowledge of the unknown words that underlies the ability to use them in a productive mode (Paribakht & Wesche, 1997).

In contrast to implicit vocabulary instruction, explicit vocabulary teaching is featured with the following key principles as Sokmen (1997) identified throughout the literature: building a large sight vocabulary, integrating new words with old, providing multiple encounters with the word, promoting a deep level of semantic processing, facilitating imaging and concreteness, using a variety of techniques, and encouraging independent learning strategies.

- Building a large sight vocabulary: To help L2 learners develop a large sight vocabulary, instructors need to answer the following question in vocabulary teaching: Which words should be focused on: high frequency words or difficult words?
- Integrating new words with old: To help L2 students store vocabulary effectively, instructors should design a variety of class activities which can draw on students' background knowledge and stimulate them to explore the relationships between the word to be learned and words already known.
- Providing multiple encounters with the word: To help L2 students develop a more accurate understanding of a word's meaning and use, instructors need to consciously cue reactivation of the word. In other words, they should provide students with initial coding of the new word and then design a variety of activities and different contexts for the purpose of subsequent retrieval of the word.
- Promoting a deep level of semantic processing: For a deeper level of semantic processing, L2 instructors need to develop classroom activities demanding a richer level of encoding of a new word. For example, they can ask students to manipulate the new word, relate it to other words and to their own experiences, and then justify their choices.
- Facilitating imaging and concreteness: L2 instructors need to make new words real or concrete by connecting them to students' world in some way. For example, they can make illustrations, show pictures, or draw diagrams in vocabulary teaching. The instructors also can provide personal examples, relate new words to current events, or have students relate new words to their own lives.

- Using a variety of techniques: Vocabulary instruction needs to involve the six general categories of instructional ideas identified in literature: dictionary work (i.e., routines focusing on a word and its definition), word unit analysis (i.e., activities focusing on analysis of affixes and word roots), mnemonic devices (i.e., verbal or visual aids to memory or a combination of both, e.g., using the rhyming of poetry to enhance memory), semantic elaboration (i.e., activities promoting formation of associations and building L2 learners' semantic networks for long-term retention of vocabulary), collocations (i.e., activities heightening students' awareness of which words commonly occur in the company with the target word they learn), and oral production (oral activities using to-be-learned words, e.g., having students make dialogues with the target words).

- Encouraging independent learning strategies: Vocabulary instruction should involve helping students learn how to continue to acquire vocabulary on their own. For this purpose, students can learn how to learn vocabulary independently from "cognitive apprenticeship" (Resnick, 1989). That is, they can learn it from experiencing instructors' explicit methods of vocabulary learning which require deep processing and plan re-encountering of words. Moreover, learners can also learn independent vocabulary learning strategies through designing class activities which capitalize on metacognitive training (e.g., encouraging learners to keep vocabulary notebooks).

Finally, more and more research criticizes the ineffectiveness of over-reliance on implicit vocabulary instruction. Researchers suggest that a more effective approach to L2 vocabulary learning can be integrating incidental L2 vocabulary instruction into explicit

L2 vocabulary learning (Hulstijn, 1992; Sokmen, 1997). As Hulstijn's (1992) study indicated, when L2 learners were provided a certain brief period of time to study for a test, their performance was much better than under any of the incidental learning conditions. In other words, their explicit vocabulary learning overrode the influence of other incidental learning conditions. Craw and Quigley's (1985) experimental study also showed that "learning that occurred through formal instruction was significantly better than whatever incidental vocabulary learning may have occurred" (p. 509).

Summary

Though considerable literature exists on L2 vocabulary instruction, research has focused on exploring what teachers do in the classroom (teacher behavior) from a researcher's perspective rather than investigating the conceptions and beliefs behind teachers' particular behaviors while teaching vocabulary. My review of existing literature leads me to conclude that little research has investigated L2 teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction from teachers' perspectives. Some researchers have called for more work to examine L2 teacher knowledge in specific curricular areas (e.g., Borg, 2003) in that each curricular area has particular characteristics regarding linguistic properties, teaching techniques, and learning strategies. Thus, what teacher knowledge specifically consists of should vary from one curricular area to another. To examine teacher knowledge about vocabulary instruction, we need to answer three broad interrelated questions in term of teachers' views: a) How to learn vocabulary? b) What to teach about vocabulary? and c) How to teach vocabulary?

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate and describe EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction. Based on previous research on teacher knowledge and L2 vocabulary knowledge, the main research questions to be addressed through this study are:

1. What beliefs do experienced Chinese EFL teachers hold about vocabulary learning?
2. What are their beliefs about vocabulary teaching?
3. What is the relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning vocabulary instruction and their classroom behavior?
4. How do they develop knowledge of vocabulary instruction?

CHAPTER 3

EFL TEACHING IN CHINA

The context cannot be ignored in teacher knowledge research (Borg, 2003; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Tsui, 2003). As Freeman and Johnson (1998) argue, “language teaching cannot be understood apart from the socio-cultural environments in which it takes place and the processes of establishing and navigating social values in which it is embedded” (p. 409). Tsui (2003) also suggests that “teachers’ knowledge must be understood in terms of the way they respond to the contexts of their work, and this in turn shapes the contexts in which their knowledge is developed” (p. 2). To explore EFL teachers’ knowledge of vocabulary instruction, it is necessary to understand the context in which their EFL instruction takes place. This chapter presents an account of EFL education in China, the broad context which this research involves, mainly focusing on four aspects: the role and history of EFL teaching in China, EFL vocabulary instruction, and EFL university teacher education.

The Role of EFL in China

In the last 30 years, the English language has been gaining importance at an accelerated rate in China because of the policy of opening to the outside world and the drive to modernization (Xu, 2006; Yao 1993). Since the late 1970s, the Chinese government has viewed English as a valuable resource for China’s modernization. As Cowan *et al.* (1979) state, “the Chinese view English primarily as a necessary tool which can facilitate access to modern scientific and technological advances and secondarily as a vehicle to promote commerce and understanding between the PRC

and countries where English is a major language” (p. 466). Maley (1995) also assumes that “China is in a phase of industrial, scientific and commercial expansion which will make it the world’s largest economy ... In order to function efficiently in this role, it needs to bring large numbers of its people to high levels of proficiency in the use of English for a wide variety of functions” (p. 47). Thus, foreign languages were viewed “to embody the scientific, progressive, and creative thinking that China’s leaders advocated for modernization” (Yang, 2000, p. 16). Of various foreign languages being taught in China, English is obviously the actual and even quasi-official number one (Cheng, 2002). This is reflected in the special importance attached to English language teaching from primary school education to university education in China.

According to the Chinese Ministry of Education, English education should start in grade three at the primary school level and students from primary school to high school have to take at least four periods of English education weekly (Cheng, 2002). At present, English also has become one of the three required core subjects in high school curricula and College Entrance Examinations (Yang, 2000).

For university students, English is the first foreign language to learn after their eight-year compulsory English training in primary school and high school (Yao, 1993). In addition, they view English as a useful world language and study it out of personal interest. Actually many of them have great motivation to learn English in that a good level of English can help them “to enter and graduate university; to obtain better jobs, especially those in companies or joint ventures which have international

connections; to read technical materials; and to study abroad” (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996, p.61).

In Chinese higher education, there are two main programmes for English language teaching. One is for English majors and the other for those majoring in other subjects (also called non-English majors). Two different national curricula have been set up respectively for these two programmes. For non-English majors, the National Curriculum requires that in the course of their tertiary education, they have to learn English as a compulsory module four hours per week in Year 1 and Year 2 and as a selective module two hours per week in Year 3 (Wu, 2001). The first two years are generally for the fundamental study of English and the third year for advanced reading of information for specific purposes. For graduate students, English is equally important as well. To be admitted into a graduate school, candidates need to pass a national English examination. After becoming graduate students, they also need to study English as a required course for one or two terms.

English in China assumes an important position not only in the school curriculum but also in people’s daily lives. For example, people with a good command of English tend to get better paying jobs (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Hu, 2003). Professionals who want to obtain a title above lecturer or engineer are also required to pass a foreign language test, generally English.

English in China, therefore, is viewed not only as a tool for the nation’s modernization but also as a ticket for an individual’s academic advancement (Yang, 2000). These factors have contributed to a flourishing growth of teaching and learning English as a foreign language all over China. Currently, over 300 million Chinese people, more than a quarter of Chinese population, learn English, and it is estimated

that Chinese EFL learners may outnumber native English speakers in the next few years (Liu & Teng, 2006). For the current situation of EFL learning and teaching in China, Gray (2000) depicted a vivid picture as follows:

...the study of English is currently extremely popular in China. Language schools ... are flourishing in the big cities, Chinese TV and radio have daily English language programs, there are now more 'foreign experts' teaching English in the country than ever before, and recently Beijing, for the first time, had an international ELT book and education fair. (p. 1)

The History of EFL Teaching in China

The development of EFL teaching in China from 1949, when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established, has been viewed as a barometer of modernization (Ross, 1992). In research tracing the history of PRC English teaching (e.g., Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Lam, 2002; Yang, 2000), two broad periods have been identified: the Socialist Revolutionary Period (1949-1977) and the Open Door Period (1978- the Present).

The Socialist Revolutionary Period (1949-1977)

English teaching in the Socialist Revolutionary Period in China experienced two stages: before the Cultural Revolution (1949-1965) and during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) (Lam, 2002). Before the Cultural Revolution (1949-1965), foreign language teaching in China was dominated by that of the Russian language because of China's intimacy with the Soviet Union (Lam, 2002; Yang, 2000). In foreign language teaching, China borrowed educational structures, curriculum,

pedagogy, and teaching materials from the Soviet Union. Due to the pervasiveness of Russian learning, there was a shortage of teachers of Russian, and numerous teachers of English were ordered to switch to teaching Russian (Yang, 2000). English instruction was merely confined to certain specialized institutes to train foreign language teachers, translators, and interpreters.

In the late 1950s, when there occurred the breakdown of political and economic links between China and the Soviet Union, China began to change the slogan “Learn from the Soviet Union” to “Learn from all the advanced experiences of the world” (Dzau, 1990a, p. 19). Thus, the teaching of other foreign languages, especially English, resumed. In 1962, foreign languages became a compulsory subject in China’s university entrance examinations (Ross, 1992) and English, displacing Russian, was officially designated to be the first foreign language. The revival of English teaching, however, did not last long when the Cultural Revolution was launched in China in 1966.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) throughout China, farmers and workers were honored and intellectuals were distrusted. Students were supposed to be educated more directly and more effectively if participating in physical labor in factories and on farms than just learning at school. The learning or teaching of anything foreign was labeled “poisonous weeds” and became condemnable. Therefore, most schools stopped teaching English. Teachers of English were vilified as ‘spies’ and ‘worshippers of everything foreign’ (Yang, 2000). Books about foreign classic literature were burned. Foreign newspapers and movies were also considered as the

forbidden zone.

In the early 1970s, the relationships with the West, particularly marked by the United States' formal recognition of China as a member of the United Nations, brought English back to the school curriculum. However, it was still viewed as a weapon for political dogma rather than as a tool for an individual's academic development or for China's interaction with other nations (Yang, 2000). As a result, learning English seemed to be of little use to students. Students had little motivation to learn English and teachers had no enthusiasm to teach English. In addition, teachers were afraid of inadvertently talking about anything politically wrong, and thus had to rigidly follow what the authorities had published.

In the Socialist Revolutionary Period (1949-1977), EFL teaching in China also involved certain specific aspects, for example, its general goal, teaching methodologies, and textbooks. First, the general goal of the English curriculum was for students to develop a working knowledge of the target language rather than foreign ideas (Yang, 2000). Although having realized the need to master "the foreign way of expression" and learn to think in the foreign language, the Chinese government stressed that students should not learn "the way of thinking of the foreigner" and that foreign languages should be used "in our own way" (Yang, 2000, p. 12).

Moreover, several methodologies in English teaching were introduced in this period. In the 1950s, Soviet theories and methodologies in teaching foreign languages were promoted in China. The prevalent method of English teaching was the

Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). The major characteristics of GTM are as follows (Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979):

- Classes are taught in the mother tongue rather than the target language;
- Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words;
- Long, elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are provided;
- Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words;
- Little attention is paid to the content of texts and the texts are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis;
- The only drills usually are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue;

Li (1984) also states that a GTM lesson consists of a focus text and a list of language points which are drawn out of the text and only involve the form of the language:

grammar and vocabulary. In a typical class with this method, the teacher would provide students with a word, phrase or sentence and ask them for choral repetition.

Then students would be required to read it aloud individually and translate it into Chinese. It is argued that there are some main disadvantages in the GTM (Li, 1998).

First, the use of GTM cannot highly motivate students to learn a foreign language because of its teacher-centeredness. Moreover, the biggest failure of GTM may be that it overlooks the communicative aspect of language teaching and learning.

Students trained with this approach usually have obstacles in communicating with others by means of the target language. Another weakness may be that students might

become used to translating Chinese meaning into English rather than thinking directly in English while they are speaking or writing English, thus usually causing to produce Chinglish (Chinese English). The habit of translating also severely affects the improvement of their English when they continue at a higher stage. Finally, students who have memorized more than 3,000 words might not pronounce them correctly because they learn the words through meaning and spelling rather than speaking and listening. Meanwhile, words are usually learned in isolation rather than in context and hence, it is difficult for learners to use them appropriately.

In the early 1960s, western language teaching methodologies, especially the Audiolingual Method, were borrowed for English teaching in China (Yang, 2000). According to the Audiolingual Method, foreign language learning is viewed as a process of mechanical habit formation. Pedagogically, English teaching was featured with learners' memorizing dialogues and performing pattern drills. During the Cultural Revolution, due to its association with Western methods of foreign language learning, the Audiolingual Method was abandoned. English teaching was dominated again by the Grammar-Translation Method.

Regarding EFL textbooks, the themes were mainly related to political slogans, moral doctrines, and negative descriptions of the western capitalist world during the Socialist Revolutionary Period. In the 1950s, the texts for English teaching were about politics in China and some English texts were adapted from Communist newspapers in English-speaking countries or from English translations of Russian books. In the early 1960s, though English, replacing Russian, became the primary

foreign language in China, English teachers were not allowed to directly use Western teaching materials. The influential English textbooks in China, named *English*, were compiled by Guozhang Xu in 1960. The texts were mostly concerned with Chinese moral and political issues. Each lesson was designed according to the following format: a short piece of prose as the focus text, a list of new words and expressions, notes about grammatical structures, a list of useful patterns with additional examples, questions based on the content of the text, exercises about grammar and vocabulary, and exercises about sentence and passage translation. During the Cultural Revolution, since teaching mainly aimed at preaching political dogma, the texts for English teaching were highly politicized. Almost all texts were translated from Chinese political dogmas, without considering students' and instructors' interests.

Overall, due to the politicized education of this period, English teaching was characterized with political expressions and an extreme lack of understanding of English cultures. Thus, the quality of English teaching was very low. For college entrance examination, for example, the English vocabulary required was only 600-800 words (Yang, 2000). After graduation, English-major students had poor reading ability, with an average reading speed of 50-80 words per minute. Usually they were unable to comprehend what they read in the foreign press. In listening, English majors could not follow native speakers of English even though they spoke at a normal speed. English majors also could not speak clearly and naturally. If this was the proficiency of English majors, the proficiency of non-English majors was considerably lower.

The Open Door Period (1978- the Present)

This politicized atmosphere in China existed until the termination of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, when China began to realize the importance of opening its doors to the West and concentrating on its economic development (Lam, 2002). In 1978, the Chinese government proposed to accomplish the Four Modernizations in Chinese agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology by the year 2000. This policy soon evolved into the Reform and Opening Policy (Lam, 2002). In order to develop an economically strong nation, the government asserted that “for socialistic construction we need to absorb and utilize the rich knowledge accumulated by the capitalist countries, their advanced technologies and ways of management” (Cleverly, 1985, p. 264). Thus, learning foreign languages, especially English, was highly valued for the Chinese. By 1982, English was promoted as the main foreign language in secondary education in China (Lam, 2002). From the mid 1990s, English together with Chinese and mathematics had become one core element in China’s university entrance examinations. In 1985, the first international conference on English language teaching was held in Guangzhou, China. In 1987, the national College English Test (CET Band 4 and CET Band 6) was introduced to promote English learning as well as assessing the implementation of the College English Syllabus. Currently, CET4/6 has become one of the most important tests nationwide with nearly 6 million candidates annually (Pang, Zhou & Fu, 2002). The CET certificate has been so highly valued in China that it is generally viewed as a passport to better-paid employment in China’s increasingly competitive job market.

In 1991, when the Soviet Union disintegrated, China began to adopt a more international stance. For example, China endeavored to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) and bid to host the Olympic Games. In 2001, both dreams were realized. China succeeded in gaining entry to the WTO on November 10, 2001 and will host the Olympics in August, 2008. With China's increasingly active involvement in the process of economic globalization and international cooperation during this period, great importance has been attached to the English language in Chinese education (Pang, Zhou, & Fu, 2002). In 1996, Lanqing Li, Vice Premier of the State Council, explicitly asserted that the urgent improvement of Chinese people's English proficiency was not only an educational issue but an issue associated with the modernization of China. To meet the needs of English for people in society at large, another national English test, the China Public English Test System (PETS), was developed in 1999. The PETS is administered by the National Educational Examinations Authority under the Ministry of Education in China.

Objectives of EFL Teaching. During the Open Door Period, the objectives of college English teaching were gradually made explicit. In 1985, the College English Syllabus was published. According to the syllabus, the ultimate goal of English teaching is to develop students' communicative skills in spoken and written forms. Specifically, college English teaching aimed to train proficient reading ability, certain listening and translation ability, and elementary writing and speaking ability, thus helping students develop abilities to use English as a tool to gain knowledge of their specialization (Yang, 2000). In 1999, the revised College English Syllabus was

completed and is being used by Chinese universities. This syllabus requires that learners should have the abilities to use English for basic communication not only in their specialization, as required in the 1985 syllabus, but also for general communication. For one thing, the revised syllabus continues to attach the greatest importance to developing learners' reading ability, as the 1985 syllabus did. On the other hand, to meet social needs, the revised syllabus places the same emphasis on developing learners' speaking and writing ability as on developing their listening and translation ability, as required in the former syllabus. That is, EFL learners should be trained to acquire certain speaking and writing abilities as well as certain listening and translation abilities. Moreover, different from its 1985 counterpart, the 1999 syllabus raises the vocabulary requirement for college graduates (from 4,000 words to 5,000 words) (College English Syllabus, 1999).

Development of EFL Textbooks. Since the late 1980s, various English textbooks were compiled and introduced. A series of nine-volume high school English textbooks began to be used in most high schools in China in the 1980s. The texts consisted of drills, dialogues or short texts. Explanations were mostly provided in Chinese. The exercises included spelling, pronunciation, sentence-construction, grammar, and English-Chinese translation (Yang, 2000). Meanwhile, some popular English textbooks compiled in the English-speaking countries were introduced into China, for example, *New Concept English* (NCE) (Alexander, 1967) from England and *English 900* (Inc. Washington D.C. English Language Services, 1967) from the United States. The four-volume textbooks *New Concept English* were fairly

influential owing to their resemblance in the selection of texts to Chinese English textbooks (Yang, 2000). For instance, the first volume was based on pattern drills and conversations. NCE became popular also because its author was a native English speaker and the texts were authentic English. Therefore, the popularity of NCE in China lies in its close association with Chinese traditionalism and authentic language input (Ross, 1992; Yang, 2000). In the 1990s, more diversified English textbooks, based on various language teaching theories, were developed. Cultural information about English-speaking countries was also included in the textbooks. Moreover, attention was attached to the materials on science and technology for textbook writing.

EFL Teaching Methodologies. In the Open Door Period, English syllabi began to highly promote the study of foreign theories of language teaching (Yang, 2000). EFL teachers started to value linguistics and applied linguistics in EFL teaching. In an arena previously dominated by the grammar-translation approach, these 30 years have witnessed profound changes in language teaching methodologies. The most influential teaching approach is the communicative language teaching (CLT), which was introduced into Chinese EFL teaching in the 1980s (Li, 1984; Yu, 2001). CLT started with a theory of language as communication with the goal to develop learners' communicative competence (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Brown (1987) offered four interconnected characteristics of CLT: 1) The focus of classroom goals is on all the ingredients of communicative competence rather than merely on linguistic competence; 2) *function* is the primary framework for organizing and

sequencing lessons and *forms* are taught through *function*; 3) *fluency* is more emphasized than *accuracy*, and ‘the ultimate criterion for communicative success is the actual transmission and receiving of intended meaning’ (Brown, 1987, p. 213); and 4) learners can use the target language productively and receptively in ‘unrehearsed’ contexts in a communicative classroom. The call for the adoption of CLT is generally viewed as a recognition of the inadequacy of the traditional GTM (Mitchell, 1994; Nunan, 1988; Yu, 2001) and as a response to discontent with the GTM’s four-centeredness (i.e., teacher-centeredness, textbook-centeredness, grammar-centeredness, and vocabulary-centeredness) (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996).

According to the CLT approach, the primary goal of language learning is fluency and acceptable language output. Thus, error correction is generally strictly controlled or even forbidden. Language learners are expected to learn English through completing tasks and communicating information with each other. Specifically, a CLT class is featured with the activities of group discussion, debate, and role play, and the use of Chinese is normally avoided.

To promote the application of CLT to EFL teaching practice, the China State Education Development Commission (SEDC) issued a new national EFL syllabus in 1992 to replace the 1981 structured-based syllabus. This syllabus, setting communication as the teaching aim, called for EFL training in listening, speaking, reading, and writing to enable students to develop basic knowledge of English and competence to use English for communication (Yu, 2001).

Although CLT has been highly recommended and has aroused enormous

interests in Chinese EFL teaching since the 1980s, its implementation in China is not as successful as expected due to various constraints on CLT (Ellis, 1996; Yao, 1993; Yu, 2001). Many EFL researchers, educators, and practitioners in China are still “skeptical as to whether CLT is really superior to the traditional analytical approach” (Yu, 2001, p. 196). In EFL teaching practice, conflicts often arise between CLT and the traditional GTM in China. One reason is that CLT focuses on four different centers: *the learner, interaction, tasks and problems*, and *functions and uses* while the Chinese traditional approach has ‘a long-standing concern with *mastery of knowledge*, which is focused on the four centers of *the teacher, the textbook, grammar* and *vocabulary* (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996, p.65).

Another reason is that in Chinese Confucian culture, learners often view learning as something static and directed by others. The teacher is perceived as an authority, a source of knowledge, and an intellectual and moral example, taking charge of transmitting the knowledge of English to learners (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). That is, “if teachers do not display their knowledge in lectures, or if they play games with students or ask students to role-play in class, then they are not doing their job” (Hui, 1997, p. 38). Moreover, the knowledge the teacher transmits is included in textbooks. The texts, therefore, are generally taught and learned in great detail in China. Students hold that if they acquire what the textbook contains, they will meet all needs from the teacher and various exams. Textbook-reliance hence is ‘a key element in Chinese learning’ (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996, p.65). As a result, Chinese students tend to depend on the teacher, syllabus and textbook, favor rote learning over creative

learning, and lack intellectual initiative (Wedell & Liu, 1995; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). It seems that they are passive recipients of knowledge and reluctant to challenge authority openly, especially teachers. This is in sharp contrast with what CLT promotes: Students should take the primary role in learning.

There are also some other factors constraining the effective use CLT in Chinese EFL teaching. First, due to the requirement of teachers' native-like fluency in English, quite a number of Chinese EFL teachers, for lack of such training, are professionally unqualified (Yang, 2000). They know only some basic English grammar and vocabulary (Yu, 2001). For such teachers, therefore, the GTM is the most feasible teaching method. In addition, due to the economic conditions and population in China, the classroom size from 40-100 students constrains the effective application of CLT. On the other hand, many students taught with CLT do not perform well on national English tests, which are oriented towards accuracy in grammar. Therefore, students often complain that it is a waste of time to take an English class taught with CLT (Yang, 2000; Yen, 1987).

Indeed, traditional teaching methods are still in a dominant position in China (Yang, 2000). A study about EFL university teachers' teaching methodology shows that over 70% of the teachers admit that they are still employing the traditional GTM in class (Xu, 2006). It can often be observed in an English class in China that the teacher of English holding a textbook explains a text word by word, asks students to translate some sentences in the text or recite the text while students passively participate in their language learning process (Li, 1984; Yang, 2000).

Summary

The open door period has witnessed tremendous changes in EFL teaching and learning in China. The most significant change in Chinese EFL teaching is the increasing number of teachers and learners (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). In 1957, for instance, only 843 full time high school teachers taught English in China. In the early 1990s, however, there were over 310,400 such English teachers (Ross, 1992). Students' English proficiency, compared with their counterparts' two decades ago, has also been greatly improved. High school graduates' vocabulary, for example, is much larger than that of the graduates two decades ago (1600 words in 1998 vs. 600-800 words in 1978). These changes reflect the general perception of the need for English as part of China's modernization, the new job opportunities requiring English in the rapid development of 'socialist market economy' (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). Pang, Zhou, and Fu (2002) also claim that "for most Chinese people, English is now learnt not for the prestige of knowing a foreign language or appreciating the cultural heritage of Anglo-American societies, but for patriotic and utilitarian reasons, and for national modernization as well as personal advancement and material gain" (p. 203).

Although EFL teaching in China has made great progress since the 1980s (Yao, 1993), problems still exist in this field. According to the National Academic Conference on Foreign Language Teaching in 1997, tertiary EFL teaching is not as successful as the instruction of other general modules such as mathematics, chemistry, physics, and Chinese. The English module, compared with others, is invested with more time and financial support but seems less effective. In reality, it is often the case

that many Chinese tertiary students who have received nearly ten years of English language instruction frequently remain deficient in using the language or even understanding it in normal communication. For such a condition, researchers have explored the reasons (e.g. Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). According to Cortazzi & Jin (1996), the main reasons may lie in such areas as:

the present examination systems in schools and colleges, which emphasise the development of reading comprehension skills through knowledge of grammar and vocabulary; perceived lack of time; the continued use of time-honoured textbooks; perceived limitations in resources and teacher training; institutional resistance to change; and the difficulty of teaching large classes. (p. 65)

EFL Vocabulary Instruction in China

Chinese EFL teachers, as their counterparts in ESL settings do, consider vocabulary as one of the most important components in English learning and teaching (Xu & Li, 2007). Researchers argue that English vocabulary teaching in China may fall into three groups (Wang, 2001; Wang, Han & Liu, 2007; Xu & Li, 2007): the grammar-translation approach, the communicative approach, and an integrated approach.

Before the 1980s, Chinese EFL teaching was dominated by the GTM. What was emphasized in the GTM is on “grammar and lexical accuracy, attention to form rather than meaning, explanation and memorization of individual words and their usage” (Yang, 2000, p. 18). According to the GTM, language learning, to a great

extent, was viewed as vocabulary learning. What students were normally engaged in was memorizing hundreds of words in English learning, and an English teacher was usually regarded as a 'live' dictionary (Wang, Han & Liu, 2007). The GTM valued direct vocabulary learning, in which learners focused their attention on vocabulary through doing exercises and activities (Tong, 2001). For vocabulary teaching, an explicit method was usually adopted, generally focusing on spelling, meaning, and usage with little or no attention paid to pronunciation (Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979). The teacher explicitly presented the meanings of a word to students and then exemplified how to use the word by providing several sentences. The word meanings taught in class were not necessarily associated with the text students were learning. To teach a reading text, teachers employing the GTM usually utilized a bottom-up method, starting with treating the new words first and then handling the text. For vocabulary teaching and learning, bilingual dictionaries were highly regarded as reference tools.

In the 1990s, the communicative approach greatly impacted Chinese EFL teaching (Yang, 2000; Yu, 2001). This approach, focusing more on language use than language form and more on language fluency than language accuracy (Brown, 1987), stressed indirect, implicit, and incidental learning of vocabulary, in which learners' attention was focused on the message rather than on vocabulary (Ao, 2005; Tong, 2001). Following this approach, EFL teachers taught vocabulary in context and usually instructed students to guess the meanings of new words in context. This approach valued English-English dictionaries rather than English-Chinese dictionaries

for vocabulary learning.

In actual vocabulary instruction, an integrated approach is usually employed by EFL Chinese teachers, integrating the GTM into CLT (Wang, Han & Liu, 2007; Yan, Zhou, & Dai, 2007) and combining incidental vocabulary teaching with explicit vocabulary teaching (Ao, 2005; Tong, 2001). As pointed out above, the GTM has its weaknesses in language teaching and CLT is also problematic in its application to EFL teaching in the Chinese context. Empirical research (e.g., Wang, 1999) indicates that both the GTM and CLT have strengths and weaknesses in the Chinese EFL setting. In teaching practice, researchers (Yan, Zhou, & Dai, 2007) have found that Chinese EFL teachers do not confine themselves to one teaching approach but they are eclectic in approach. Specifically, they employ “more than one method/approach with or without one of them as the main construct” and their techniques seem to be “at the center of the Two-Dimension Model, generally focusing on both form and function and resulting in both learning (conscious) and acquisition (subconscious)” (Yan, Zhou, & Dai, 2007, p.12). Therefore, it is argued that all methods have valuable insights into English language teaching, but no single method seems good enough to be universally accepted as the best (Yan, Zhou, & Dai, 2007).

An integrated approach of vocabulary teaching also values both incidental vocabulary teaching and explicit vocabulary teaching (Tong, 2001). In addition, vocabulary instruction with this approach tends to develop learners’ independent vocabulary learning strategies, for example, how to guess words from context and how to effectively use a dictionary (Ao, 2005; Wang, Han, & Liu, 2007).

EFL University Teacher Education in China

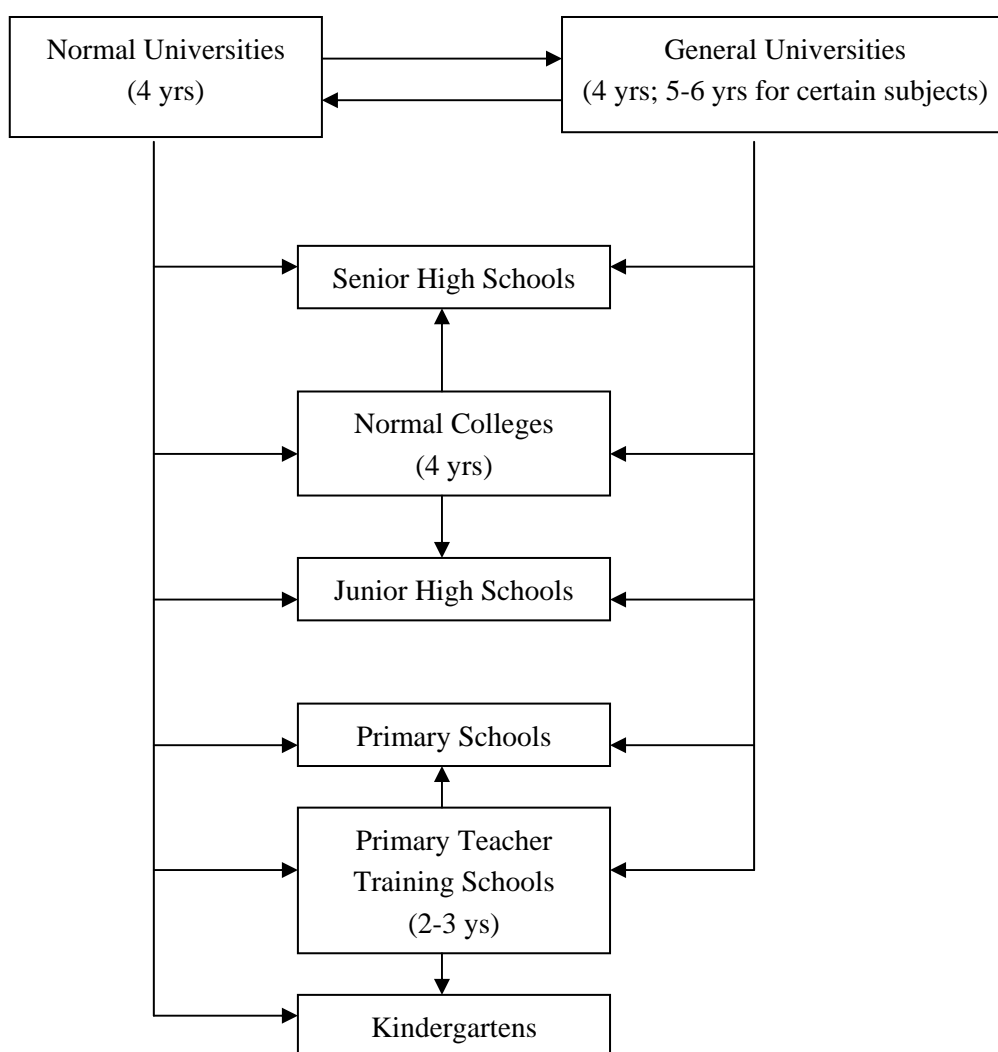
With China opening up further to the outside world, particularly after China became a member of WTO, people become increasingly interested in learning English and an increasing number of English speaking professionals are needed (Pang, Zhou, & Fu, 2002). EFL teaching, as a result, has become a huge profession in China. English teacher education in the Chinese EFL setting performs a crucial role in the EFL university teaching reform which has been promoted since the early 1990s (Lu, 2003; Zhou, 2002). Along with this, EFL university teacher education in China has received considerable research attention in the past two decades (e.g., Adamson, 1995; Oatey, 1990b; Yen, 1987; Zeng, 2002). This section discusses current issues involving the education of Chinese EFL university teachers instructing students as non-English majors. To begin with, my attention centers on a review of teacher education system in China. Then my focus shifts to the provisions of Chinese EFL university teacher education. Finally, a discussion is conducted about the challenges in Chinese EFL university teacher education.

Provisions of Teacher Education in China

Traditionally, in the Chinese setting, great importance has been attached to the role and status of teachers. In contemporary China, teachers are often depicted as *engineers of the human soul* and there has been a National Teachers' Day in China, which is annually celebrated on September 10. Teacher education, therefore, is an important part of Chinese education system. Currently, a teacher education system has been established to meet the needs of basic education of different types and at

different levels. The Chinese teacher education system consists of two sections: pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher training. Pre-service teacher education usually is conducted by general universities, normal universities and colleges, and primary teacher training schools (See Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 *Pre-service teacher education system in China*



Note: → shows the destination institutions where graduates normally go to be teachers after graduation.

As regards in-service teacher training, there are four major ways: correspondence education, broadcasting and television education, self-study examinations, school-level self-development. First, normal universities/colleges offer

some correspondence courses focusing on specific areas (e.g., teaching methodologies) for in-service teachers. In addition, courses are offered by radio and TV. Since the 1980s, television universities have been established in some big cities. Finally, teachers can take self-study examinations at a particular time of the year. When they accumulate sufficient credits, they are awarded a degree or certificate. In-service teacher development at school level is another common way. Specifically, teachers are asked to work in teams to prepare lessons, or to observe master teachers' demonstration followed by a discussion about methodology and classroom organization (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996).

Provisions of EFL University Teacher Education in China

Numerous normal or general universities and colleges in China provide undergraduate programs for future English language teachers in high schools, primary schools, and kindergartens. In training to teach EFL, the undergraduates as pre-service teachers originally were required merely to study the English language and literature. Since the 1980s, however, trainees at normal universities have been required to take courses related to teaching methodology and educational psychology, which are generally taught in Chinese. Some programs also provide linguistics as an elective course for trainees. In addition, trainees have to participate in teaching practice which usually takes place in the fourth year, but not much time is distributed because it lasts only around a month (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). In the course of teaching practice, a collective approach is generally employed, which is characterized by trainees' work together with experienced teachers to prepare, rehearse, observe and analyze lessons.

Various MA TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) or Applied Linguistics programs have been established in Chinese normal universities and general universities since the 1990s. Most of the MA candidates in these programs will become tertiary EFL teachers after graduation. The candidates can be divided into two groups. One group consists of the students who are admitted upon graduation from their undergraduate programs. They are viewed as pre-service teachers in that they have limited teaching experiences. The other group is the candidates who have teaching experience before they are admitted to the MA program. They are viewed as in-service teachers. The courses that the MA programs offer usually include linguistics (e.g., general linguistics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics) and applied linguistics (e.g., teaching methodology).

Tertiary In-service EFL Teacher Education in China

In the 1980s, Chinese educational government began to emphasize tertiary in-service EFL teacher education. Oatey's (1990a) systematic review shows that tertiary in-service EFL teacher education in China between the 1980s and the 1990s can be divided into two phases. In the first phase (1979-1983), two groups of people were involved in EFL teacher training programs. One group were the teachers of Russian who were asked to teach English when the Sino-Soviet relation deteriorated in the late 1950s. These teachers had difficulties in oral communication in English due to their previous formal training in Russian. The other group were the teachers of English who graduated in the period of the Cultural Revolution and were called WPS (worker-peasant-soldier) students (Oatey, 1990a). Although these teachers received

some training in English, their EFL proficiency was rather limited. In this phrase, 24 in-service EFL teacher training centers were established throughout the country. The centers generally ran six one-semester courses, focusing on two areas: English proficiency improvement and teaching methodology. The courses were taught mainly through lectures and the major focus was on improving their English proficiency.

In the second phrase (1983-1988), ATTCs (Advanced Teacher Training Courses) in English were developed in different EFL teacher training centers. These training courses were longer and of a higher standard than those in the first phase. Any tertiary in-service teachers could apply for the courses if they had the approval of their places of work though initially these courses were planned for the tertiary teachers who used to be WPS students. ATTCs consisted of three major components: English proficiency improvement, teaching methodology, and linguistics. The courses were taught by means of lectures, seminars, and workshops. Some centers also tried microteaching sessions to improve students' teaching skills.

After the 1990s, tertiary in-service EFL teacher education in China entered a new phase. Tertiary teachers of Russian who were required to teach English began to retire and those who graduated as WPS students improved their English proficiency. Thus, a reform occurred in tertiary EFL teacher education. In the early 1990s, with the development of MA programs, EFL teacher training centers began to merge their ATTCs with their Master's courses and trainees could obtain a Master's degree after satisfying the requirements concerned. Some of today's MA TEFL programs in China were established through the pattern of merging ATTCs. At present such MA

programs are planned not only for tertiary in-service EFL teachers but also for pre-service teachers who have just obtained a Bachelor degree in English language and literature.

In addition, studying as visiting scholars in English-speaking countries has become another means of in-service development for EFL university teachers in China. Since the late 1990s, with the rapid economic development, an increasing number of in-service EFL university teachers are financially supported by the Chinese government to study in English-speaking countries.

Challenges in Tertiary EFL Teacher Education in China

Despite its progress since the 1980s, the system of Chinese EFL university teacher education is still inadequate (e.g., Lu, 2003; Zeng, 2002). Research (e.g., Dzau, 1990b; Ge, 2004; Harvey, 1990) has identified the main challenges in tertiary EFL teacher education in China. The first challenge lies in the inconsistency between tertiary EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching and their teaching act in classroom. As Lu (2003) points out, many EFL teachers' actual teaching is teacher-centered though they admit that learner-centeredness is important for students' learning. In classroom teaching, many EFL teachers usually adopt the GTM (Dzau, 1990b). One of the reasons for this is that teachers may have a misunderstanding of learner-centeredness (Lu, 2003). For example, some teachers view students' in-class reading as learner-centeredness because of their participation though it is passive. Another reason lies in the test-oriented EFL teaching system (Lu, 2003). To help students pass various exams (e.g., College English Tests Band 4 and Band 6), teachers have to

employ traditional teaching approaches focusing on grammar. The employment of this approach usually discourages students' interest, making EFL teaching ineffective (Lu, 2003).

The second challenge may involve EFL teachers' misconceptions of teaching. According to the survey of over 900 tertiary EFL teachers at 48 Chinese universities conducted by China Foreign Languages Education Research Center in 2002 (Ge, 2004), 82.8% of the investigated teachers assumed that a teacher will teach EFL well as long as he/she has a high English proficiency. Du (1990) and Oatey (1990a) also found that in-service EFL teachers often interpret the term "EFL teacher training" only as language improvement. These research results imply that many tertiary EFL teachers only stress one aspect of teacher knowledge – subject matter knowledge and ignore other aspects of teacher knowledge identified by Grossman (1990), for example, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of context, and pedagogical content knowledge. Xu (2001) and Maley (1983) also echo that this misconception of teaching pays no attention to the role of teaching methodology. It seems that EFL teachers' overemphasis of subject matter knowledge may contribute to their employment of traditional teaching approaches (Ge, 2004).

Another challenge may lie in overemphasis on developing teachers' subject matter knowledge by current MA TEFL programs in China. Guo's (1999) review of the historical and current development of Chinese teacher education confirms that teacher subject knowledge is the training focus in Chinese teacher education programs while other types of teacher knowledge are comparatively ignored. For example, the

syllabuses of many current MA TEFL programs indicate that the compulsory courses for MA students primarily involve general linguistics, syntax, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, second language acquisition, and translatology, which intend to develop trainees' subject matter knowledge. The courses related to EFL teachers' pedagogical knowledge, such as those regarding how to teach reading, writing, listening, and grammar, are available in almost none of the MA programs. The one course related to developing teachers' pedagogical knowledge that MA students can take is EFL teaching methodology. This course generally makes an introduction of various language teaching approaches (e.g., communicative language teaching, the audiolingual method, the natural approach, and suggestopedia). Not much teaching practice is integrated into this course and what students learn in the course, therefore, may not be of high practicality.

Furthermore, EFL university teachers are unfamiliar with foreign language research theories and reluctant to conduct research about their teaching. According to Xu (2006), 24% of several hundred EFL teachers from around 300 Chinese universities have never written and have little knowledge of how to write academic papers about their teaching and more than 50% of them have never participated in any research projects. EFL teachers' low participation in research, due to or leading to a poor research environment, may contribute to low levels of teaching.

Finally, the issue of teacher learning in language teaching, which has been well recognized in many other ESL/EFL teacher education contexts (See Freeman & Richards, 1996), has not gained researchers' sufficient attention in the Chinese setting.

The literature reveals that little research has explored Chinese tertiary EFL teachers' knowledge base. It seems that researchers and educators in the Chinese context have not been completely aware of the assumption that teacher learning is a life-long process. For example, as Ge (2004) pointed out, the reflective approach frequently employed in language teacher education in other contexts has not been fully introduced into the field of Chinese tertiary EFL teacher education. This approach usually represented by the means of journaling or narrative inquiry is seldom applied in the Chinese context (Ge, 2004). Moreover, though some theories of teacher education have been introduced from Western contexts, there still lack empirical studies to apply them to Chinese tertiary EFL teacher education. For instance, the conception of constructivism was introduced into Chinese EFL teaching several years ago (Zhao, 2000), but no empirical research has explored this conception in the Chinese setting.

Impact of Chinese Culture on EFL Teacher Education

There are various factors contributing to the challenges discussed above in Chinese EFL teacher education. The major one, as much research has tried to investigate, is the impact of Chinese culture, especially Confucianism, on Chinese teachers' perceptions of teaching (e.g., Yen, 1987; Gao & Watkins, 2002; Watkins, 2000). According to Watkins (2000), all education in mainland China is based on Confucian principles even though the teachers are unconscious of their source. Some of the principles are that the teacher is a model both of knowledge and morality and that learning is a moral duty. These principles imply that a teacher should not only be

knowledgeable but also be concerned with the moral development of his/her students. In other words, as Watkins (2000) depicts, Chinese people perceive a good teacher as one who has deep knowledge, is able to answer questions, and is a good moral model.

Oatey (1990b) also points out that in Chinese culture, what is emphasized in a traditional Chinese classroom is knowledge processing. For students, the most important thing in their learning process is the acquisition of knowledge while the teacher's task is to convey knowledge. The educational perspective in Chinese culture can be summarized as in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 *A Chinese perspective of learning and teaching* (Oatey, 1990b)

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Main goal of teaching and learning | - To comprehend and store knowledge |
| Teachers' main roles | - To convey knowledge; - To direct learning: Provide students with specific instructions about what they should read and memorize. |
| Students' main roles | - To memorize the knowledge supplied by the teacher; - To reproduce the knowledge |

As regards EFL teaching, Yen's (1987) arguments are similar to those discussed above. As Yen has discovered, Confucianism, which emphasizes a stratified hierarchy and respect for authority, exerts an impact on Chinese EFL teachers with teacher-centeredness and textbook-centeredness in teaching. This may illustrate the major reasons for the preference of employing traditional teaching approach by Chinese EFL teachers.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative data collection method is employed for this study. Qualitative research is conducted in the natural world, and uses multiple techniques that are interactive and holistic. It allows for the collection of data that is rich in description of people, the investigation of topics in context, and an understanding of behavior from the participants' own frame of reference (Bogdan, & Biklen, 1998). Qualitative research is emergent rather than tightly prefigured, and is fundamentally interpretive (Davis, 1995; Rossman & Rallis, 1998). This study adopts a qualitative data collection approach to investigate EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction. Three research techniques of data collection are used in this study to ensure reliable data results and adequate descriptions of the phenomena studied: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recall.

This chapter is concerned with the methodology employed to carry out the present study. First, a brief discussion is presented about the ethical issues and triangulation concerning this research. Then a fairly detailed account is provided regarding the settings, pilot study, and participants involved in the study. Finally, the design of the instruments and the procedures used in the collection and analysis of the data investigated in the study are described.

Ethical Issues

Throughout the whole dissertation project, I kept in mind the ethical issues arising from the research. I followed the guidelines about ethics proposed by Christians (2000) in the course of the research. First of all, I took participants' voluntary informed consent to

be the condition in which they understood and agreed to their participation with no duress before data collection started. I explained clearly to participants the goals of the research, the necessity of their participation, the procedure of their involvement, and the use and security of their data. Participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and at any time. Moreover, I assured the participants of the privacy and confidentiality of their records. All their personal data was secured and made public with a shield of anonymity. Finally, throughout the project, I tried to avoid deception in data collection. Attempts were made to ensure participants' freedom of speech and frankness. For example, the purposes and aims of the research were revealed to participants prior to their participation. When collecting data, the participants were treated as 'people' who have feelings, values, and needs rather than merely 'subjects' (Elbaz, 1983; Tsui, 2003). Since I had worked together with all the participants at least six years before pursuing my PhD degree, a relaxed, comfortable, and trusting relationship between the participants and me has been established. During the interviews and stimulated recall, I also managed to develop a relaxed atmosphere through, for instance, a several minutes' free chat with the participants. All these guidelines were followed throughout this research.

Triangulation

Issues of validity (accuracy of information) and reliability (consistency of findings) also need to be given careful attention when conducting qualitative research. To enhance its validity and reliability, qualitative research often employs the strategy of triangulation, which generally contains multiple data-collection procedures, multiple theoretical perspectives, and/or multiple analysis techniques (Berg, 1998). Triangulation

assumes that research is a discovery process designed to reach an objective truth that may be systematized as a formal theory (Miller, 1997). Another assumption of the triangulation strategy is that looking at an object from more than one standpoint provides researchers with more comprehensive knowledge about the object. As a result, Miller (1997) raises a “bridging approach”, which suggests using several methodological strategies to combine aspects of different sociological perspectives and thus rendering these perspectives mutually informative.

This study called for three main sources of evidence with data needing to converge “in a triangulated fashion” (Yin, 1994, p. 13): semi-structured in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recall. In addition, a coding team was formed to lessen possibilities for researcher biases. Two Chinese EFL teacher educators were invited to review the collected data. They were asked to suggest themes and patterns that they found emerging from the data or to confirm themes and patterns that I suggested. Thus, researcher biases can be mitigated by other reviewers and any promising themes that I may miss can be identified.

The University Context

This study was conducted in a northern Chinese university, a top technology and science institution in China. This university has an annual enrollment of more than 3,300 undergraduate students and over 4,000 graduate students. For almost all of the undergraduate and graduate students, English as a foreign language is the compulsory course they have to take for approximately one or two years depending on their performance in the entrance English test in the first semester they are admitted to the university.

The Department of Foreign Languages (DFL) is in charge of EFL teaching for all the students of this university. There are two EFL teaching programs in DFL: One is for English-major students and the other is for non-English-major students. In the English-major EFL teaching program, there is an annual enrollment of around 50 undergraduate students majoring in English language and literature, 20 MA students majoring in linguistics & applied linguistics or English language & literature, and 5-10 PhD students majoring in English Language & Literature. This program has eleven full professors and eight associate professors, including six doctoral advisors.

The non-English-major EFL teaching program assumes the responsibility of offering university-wide English courses to all the non-English major students on campus, including undergraduate students, Master students, and PhD students. In this program, there are 46 teachers (30 female and 16 male), including 6 professors, 22 associate professors, and 18 lecturers. Five of the teachers have obtained a PhD degree, 36 have gained an MA degree, five hold a Bachelor degree, and nine teachers are pursuing their PhD degree while teaching EFL. The work load for each teacher in this program is 10 class hours of teaching (1 class hour = 45 minutes) per week. Each academic year, this program provides more than 600 English courses to the students on campus.

The major courses offered by the department are as follows: basic English (from the intermediate level to the advanced level) and elective courses (e.g. English for Science and Technology, Business English, Newspaper Reading, Movie Appreciation, English-Chinese and Chinese-English translation, Advanced Writing, Advanced Speaking, Advanced Reading, Advanced Listening Comprehension, Western Society and Culture, and Chinese Culture in English). The normal size of an English class is 40 students. The

EFL teaching in this program is mainly featured with helping students establish a strong language foundation and develop their ability to use foreign languages. For this purpose, the program has developed an English testing system designed to assess student's all-round ability to use language along with a language learning environment system to cultivate a good extracurricular environment of language learning.

The English testing system consists of English Proficiency Test I (EPT I) and English Proficiency Test II (EPT II). Both the tests comprise a written test and an oral test, highlighting the evaluation of students' ability to use English. EPT I is the management target for the basic phase of college English, and EPT II for the advanced phase. All the non-English major undergraduate students are required to attend EPT I. Only passing this test are they qualified to obtain their bachelor's degree.

To cultivate a favorable environment for language learning, the non-English-major program has established a language learning environment system. This system, regarded as an extension of traditional classroom teaching and a useful medium to train student's practical abilities, organizes different extracurricular activities at the university. These activities include daily on-campus English language radio broadcast, weekly western culture series lectures by native English speakers, weekly English corner, speech contests, composition contests, English songs contests, and English Wall Newspapers.

In recent years, DFL has changed from a department focused on offering university-wide language courses in English to a department that focuses on both research and teaching. Currently there are three research centers in DFL: Center for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Center for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, and Center for Translation and Interdisciplinary Studies.

Pilot Study

This dissertation investigation is partly based on the pilot study about Chinese EFL teachers' knowledge base (Zhang, 2005). The pilot study aimed to develop a preliminary understanding of the major components of Chinese EFL teachers' knowledge of EFL teaching and the sources of their knowledge. Three PhD students studying in a southern university in the United States participated in the study. All the three participants were from mainland China and each of them had more than six years of EFL teaching experience in three different Chinese universities. Their length of stay in the USA ranged from one to two years. The research technique employed in the pilot study was semi-structured interviews. Each participant was interviewed once and the interviews were conducted in Chinese in order to facilitate communication. The interview protocol of the study was adapted from the one in Borg's (1998a) research (See Appendix A). The pilot study tried to address two research questions centering on what components Chinese EFL teacher knowledge base consists of and how Chinese EFL teachers develop their knowledge of EFL teaching.

For the first research question, the salient categories of Chinese EFL teacher knowledge involve content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of students, and knowledge of curriculum. These categories mostly match those in the teacher knowledge framework identified by Shulman (1986, 1987). This study also shows that EFL teachers have their own beliefs about teacher knowledge. First, all the participants indicated that in EFL teaching practice, the different components of teacher knowledge should be integrated and cannot be separated. With respect to content knowledge, EFL teachers tended to focus more on English language

proficiency (primarily referring to the proficiency in the following five skills: reading, writing, listening, speaking, and translation) than theoretical linguistic knowledge (e.g., linguistics, second language acquisition, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics). The participants also argued that knowledge about linguistics and second language acquisition is not very practical in EFL teaching practice. Moreover, participants claimed that their pedagogical knowledge increased and improved while teaching EFL, but their content knowledge (here referring to their English language proficiency) increased or decreased depending upon the actual courses they were assigned to teach.

For the second question, the data analysis shows that the sources of EFL teacher knowledge primarily involves experience of being an English learner, EFL classroom teaching experience, collaboration with colleagues, and courses in foreign language pedagogy. These sources mostly match what other researchers have found in this domain (e.g., Grossman, 1990; Richards, 1998; Tsui, 2003). The most influential sources of EFL teacher knowledge the participants categorized are EFL classroom teaching experience and experience of being an English learner. The participants did not view the experience of being an MA student, or of taking the courses like linguistics and second language acquisition as important sources of knowledge. This finding may suggest that the EFL teacher education programs in China have not thoroughly satisfied their candidates' needs, particularly regarding how to effectively integrate their curriculum designs into MA students' future EFL teaching practice.

The data analysis in the pilot study also demonstrates that Chinese EFL teachers' academic degrees seem to have little connection with their teaching effectiveness, which supports Freeman & Johnson's (1998) position that teacher knowledge should be rooted

in teachers' actual practice. Another salient and recurrent theme identified in the data involves EFL teachers' concerns about how to develop their content knowledge (referring to their English proficiency) through teaching practice. The participants maintained that their English proficiency tends to decrease with the increase of EFL teaching experience. One more salient theme is concerned with the relationship between EFL teaching and academic research. The three participants held that their heavy EFL teaching loads affected their devotion academic research. They also pointed out that they lacked knowledge of how to conduct academic research while they were teaching.

There seem to be two major contributions that the pilot study has made to my dissertation research. First, the pilot study provides a general picture about Chinese EFL teachers' knowledge base. On the basis, this dissertation study narrows down the research focus on EFL teachers' knowledge about one specific curricular area – vocabulary instruction. In addition, methodologically, the pilot study contributes to enriching my experience in data collection and data analysis for this dissertation research.

Participants

This research described in this dissertation is designed to explore EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction. The central concern centers on university EFL teachers who teach an English reading course. In selecting participants for this research, I took the following two factors into consideration: a) the EFL reading course involving more vocabulary instruction than other courses (Hunt & Beglar, 2005); and b) my familiarity with EFL university instruction¹. Initially, purposeful sampling was employed to select participants matching the two factors above. "Purposeful sampling is

¹ Before pursuing my PhD degree, I had 12-year EFL teaching experience in the EFL teaching program for non-English-majors in which this research was conducted.

based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61).

The screening process for potential research participants in the study began in August, 2006, when I was pursuing doctoral studies in Atlanta, Georgia. A mass email was sent to all the instructors (twenty eight in total) who taught the English reading course in the non-English-major teaching program. Six candidates showed interest and agreed to participate in the study. In September, 2006, when I returned to China, one more instructor teaching the English reading course agreed to participate in the research. Totally there were seven participants (four female and three male) for this study (See Table 4.1).

When the data collection started, all the participants, identified by pseudonyms, had teaching experience of over ten years, ranging from 10 to 19 years. All of them can be considered experienced EFL teachers (Gao, 2007; Tsui, 2003). Of the seven participants, four were associate professors and three were lecturers. Two of them held PhD degrees, four had obtained MA degrees, and one had gained a graduate diploma. These participants, as a result, can be representatives of the program’s instructors in terms of their education and academic ranking in the non-English-major EFL teaching program. For EFL education, all the participants began to learn English in junior high school. They all obtained a BA degree in China. They also received their graduate education in China except Shasha, who gained her MA degree in Japan. Before starting to teach English, the teacher-participants had learned it over a decade. All the participants also had one-month-to-three-year experiences of staying in English-speaking countries

Table 4.1 *Identification of participants*

| Participant pseudonym | Gender & age | Years of EFL Teaching | Rank | Education and research interest (RI) | International experience | Rank in teaching |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---|---|------------------|
| Shasha | Female, 42 | 19 years (4-year teaching in Japan) | Associate professor | BA in English language & literature (ELL); MA in Applied Linguistics (AL) in a Japanese university RI: British & American literature | Staying in Japan for six years; Teaching EFL in Japan for 4 years; | Group A |
| Lin | Male, 34 | 10 years | Lecturer | BA in ELL; MA in AL RI: Linguistics and Functional Grammar | One-month academic tour to the USA | Group A |
| Lili | Female, 38 | 14 years | Lecturer | BA in ELL; Graduate diploma in AL RI: EFL classroom teaching | One-year stay as a visiting scholar in the USA | Group A |
| Yao | Male, 38 | 14 years | Associate Professor | BA in ELL; MA in AL; PhD in Linguistic History RI: Linguistics and applied linguistics | One-month academic tour to the USA | Group A |
| Fangfang | Female, 41 | 14 years | Associate professor | BA in ELL; MA in AL; PhD in Comparative Literature RI: Comparative literature | Staying with her husband in the USA for 3 years. | Group B |
| Dandan | Female, 43 | 19 years | Associate professor | BA in ELL; MA in AL RI: EFL classroom teaching | One-year stay as a visiting scholar in Great Britain | Group B |
| Deng | Male, 36 | 11 years | Lecturer | BA in ELL; MA in AL Pursuing his PhD in Language & Philosophy RI: Language & philosophy | One-year stay as a visiting scholar in the USA | Group B |

except Shasha, who stayed in Japan for six years and had four-year EFL teaching experience in Japan.

In addition, all seven teacher participants were competent and well qualified EFL teachers. As highly valued professionals, they all had been promoted to tenured positions at the university. For the purposes of this study, I was able to divide the participants into two groups (Group A and Group B) according to their relative degrees of reputations for excellence within the program. The classification was based upon a combination of information from students (including student evaluation-of-instructors reports), colleagues (less formal conversation), and the program director (interview and less formal conversation). Within Group A are the participants who their students, colleagues and director described as ‘excellent’ EFL teachers. Four of the teacher-participants were placed into Group A: Shasha, Yao, Lili, and Lin. The other three participants placed into Group B (i.e., Deng, Dandan, and Fangfang) are those who their students, colleagues and director described as ‘very good’ EFL teachers. We need to bear in mind that these are two broad categories only based upon students’ evaluation-of-instructors reports, less formal conversations with colleagues, and an interview and a less formal conversation with the program director.

As regards teaching loads, each participant was responsible for teaching five classes (ten class hours in total) weekly in the semester when the data was collected. Table 4.2 shows the courses they were teaching and their teaching loads for the courses. This study involves the course *Reading, Writing, and Translation* (RWT) for intermediate students (Level 2), which all the participants taught. The course focused mainly on developing students’ English reading abilities, based on which to develop their skills of

English writing and English-Chinese translation as well. The normal class size of this course ranged from 30-40 students and the students taking this course were freshmen. Instructors met students once a week and taught them two class hours (2 class hours = 90 minutes).

Table 4.2 *The courses participants taught and their teaching loads*

| Participant pseudonym | EFL courses participants were teaching | Teaching loads (10 class hours in total; 1 class hour = 45 minutes) |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Shasha | - Reading, Writing, & Translation | 8 |
| | - Listening & Speaking | 2 |
| Lin | - Reading, Writing, & Translation | 6 |
| | - Chinese-English Translation | 4 |
| Lili | - Reading, Writing, & Translation | 6 |
| | - English Listening & Speaking for Science & Technology | 4 |
| Yao | - Reading, Writing, & Translation | 8 |
| | - Listening & Speaking | 2 |
| Fangfang | - Reading, Writing, & Translation | 10 |
| Dandan | - Reading, Writing, & Translation | 8 |
| | - Listening & Speaking | 2 |
| Deng | - Reading, Writing, & Translation | 8 |
| | - Listening & Speaking | 2 |

The textbook employed for the RWT course was compiled by the instructors in the EFL teaching program. It consists of eight units and each unit is comprised of three sections. Section A has one intensive reading text, focusing on developing learners' ability to read for accuracy. Sesnan (1997) defines intensive reading as "reading a passage or a book slowly and carefully, paying attention to each word and every idea" (p.

51). For this purpose, Section A is accompanied with a variety of exercises centering on vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and discourse. Section B is designed for extensive reading. This section aims to help develop learners' ability to read for fluency. It consists of two or three texts. Following each text, two or three exercises are designed mainly to develop readers' ability in reading comprehension. Section C is for developing learners' reading skills, which introduces various learning strategies (e.g., how to skim or scan a text, or how to guess word meanings). After each text of both Section A and Section B, a New Vocabulary list is provided. Words in this list are defined both in English and in Chinese.

According to the syllabus for the RWT class, it normally takes the teacher two weeks to finish teaching one unit of the textbook. In the first week, their teaching focuses on the intensive reading text of Section A, helping students understand the whole text. In the second week, they shift their attention to a) reviewing Section A, involving the vocabulary, the discourse, and the follow-up exercises designed for the text, b) handling Section B for fast reading, and c) Section C about reading skills development. The semester when the data was collected consisted of 18 weeks. The third week was for a National Day holiday and all classes were cancelled. Week 17 and Week 18 were for students' final examinations. Thus, 15 weeks were available for teaching in the whole semester.

Data Collection

Instruments

For purposes of teacher knowledge research, narrative has been proposed as an accepted mode of knowing and is suggested to be valuable for representing the richness

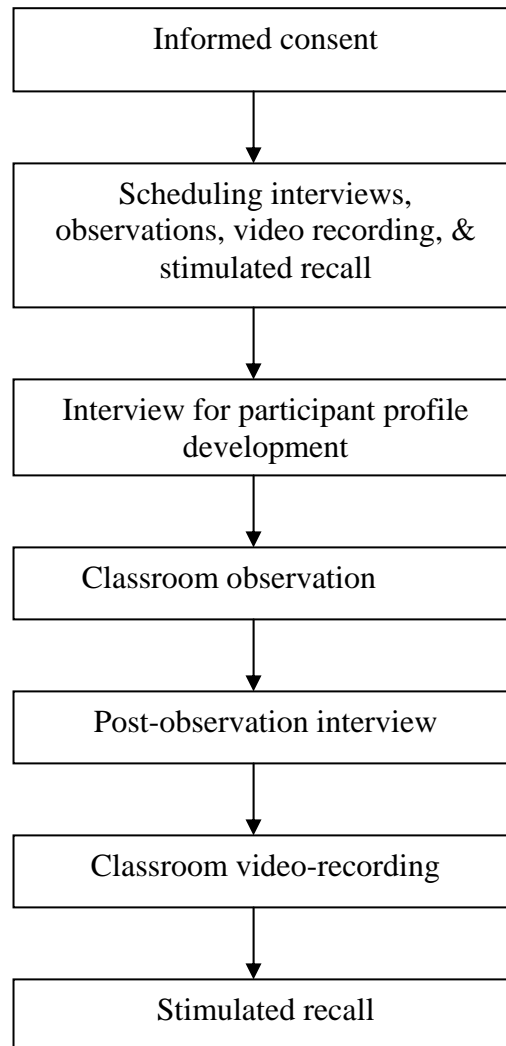
of human experiences (Black & Halliwell, 2000; Carter, 1993; Cizek, 1999; Johnson & Golombek, 2002). Interest in the use of narrative has grown based on the argument that teachers are all knowers who reflect on experience, confront the unknown, make sense of it, and take action. It has become a means through which teachers can actualize their ways of knowing and growing that nourish and sustain their professional development throughout their careers. As Cizek (1999) states, “narrative is both a powerful tool for conveying meaning and an efficacious instrument for influencing people in the ways that we want” (p.64). Carter and Doyle (1995) also suggest that “personal narrative and life history are fundamentally educative because they empower us both to understand what forces are shaping us and to command our own growth and development” (p.191).

Narrative descriptions, featured with thick descriptions rich in details, include at least four elements: participants, incidents, participants’ language, and participants’ meanings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2000). In the descriptions, participants need to demonstrate different physical, emotional, and intellectual characteristics in different situations; incidents are related to social scenes; participants’ language refers to the forms of communication (e.g., verbal & nonverbal expression, drawings, cartoons); and participants’ meanings refer to their perceptions of reality.

There are various forms of implementing a narrative research method. The forms commonly used by researchers and teachers include interviews, journal writing, conversations, fieldnotes, autobiography, and letters between participants and researchers (Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997). For this study, interviewing was employed as the main technique for data collection in conjunction with participant observations and

stimulated recall supplemented by field notes. The flowchart of data collection is shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 *Flowchart of data collection*



I arranged individual meetings with all the seven participants before starting to collect data. In the meetings, the goals of the study were explained and each participant signed a consent form approved by the Institutional Review Board of Georgia State University (See Appendix B). Dates for interviews, observations, video-recording their teaching were also arranged. It was made clear through personal meetings with the

participants and through the consent form that their lectures would be observed or video-recorded as they naturally occurred throughout the semester. The participants were not asked to perform any differently in the classroom teaching on the days when I visited their classes.

Interviews. An interview can be defined as “a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 93). This technique generally is used to investigate participants’ insider perspectives on their behavior (Bartels, 2005a). Three categories of interviews are often identified in the literature: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured (Verma & Mallick, 1999). This study employed face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which were guided by a list of interview questions and designed to put interviewees at ease and allow them to express themselves (Kvale, 1996). That is, the format of each interview was designed to be relaxed, spontaneous, and open-ended, allowing for greater in-depth discussions. All the interviews were audio-recorded and fully transcribed. The audio-recorder used for this study was an Olympus VN-240PC Digital Voice Recorder. The tool used for transcription was SoundScriber, a program designed for transcription of digitized sound files.

In the study, five semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant (one for developing the participant’s profile and the other four for field observations) (35 interviews in total). To facilitate communication and to eliminate any barrier created by English as a foreign language, I interviewed the participants in Chinese, the participants’ native language that I share. Before conducting the interviews, I referred to and followed the five aspects of standardized interview behavior suggested by Fowler (1993): the way

to present the research objectives and the task, the way to ask questions, the way to probe inadequate answers, the way to record answers, and the way to handle interpersonal aspects of the interview. The interviews also adopted Woods' (1985) progressive focusing approach. The first interview provided a profile of each participant's educational background, experience of language learning and teaching, general views about language learning and language teaching, and general views about vocabulary learning and teaching. The other interviews focused on issues and themes identified through classroom observations.

The first interview with each participant ($n = 7$), lasting from forty-five minutes to one and a half hours, was conducted before classroom observations began. The interview guide questions (See Appendix C) are based on the interview protocol in the pilot study and the one in Borg's (1998a) research. The other four interviews with each participant (28 interviews in total), lasting from 15 to 30 minutes, were carried out after each classroom observation was completed. These interviews were based on observational data and focused on key instructional episodes regarding vocabulary learning and teaching, including the use of a particular vocabulary teaching activity, a response to a student's question about vocabulary, or a reaction to a student's use of vocabulary. Such episodes were used to prompt questions through which to obtain insights about the teacher's classroom behavior (Borg, 1998a). The guide questions for the post-observation interviews, based on Nelms (2001), are shown in Appendix D. These post-observation interviews were conducted normally on the day when the observations were completed. Due to the tight schedules of some of the participants, however, two of the 28 post-observation interviews took place on the second day after the observations.

In addition to the interviews, I followed the data collection methodology promoted by Woods (1985) and Tsui (2003), which mixes interviews with “conversations”. Having worked together with the participants more than six years before pursuing my PhD studies, I knew them very well and I was able to establish a comfortable and trusting relationship with them. For data collection, a variety of other opportunities were also utilized to communicate with the participants, for example, having lunches together, going home together, and making phone calls to them. In a deliberately conscientious manner, I recalled and wrote down what was involved in the conversations immediately after they were completed.

It is also worth pointing out that it is generally recognized as impossible for researchers to obtain absolutely genuine data in research of this nature (Sabar, 1994; Tsui, 2003). According to Sabar (1994), “obtaining teachers’ knowledge from their stories entails some kind of intervention” (p. 119). Specifically, the questions a researcher might ask during an interview are likely to contribute to the participants’ reflection and reorganization of their thinking. Thus, the data collected can be ‘contaminated’ (Tsui, 2003). This, to some extent, happened in the process of data collection in this study. For instance, in one interview, Fangfang was asked whether she recommended that her students use dictionaries to enlarge vocabulary. She answered that she had seldom thought about this question. Two weeks later, when she was interviewed again, she referred to this question again and stated that she would encourage students to use dictionaries for vocabulary enlargement. She even provided a specific answer in terms of what type of dictionary it would be good for them to use and when it is appropriate to utilize a dictionary. In this sense, the nature of this data collection technique seems to be

an inevitable limitation, but this data contamination did not fundamentally change the genuineness of the data collected.

Observations. Classroom observation is another common technique for collecting data about teachers' knowledge and knowledge use (Bartels, 2005a; Borg, 1998a, 2005a; Lo, 2005; Richards, 2003). This technique can help researchers to examine the relationship between teachers' beliefs about vocabulary instruction and their classroom practices. The use of observational data allows for understanding teacher knowledge in a way and to a degree less possible than using only insights and information obtained through interviews. Observation has several advantages as a data collection technique. It can contribute to greater understanding of the context in which classroom events occur and provide researchers with direct experience in the context, making available the information that may be taken for granted by participants and researchers (Patton, 1987). Observation data also can serve to help triangulate emerging findings from interview data.

In the study, the observation period spanned one 18-week academic semester (corresponding to approximately four months), of which the third week was for a National Day holiday in China. In fact, based on the participants' preference and agreement, the observations started in Week 2 of the semester and ended in Week 16 because the last two weeks of the semester are usually devoted to students' final examinations. Thus, the field observations were distributed throughout 14 weeks. During these weeks, I observed each participant's actual classroom teaching four times, each lasting 1.5 hours (totally 28 observations and 42 hours). In order to obtain a comprehensive picture of each participant's teaching, I tried to observe him/her consecutively for two weeks, during which the participant completely finished teaching

one unit of the textbook. The primary rationale for conducting observation in this manner is that each complete unit involves vocabulary teaching in both intensive reading and extensive reading. Observing the participants' teaching of two complete units enabled me to obtain a whole picture of their repertoire of vocabulary teaching strategies.

During the observations within the EFL classrooms, my role was that of a non-participant observer (Alwright & Bailey, 1991; Richards, 1996; Spada, 1990; Tsui, 2003). In order to backup observation data, each participant's observed teaching was also digitally audio-recorded by using an Olympus VN-240PC Digital Voice Recorder. The audio-recorded data was partially transcribed to identify emergent themes in the research. The process of audio recording was agreed to by the participants. For effective observations and audio-recording, I normally arrived 10 minutes before the class started. Then I switched on the digital recorder and placed it on a location that was hardly noticeable to the instructor but still guaranteed the recording quality (e.g., a window sill near the blackboard or a desk in the front of the classroom). Then I took a seat in one back corner of the classroom, trying to 'pretend' not to be observing the course to lessen the effect of the observer's paradox (Nelms, 2001).

A field observation normally involves generating various qualitative field notes (Merriam, 1998). Field notes in qualitative research refer to "the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, pp. 107-108). They usually include verbal descriptions of the setting, people, and activities; direct quotations or the substance of what was said; and researcher's comments on feelings, reactions, hunches, or initial interpretations (Merriam, 1998). In the course of the observations for

this research, I tried to generate a detailed account of classroom events particularly regarding vocabulary teaching and learning through qualitative field notes. The field notes I generated mainly involved the following target elements: (a) physical classroom settings, (b) verbal and non-verbal interactions between teachers and students, and (c) planned or unplanned activities. Specifically, the field notes focused on what activities were designed, how the teacher handled the activities, how long the activities lasted, what language elements were handled in the activities, how students got involved in the activities, and what other activities preceded and followed each activity. On this basis, I selected the vocabulary teaching activities from the field notes immediately after completing the observation. I also formulated questions for follow-up interviews while observing the teacher-participant and immediately after each observation.

The data collection for this study also followed what Wolcott (1992) advocates as “watching” (i.e., lesson observations), “asking” (i.e., interviews), and “examining” (i.e., curriculum materials). Therefore, the curriculum materials, including copies of all instructional materials, teaching plans, and samples of students’ written homework, were collected as well. These artifacts represented the raw data from which the study’s findings would emerge.

Stimulated Recall. A stimulated recall is defined as an introspective method in which participants are prompted through some visual or oral stimulus (e.g., a video/audio-taped event) or any other tangible reminder (e.g., different drafts of a learner’s composition) to recall thoughts they entertained while carrying out certain tasks or participating in certain events (Calderhead, 1984; Gass & Mackey, 2000). In other words, in a stimulated recall, a participant is offered opportunities to re-visit actions that

he/she performed while engaged in completing a task and is asked to discuss in retrospect what he/she was doing or thinking at that moment of the original event. This technique has its advantages. First, the participant does not need to rely heavily on memory without any prompts. Moreover, the participant does not need to go through a process of extensive training in order to be able to perform a task and talk about it retrospectively. Stimulated recall can also be used for the purpose of triangulation. The use of stimulated recall in this study aims to access each participant's thoughts about key vocabulary instruction issues in teaching practices. Meanwhile, triangulation is taken into account for the employment of this technique in this research.

After the four classroom observations and the four post-observation interviews for each participant were completed, two stimulated recall sessions were conducted, each lasting approximately 45 minutes to one hour. For this purpose, each participant's teaching was video-recorded twice (3-hours of recording in total). These two video recordings were carried out once the four classroom observations were completed. To gain a comprehensive picture of each participant's teaching, I generally conducted the two video recordings consecutively for two weeks, which recorded how the teacher-participant taught one complete unit of the textbook. One exception was the Dandan's case, which will be described in the section of "Observer's Paradox".

For the video recordings, I employed a JVC Everio GZ-MG20 20GB Hard Disk Drive Camcorder. Before each video recording, I set the camcorder on a tripod which could be fully extended to six feet. The use of the video camcorder followed the work of Erickson (1982). To minimize the effect of the use of the camcorder and my presence on the participant's teaching, I normally positioned the camcorder in the back of the

classroom and assembled the equipment several minutes before the participant arrived at the class. Then I sat in one back corner of the room and used a remote control to manage the camcorder for video recording. In Yao's case, however, the camcorder was positioned in the front of the classroom due to the fixed table arrangement in the classroom.

When conducting each video recording, I focused the camcorder on the teacher of the course (and not on students) since the aim of the investigation was to explore teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction. Procedures were followed to avoid deliberate video recording of anyone in the room but the teacher.

After each video-recording, the material was transferred from the camcorder into my personal notebook computer and saved as a video file. Meanwhile, the file was copied as a backup into another movable hard drive.

In the course of video recording, I tried to take down some key vocabulary teaching episodes to be used for the coming stimulated recall. After the video recording, I continued to formulate more key issues about vocabulary teaching through watching the video. The key vocabulary instruction issues in teaching practices taken into consideration for the stimulated recall mainly include:

- commenting on what the teacher-participant was trying to do at a particular stage of the lesson and why;
- commenting on how a particular episode about vocabulary teaching fits into the structure of the teacher-participant's lesson and why;
- responding to researchers' assertions about the participant's vocabulary teaching practices according to what the researcher observed;

- explaining the teacher-participant's decisions to make use of particular instructional activities and materials in vocabulary teaching

Selected portions of the video recording were used as a basis for generating the stimulated recall.

A stimulated recall was normally conducted on the same day after each video recording. During the stimulated recall, each participant and I watched the video of his/her teaching on a notebook computer. Both the participant and I were able to pause the video-playing by clicking a pause button. In the stimulated recall, I asked the questions about the key vocabulary teaching issues identified during and after the video recording. The guide questions for the stimulated recall are based on Nelms (2001), as shown in Appendix E. Mostly, these questions focused on what the participant had been thinking about the instructional episodes tied to vocabulary teaching in classroom at certain moments. At other times, the participant could elucidate moments of confusion or interest. The stimulated recalls were fully audio-recorded with the Olympus VN-240PC Digital Voice Recorder and fully transcribed through SoundScriber.

Observer's Paradox

Regarding the observer's paradox, my efforts to lessen the impact of my in-class observations and video-recordings on the participants' teaching in the process of data collection seemed to have worked fairly effectively. For the classroom observations, I normally had a casual chat with each participant to show my appreciation after the first observation. Four of the participants (i.e., Lin, Fangfang, Lili, & Yao) initiated comments on the observation and stated that my presence in classroom posed no problem at all. For example, as Fangfang responded, "I didn't even notice you were here observing my

teaching” (Fangfang, Fieldnotes, October 17, 2006). To the other three participants (i.e., Shasha, Dandan, & Deng), without initiating comments about this issue, I made an explicit inquiry in this respect. Their responses also indicate that my in-class presence did not interfere much with their teaching. According to Dandan, for instance, “I noticed your presence. I know you’re not coming to evaluate my teaching but just for your research, so I didn’t feel very nervous” (Dandan, Fieldnotes, September 18, 2006). Shasha commented that “at the beginning I was somewhat nervous, but soon I got involved into my teaching and didn’t notice your presence any more” (Shasha, Fieldnotes, October 17, 2006).

As regards the use of the camcorder for video recording, six of the participants (i.e., Fangfang, Lin, Shasha, Lili, Yao, & Deng) commented in the chats I initiated after the first video recording that the video recording of their teaching was not troublesome for them. In Shasha’s words, for example, “My teaching was video-taped before by another researcher, so your video recording hardly affected my teaching though I felt somewhat nervous at the beginning of the class” (Shasha, Fieldnotes, November 14, 2006). Lin even confidently stated to me that “No matter who comes to my class or video-records my teaching, I’ve enough confidence that I can handle my teaching as usual” (Lin, Fieldnotes, December 5, 2006). Dandan, however, reported that she was very nervous and felt quite uncomfortable facing the camcorder for the first time. Then she suggested that when she felt fine, she would inform me to conduct the second video recording. In fact, the second recording of her teaching was carried out two weeks after the first recording. As a result, I only included the second video taping of Dandan’s teaching in the stimulated recalls.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis refers to “the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 153). It aims to determine the categories, relationships and assumptions that inform the participants’ view of the world in general, and of the topic in particular. Through analysis, researchers attempt to gain a deeper understanding of what they have studied and to continually refine their interpretations. Analyzing qualitative data often involves coding or categorizing, which is defined as “the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 57). In this study, Nudist Vivo (NVivo), a data analysis software designed to help researchers code and analyze qualitative research data, was used to manage the coding.

Data analysis in this study followed the 3-procedure framework about coding suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990): open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The first stage, opening coding, is a process of generating categories and their properties. Specifically, the data is broken down into units of information composed of events, happenings, or instances and each unit is categorized by conceptual labels. During this initial stage of data analysis, a continuous process of evaluation, or the constant comparative method, is used in the construction of categories and their properties. The second stage, axial coding, refers to “a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96). This process aims to organize the data and make

connections between categories, based on the 'axis' of a category. It involves relating categories to subcategories. The final stage, selective coding, culminates in the selection of a core variable – “a central phenomenon around which all other categories are integrated” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116). This process aims to identify a central category or explanatory concept, through which other categories can be refined and integrated.

At the first stage of data analysis for this study, all of the transcripts (i.e., 35 interviews and 13 stimulated recalls) were analyzed and the participants' comments about the events, happenings, or instances related to their teaching were categorized with descriptive codes. This laborious process generated various specific initial categories in terms of vocabulary learning and teaching. For instance, numerous instances involving how to enlarge English vocabulary were identified in the data, and various codes were ascribed to these instances such as “reading novels”, “reading journal papers”, “reading newspapers”, “reading magazines”, and “reading English-version textbooks in one's major”. During the second stage, axial coding, the categories generated at the stage of open coding were combined to form major concepts. In other words, the specific initial codes were brought together and grouped into broader categories. For the above example, the initial codes were subsequently labeled into the broad category “extensive reading” for English vocabulary enlargement. At the final stage, selective coding, all the interrelated categories generated at the stage of axial coding were combined to form a core concept integrating these categories. In this example, the category “extensive reading” together with other vocabulary-learning categories, such as word-formation,

using dictionaries, and intensive reading, forms the explanatory construct of EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary development.

Although it seems that the above three-stage procedures were conducted in a linear process in this study, the analyses of the qualitative data were actually part of an ongoing process, carried out in a cyclic, complex, and recursive format, in which there were constant segmentation, categorizations, and interpretations. For this study, I analyzed the data simultaneously as I collected new data. Upon completing an observation or an interview, I made a preliminary rough analysis of the data collected, aiming to identify unanticipated issues to which more attention needed to be paid in subsequent observations, or to generate further unanticipated questions for subsequent interviews. Thus, constant comparison with newly gathered data was conducted and modifications of the initial procedure of data analysis were made.

To help guarantee the reliability of the data analyses, I also followed the principles frequently adopted by teacher knowledge researchers (e.g., Borg, 1998a, 1998b, 2005a; Gao, 2007; Tsui, 2003) as shown below:

- Repeatedly reading the collected data and highlighting all information relevant to the research questions;
- Revisiting relevant literature to modify the data analyses if necessary;
- Extracting the most meaningful parts of the data and labeling them based on the recurrent themes, issues and topics;
- Initially, establishing tentative categories after a careful reading of the data, and clustering the data that have been analyzed into these tentative categories;

- Establishing new categories when new themes are detected and constantly testing the applicability of the labels to the data.

Moreover, for the purposes of triangulation and establishing inter-coding reliability, a team for data coding was formed. One Chinese EFL teacher whose research interest was in EFL teacher education was invited to work together with me on data analysis. On the whole, to establish acceptable levels of inter-coder reliability, the teacher was asked to code around 30% of the collected data. Before the teacher coded the data, I conducted a one-hour training session with him on how to code the data. During data coding, the two coders needed to agree with each other for over 80% of the shared coding data. Whenever there were disagreements, a third coder, another EFL teacher educator, was invited to discuss the coding with the two coders for the purpose of resolving any potential complications.

Finally, since the interviews and the stimulated recalls with the participants were conducted in Chinese, the data were all transcribed in Chinese but not fully translated into English. What was translated into English involves the parts connected with the recurrent themes and salient features about the participants' EFL teaching and learning, particularly regarding vocabulary teaching and learning. I conducted the translation myself and it was checked by a professor of Chinese-English translation to help ensure that there were no distortions in the translation data. Attempts were also made to strike a balance between literal and semantic translation, aiming to retain the flavor of what the participants uttered (Tsui, 2003). Only when literal translation affected the meaning of the utterance was the translation modified syntactically and semantically.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHER KNOWLEDGE OF EFL TEACHING

Research shows that language teachers' knowledge about the instruction of specific curricular areas is closely related to, or even embedded in, their knowledge about language teaching and learning (Borg, 2003; Tsui, 2003). In search of EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction, therefore, it is important and necessary to examine their understandings of EFL teaching. For this purpose, this chapter provides an account of the teacher-participants' general beliefs of a qualified EFL teacher, through which to identify salient components of teachers' knowledge of EFL teaching. The findings to be reported in this section are mainly based on the data of the first interview with each of the teacher-participants and classroom observations. The themes about the qualities of a qualified EFL teacher according to the seven teacher-participants fall into the following three categories: a) content knowledge, b) pedagogical knowledge, and c) knowledge of students.

Content Knowledge

Content knowledge refers to subject matter knowledge or knowledge of a discipline (Tsui, 2003). Researchers argue that teachers' understanding of the subject matter or the discipline affects the quality of their teaching (Shulman, 1986; Tsui, 2003). Previous studies of L2 teach knowledge indicate that content knowledge is one component of the knowledge base of teaching (e.g., Fradd, & Lee, 1998; Johnston, & Goettsch, 2000; Tsui & Nicholson, 1999). The data in this study suggests that all of the seven participants perceived content knowledge to be the first and compulsory component of EFL teacher knowledge. Specifically, in answering the question of what

qualities a qualified EFL teacher should have, all the participants viewed content knowledge as the teacher's most important quality. In Lili's words, for example, "a qualified EFL teacher should first be highly proficient in the English language" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Fangfang also stated that "the first quality of a qualified EFL teacher is his content knowledge" (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006). Yao even assumed that "the teacher can't teach his class well without solid content knowledge no matter how enthusiastic, how warm-hearted, and how hard-working he is, so his content knowledge should be the most important part of his knowledge for teaching" (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

English Proficiency

The data further shows that EFL teachers' content knowledge primarily consists of four components: English proficiency, knowledge of the language system and the language learning system, and supplementary content knowledge. The first component, English proficiency, refers to EFL teachers' command of English language skills, which include reading, writing, listening, speaking, and translation (i.e., English-Chinese and Chinese-English). All seven teacher-participants employed the Chinese term 'English proficiency' to describe this component. They viewed EFL teachers' English proficiency as the most important dimension of content knowledge. For example, a qualified EFL teacher needs to, according to Shasha, "have strong English proficiency" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Lili explicitly pointed out that an EFL teacher should be proficient in the English language, which involves five skills: "reading, writing, listening, speaking, and translation" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Yao also argued that "the teacher's English proficiency, including listening, speaking, reading and

writing, should be high enough... of course the higher, the better” (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Lin provided a specific quality regarding EFL teachers’ English proficiency. As he put it,

...an EFL teacher should be an expert at least in one or two or even more areas, for example, translation, speaking, and writing. He can publish research papers in the field from time to time. If students or other teachers have any inquiries, they can come to consult him. (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006)

Of the five language skills, all of the participants except Lin argued that the skill of English speaking is the most important for EFL university teachers. As they argued, university students, having learned English more than seven years before they go to college, generally are proficient in reading, listening, and writing. Their speaking ability, however, tends not to be as strong due to the fact that they lack speaking practice in high school. Also, they have few chances to speak English in the Chinese EFL context. In Fangfang’s words, for example,

An EFL teacher’s oral English must be excellent. When he speaks English, students should admire him because of this. Particularly at present, the students’ English proficiency is quite high at reading, grammar, and listening, but their speaking isn’t as good. If the teacher’s speaking ability isn’t good, students may be discouraged. (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006)

Dandan also put it as follows:

If you’re a qualified EFL teacher, you should first have excellent pronunciation. You should speak English fluently. You know, our students are very weak at speaking English. Your English speaking should be excellent. Then students can

more easily accept you as a qualified English teacher. (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

In addition, the participants who attached great importance to an EFL teacher's speaking ability raised two types of criteria to evaluate the teacher's speaking proficiency. One is that the teacher should be "native-like in English speaking". As Shasha and Deng both argued, for instance, for an EFL teacher, "the more native-like his oral English is, the better" (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006; Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). The other criterion is that no matter whether his English is standard or not, the EFL teacher should be able to speak English fluently for communication. As Yao put it,

If I can't speak English fluently in class or if I often make grammatical errors in speaking, which even my students are able to identify, they'll have no confidence in my teaching. Then in their eyes, I'm not a qualified teacher. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Deng further supported Yao's argument in the following words:

It's not so important if your English is standard or not, but at least you can communicate in English fluently and have a good command of the language, which is the most fundamental in English teaching. (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

With respect to the skill of translation, the participants argued that an EFL teacher needs to possess strong proficiency in English-Chinese translation and Chinese-English translation. According to Lin,

China is an EFL setting. We use Chinese every day. Now our country's developing very rapidly.... When students graduate, they'll have a lot of chances

to do translation ... from English to Chinese ... or from Chinese into English. So we English teachers should train them in this area now. We of course should have a good command of the translation skill, both English-Chinese and Chinese-English. (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006)

Knowledge of the Language System and the Language Learning System

The second component of EFL teachers' content knowledge involves knowledge of the language system and of the language learning system (e.g., phonetics, phonology, syntax, morphology, and second language acquisition). For this component, one participant (i.e., Lin) provided a comprehensive picture. In Lin's words,

...broadly speaking, an EFL teacher should have good mastery of two principles: how human language works and how a learner learns a foreign language. For the first principle, the teacher should have knowledge about linguistics. For the second principle, the teacher should have knowledge about how a learner does language learning. This is more about second language acquisition and psycholinguistics. (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006)

It seems that Lin's first principle involves EFL teachers' linguistic knowledge and his second principle is related to knowledge about the language learning system. The other participants' understandings, however, primarily concerns the dimension of the language system. For example, one area the participants frequently talked about was phonetics and phonology. The term the participants generally employed was more related to the speaking proficiency (e.g., pronunciation) rather than *phonetics* or *phonology*.

Specifically, in Fangfang's teaching, she often asked students to bear three elements in mind when they read aloud: *stress*, *rhythm*, and *sense group*. The elements of *stress* and

rhythm are actually concerned with phonetics and phonology, but the term Fangfang used to describe them was equivalent to *pronunciation*. Shasha, Lili, and Deng also employed the term *pronunciation* when demonstrating their knowledge about phonetics and phonology. One more example is based on Lili's teaching. She taught students a generalized rule of how to say a word ending with a morpheme *-ity*. The phonological rule, as she said, is that "for the word ending with a suffix *-ity*, its third syllable from behind should be stressed" (Lili, Fieldnotes, October 12, 2006)). When asked what knowledge this phonological rule belongs to, Lili classified it into "the basic language skill of speaking and pronunciation" (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006).

The data also indicates that what the participants learned about the second component of content knowledge seems to lack practicality in their EFL teaching practice. One main reason seems to be that MA TESOL programs in China did not effectively integrate the design of curricula about linguistics and language learning theories into actual EFL teaching in China. For example, as Lili put it,

I've found what I learned as a graduate student isn't very helpful for my teaching... for example, the courses like general linguistics, and functional grammar. I still remember, our professor asked us to draw a lot of tree diagrams to analyze sentence structures. I don't think they're useful for my teaching at all. I don't know why they taught us that kind of stuff. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Dandan also echoed Lili's views:

I don't think the courses I took were very useful to my teaching. They're too theoretical. Also it's such a long time since I completed my MA education. I've

almost forgotten all I learned then..... The course about second language acquisition might be helpful to my teaching, but we had no course like this when I was a graduate student. (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

Another reason for the ineffective EFL teacher education seems to lie in teacher educators' lack of qualifications. Dandan described her experience about unqualified teacher educators:

When I was doing my Master degree, many teachers weren't English majors. They originally taught Russian and later became teachers teaching MA TEFL students. They didn't get enough teacher education. Also their English proficiency's very low. (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

Though Lin admitted the importance of content knowledge about linguistics and the system of language learning in EFL teaching, he also explicitly stated as follows:

I learned little from the courses when I was doing my MA degree. I generally did self-studying, reading linguistics books by myself. You know, some teachers weren't very competent. They weren't very knowledgeable in their research areas. (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006)

Supplementary Content Knowledge

In addition to the two components of content knowledge reported above, an EFL teacher, according to the participants, needs to be equipped with supplementary content knowledge, which refers to the content knowledge used as a carrier to teach the English language. Researchers argue that language teaching has its unique characteristics (Fradd & Lee, 1998). One of them is that in language teaching, the target language can be both the medium and the object of learning. In EFL classrooms, teaching focuses not only on

the English language but also on content information which serves as a carrier for language teaching and learning. As Shasha stated,

EFL teaching doesn't just mean transferring EFL knowledge or skills to students. It also involves using the English language to transfer information, which can develop students' interest in English. It's not enough for an EFL teacher just to have knowledge of the English language. The teacher should have knowledge of other disciplines. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

According to the participants, the component of supplementary content knowledge mainly concerns knowledge of social science and humanities. Specifically, an EFL teacher should be equipped with knowledge of culture, sociology, philosophy, British and American literature, and Chinese language. As Shasha argued,

I think the teacher should be knowledgeable not only in the English language but also in the areas like western culture, literature, and sociology. Language teaching is also a kind of culture teaching. Integrating culture into English teaching, we can help students realize that English learning isn't boring and it has a lot of fun. So the teacher should have knowledge about western culture, particularly the culture about English-speaking countries, like the United States, the Great Britain, and Australia. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Lin suggested that an EFL teacher should have knowledge about sociology. In his words, "As an EFL teacher, you should care about the social issues, for example, unemployment, pollution, population, and real estate. In class, you need to give students your own critical thoughts" (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006). In Deng's opinion, the EFL teacher needs to be fairly knowledgeable in philosophy. As he said, "In EFL teaching, we should

teach students how to think critically and how to perceive the world philosophically, ... We teachers should have some knowledge in philosophy” (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006).

The interview data also indicates that a command of the Chinese language should be a part of EFL teachers’ supplementary content knowledge. According to Lin, “English teaching is quite complicated. The teacher has to use English or Chinese to help students learn English. If the teacher’s Chinese proficiency isn’t good enough, how could he teach English well?” (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006). Yao also supported Lin and stated that “An EFL teacher’s knowledge of the Chinese language can reflect his English proficiency. Now we have many chances to do English-Chinese translation. If we can’t clearly express ourselves to students in Chinese, it’s a really awkward situation” (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

It was also observed that the participants’ beliefs are fairly consistent with their teaching behaviors in terms of their supplementary content knowledge. Shasha, for instance, integrated much cultural background knowledge into her teaching practice. In the fall semester, when the data was collected, Shasha introduced some western festivals (i.e., Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas) to students in class. Shasha also selected ten famous classic English novels (e.g., *Jane Eyre*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, *the Adventures of Tom Sawyer*) as the materials of EFL extensive reading. To practice students’ extensive reading skills, she adopted a “one novel one semester” approach and asked students to finish reading one English novel in each semester. In Lin’s class, social issues were often integrated into his teaching, for example, population and employment. In Deng’s teaching, the materials of extensive reading he selected were

mostly centered on the field of philosophy (e.g., one selected material was Martin Heidegger's speech 'The Self-Assertion of the German University').

In addition to the knowledge of social science and humanities mentioned above, Lili suggested that the teacher should be knowledgeable in science and technology. Her argument seems to take students' background into account. As Lili said, "Our university is a polytechnic university. Most of the students are majoring in science and technology, so we teachers need to gain some knowledge about general science and technology" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Lili's argument also seems to be context-specific. Since Lili had been teaching the course 'English listening & speaking for science and technology' for several years before the data collection started, it may be that her content-based teaching reminded her of the context-specific knowledge of technology.

Finally, the data reveals the necessity of supplementary content knowledge. All the participants argued that supplementary content knowledge is of great necessity in EFL teaching. Shasha's words may provide a summary in this regard:

In our EFL class here, we teach the English language, but in most cases, the teaching is carried out through teaching content or information. Each semester we teach eight units, focusing on eight topics like culture, social issues, and literature. A command of knowledge in different areas can make our teaching interesting. Students won't get bored... Actually what I've learned about culture, literature and other areas is very helpful to my teaching. If I have no knowledge about these areas, I don't know how to teach English. ... If language teaching only focuses on language points like grammar, it'll be very boring to both students and teachers. It

is also not meaningful to students. Language is used to convey information.

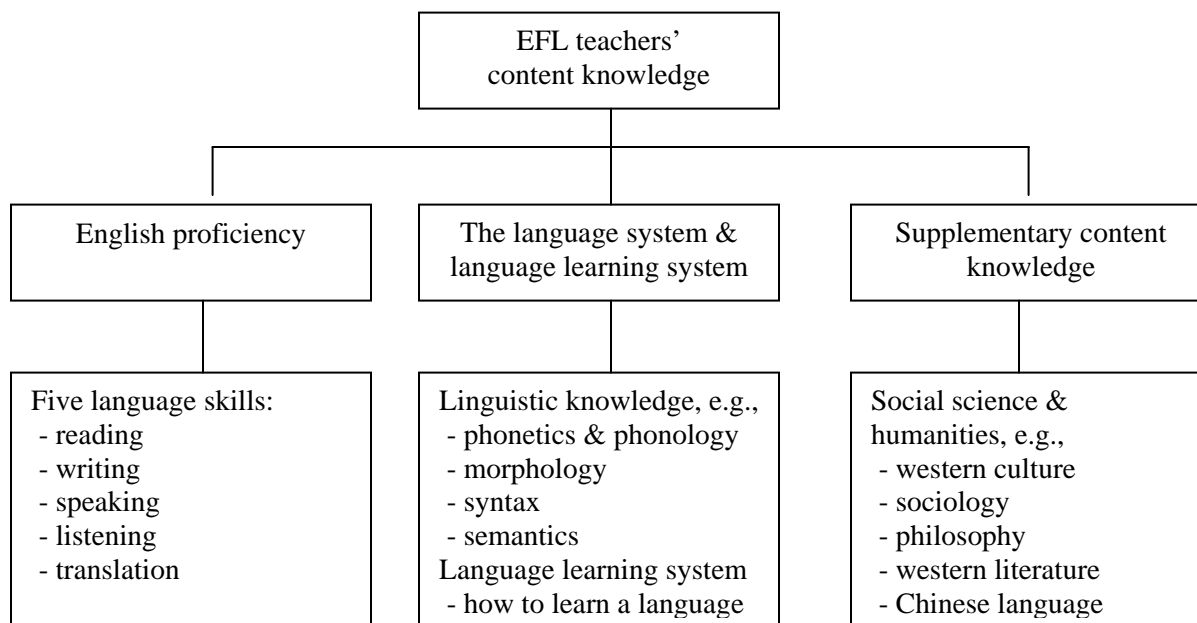
(Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Yao further stated that “if the EFL teacher is also knowledgeable in other areas besides the English language, humor will come out naturally ... Students always enjoy humorous teaching” (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

Summary

To sum up, the main components of EFL teachers’ content knowledge can be shown in Figure 5.1. The figure shows that EFL teachers’ content knowledge can be categorized into three broad components (i.e., English proficiency, the language system and the language learning system, and supplementary content knowledge) and each component contains some specific aspects.

Figure 5.1 *Components of EFL teachers’ content knowledge*



Pedagogical Knowledge

Another salient theme about Chinese EFL teacher knowledge is EFL teachers' pedagogical knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge can be subsumed into two categories: management of learning and management of resources (Tsui, 2003). In this section, the participants' conceptions of EFL teachers' pedagogical knowledge will be reported, focusing on these two dimensions.

The term 'management of learning' is employed in a wider sense than the term 'classroom management' (Tsui, 2003). Although management of learning primarily involves classroom management, it is also concerned with out-of-classroom management. Classroom management refers to aspects of classroom organization, for example, using pair or group work, maintaining discipline, and dealing with daily business (e.g., collecting assignments). Out-of-class management refers to what teachers do before or after class to facilitate students' learning. The data shows that most of the findings are concerned with classroom management.

Characteristics of an Effective EFL Class

For classroom management, previous studies indicate that the ability to conduct effective classroom management is an important quality of an effective language teacher (Arends, 1998; Gray, 2001). All of the seven teacher-participants also perceived effective classroom management to be an essential quality of a Chinese EFL teacher. For example, as Lin said, "Classroom management is very important for our EFL teaching. In class, we should know when to make fun, when to be serious, when to ask questions, and when to use group work or pair work" (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006). The data shows that there are two salient themes in terms of effective classroom management. One is

EFL teachers' beliefs about characteristics of an effective EFL class. The other involves teachers' understandings of the qualities of an EFL teacher to conduct effective classroom management.

The participants perceived that an effective EFL teaching class should have the following six characteristics: a) being in rapport with students, b) being interactive, c) learning occurrence, d) teaching both what and how, e) using an integrated teaching approach, and f) balancing fun and content. The first characteristic is concerned with developing rapport with students. All the seven participants explicitly confessed that it is of great importance to establish a good relationship with students for effective teaching. Good rapport with students is featured with being friendly (Shasha, Lin, Lili, and Fangfang), approachable (Shasha and Lili), considerate (Shasha and Lili), and relaxing (Yao, Lili, Deng, and Dandan). In actual EFL classroom teaching, however, as the field notes obtained in observations indicate, there is a difference between the Group A teachers and the Group B teachers regarding rapport development. For the Group A teachers (i.e., Shasha, Lin, Lili, and Yao), much attention was paid to establishing rapport with students in class and different strategies were employed to achieve rapport development. In Lili's teaching, she often adopted a warming-up approach at the beginning of each class. At the beginning of the class after the National Day Holiday, for example, Lili greeted students by asking "how was your holiday? How did you spend it?" (Lili, Fieldnotes, October 12, 2006). In the post-observation interview, she explained as follows:

I often greet students in this way at the beginning of each class. The greeting only takes a few seconds, but it helps to form a relaxing and exciting classroom

atmosphere; the students may feel the teacher isn't very distant from them. So I may set up a good rapport with them in class. (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006)

Lili also used a remember-students'-names strategy. As she said,

If I call students' names without referring to the roll, I can quickly develop a close personal relationship with them. Then the students may feel that they have the responsibility to learn English well for the teacher. That is, a good personal relationship may help strengthen their motivation to learn English. (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006)

Moreover, the Group A teachers generally take the initiative to understand students after class. They try to be approachable to students. To have more chances to understand students, for instance, Lili employed an office-hour strategy¹. Each week she held office hours for students. As she said, "I understood more about students in my office hours. They usually share a lot with me" (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006). In Shasha's case, she often used a free-chat approach to develop rapport with students. As she stated, "I try to get any chance to understand students" (Shasha, Interview 5, November 7, 2006). For this purpose, Shasha often had private chats with students during class breaks and after class. For example, in her first class of each semester, as she recalled, she would leave not only her office phone number but also her home and cell phone numbers to students, informing them that they could call her anytime if they needed her help. Here is one incident about how to develop rapport in Shasha's teaching:

In the first class last fall, I asked students to do self-introduction. One of the girls standing up told me, 'I don't want to tell you my name.' Then she said, 'I hate English'. Her words shocked me and other students. After class I asked her to stay

¹ In this EFL teaching program for non-English-majors, holding office hours is not compulsory for teachers.

and had a private talk with her. Then I learned that in high school her English teacher treated her badly and hit her once. Since then she decided to quit learning English. Later on I found her English was quite poor. So I often had private chats with her, tutored her, and tried to help her become interested in English. I also assigned her more extra homework in that semester. In the final she received an A for the course. (Shasha, Interview 5, November 7, 2006)

Shasha told me proudly that her students viewed her not only as a teacher but also a friend or a mom. They often shared their happiness or sadness with her. Through this way, a good rapport was gradually established between her and her students.

For the Group B teachers (i.e., Deng, Dandan, and Fangfang), however, analysis of the observation data shows that their understandings of rapport development in class tend to be somewhat inconsistent with their teaching behaviors. In class or after class, they devoted less time to building rapport with students. For example, Deng usually began his class with no intention to develop rapport with students, like warming-up greetings. He had no activities like chats with students after class or during the class break. In his class, it seems that the rapport with students was not a consistent feature of his teaching. In his view, “If what the teacher teaches is appealing to students, rapport with them should occur naturally” (Deng, Interview 4, November 14, 2006).

The second characteristic of an effective EFL class, according to the participants, is that interaction, either teacher-student or student-student, should occur in class. When describing an effective EFL class, all seven teacher-participants employed the Chinese term “interaction” and viewed interaction as a salient symbol of an effective EFL class. Yao illustrated the importance of in-class interaction:

The class shouldn't be lifeless. No matter what you say, the students should have some response. Their response means that they're listening to you, watching you, and thinking. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Dandan also stated, "My unhappy experience in teaching is that students were not responsive and there was a lack of interaction in class. Their lack of response directly affected my feeling" (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006).

The participants also maintained that interaction should be particularly enhanced in an EFL class. Dandan used a simile to highlight the specialty for EFL teaching and the role of a teacher in an EFL class:

Being an EFL teacher, you should be like a compeer in class. You should know how to keep students not sleepy and, more important, how to make them cooperate with you. English teaching is not like mathematics teaching. In mathematics teaching, it's enough if you can explain different formulae clearly. But in English teaching, you should know how to get all students involved and how to motivate them to participate. (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

Fangfang argued that language is for communication and interaction is featured with communication. In her words, "In an interactive class, students have to speak English, to use English, and to communicate in English with the teacher and their peers" (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006). Fangfang explained two types of interaction in her teaching,

I think the best EFL class should be that there is much teacher-student interaction. Students can understand your questions and then answer them. Also there should be much interaction among students about the text they've learned. The class I

like is the students can actively participate rather than I push them to. (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006)

The observation data further indicates that a difference exists between Group A and Group B teachers in terms of interaction development in teaching. In Group A teachers' classes (e.g., Shasha, Lili, and Yao), much teacher-student and/or student-student interaction tended to occur while there was less interaction in Group B teachers' classes (e.g., Dandan and Deng) although they tried to develop it.

It was also observed that there were two patterns of interactions in the participants' teaching. One pattern involves teacher-student interaction. Two of the teachers' teaching (i.e., Fangfang and Lin) was featured with this pattern. In Fangfang's class, the main technique Fangfang employed to develop interaction is questioning. As she said,

The way I mainly use to get students involved is asking them many questions. If students can actively answer them, this lesson is successful. Language is for communication and students' involvement means that they need to use English to answer the questions. In my class I stress students' interaction or involvement. (Fangfang, Interview 5, November 7, 2006)

Lin's teaching, as observed, also primarily involved teacher-student interaction. The major technique he used for interaction is the use of rhetorical questions, which means that Lin provided his answers to the questions and students generally did not need to answer them. In Lin's view, "I use the questions to arouse students' attention" (Lin, Interview 5, October 26, 2006). Regarding the development of in-class student-student interaction, Lin argued that developing student-student interaction should be

contextualized. In his words,

Developing student-student interaction is very important in class, but it should depend on what to teach, students' language levels, and class size. In a speaking class, there should be a lot of student-student interaction as well as teacher-student interaction. For a lecture or a reading class, I won't pay much attention to student-student interaction.... because my focus is on the reading materials. I don't agree with the saying that little student-student interaction in class means ineffective teaching. (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006)

The other pattern of in-class interaction is an integration of teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction. In Shasha, Lili, and Yao's teaching, for example, much interaction occurred, involving not only teacher-student interaction but also student-student interaction. To achieve interaction, Group A teachers tended to use various techniques. For example, Shasha stated,

In my class, if I see a student feel bored and sleepy, I'll shift the teaching topic or activity to another one at once. I may change a reading activity to a listening activity or a speaking activity. Then the student won't be as likely to feel bored. Just due to the frequent topic shifting, my teaching seems to be broken or unsystematic, but I think listening, speaking, reading and writing should be integrated and can't be separated for language learning. (Shasha, Interview 3, October 24, 2006)

The third characteristic of an effective EFL class is that, in the participants' views, students' learning should occur after each class. As Yao commented,

What I'm happy most about my teaching is that my students said in their feedback that they did learn something in my class, for example, new words, grammar, phrases, or collocations. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Lili further echoed Yao's view: "After each lesson, students should have the feeling that they have learned something. For example, they have learned some new words or understood some difficult sentences" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

The participants also argued that in addition to learning occurrence, an effective EFL class should be featured with making teaching and learning fun. In Yao's words, "When the class is over, the students should feel very happy and look forward to your next class. They also give you loud applause when you finish your teaching" (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). All other participants supported Yao's view that student learning should occur with fun. For example, as Deng put it, "Each time you're done with teaching, students feel that they did learn some English knowledge in class and meanwhile they feel the class had a lot of fun. This should be an ideal English teaching class" (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006). The major techniques used to make teaching fun, according to some participants, are related to the use of different activities or interesting teaching materials. Specifically, in Shasha's teaching, as she described,

To make my teaching exciting and fun, I'll try to collect the English learning materials that I think are interesting and applicable in class. I often spend one to five minutes using an activity like speaking English tongue twister, singing English songs, or making an English speech. The activity takes a very short time, but its effect is amazing. It can make students excited. They may feel it's a lot of

fun, so the class is full of laugh and applause from time to time. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

On the other hand, the participants further pointed out that there should be a balance between having fun and learning occurrence in class. As Dandan said,

An effective English class shouldn't have too much fun. Otherwise, the students may feel that they're not taking a language class. They may feel it's a waster of time. For example, you tell them funny stories in class, making your teaching a lot of fun, but after class they may feel they learned nothing in class, which is the worst in teaching. We should know how to balance making teaching fun and making learning occur in class. To help students realize that they did learn something in class, we should teach them something specific, for example, some new words or new phrases. When students go out of class, they can recall that they've learned something in class. (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

Another characteristic of an effective EFL class from the teacher-participants' perspectives is that the teacher should teach students not only what to learn about the English language but also how to learn it. Lin employed the Confucius's saying to emphasize what should be involved in teaching: "If you give a man a fish, you can feed him for a day; if you teach him to fish, you can feed him for a lifetime. So it is more important to teach students how to learn than what to learn" (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006). Yao also stated that "in my teaching, I always try to answer the three questions students often ask: how to learn English effectively, how to make English learning funny, and what is the most practical stuff to learn?" (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

Fangfang suggested that it is of great necessity to teach students how to learn EFL and therefore, EFL teachers should change their traditional role. As she said,

I think in the future, the profession of teaching may disappear. You know, now we have a kind of information explosion. The teacher is no longer the only source of knowledge to students. Students can learn on their own what the teacher teaches in front of a blackboard through various channels, for example, through books, TV, internet, and other media. In class the teacher won't serve as a conveyer of knowledge but as a facilitator and guide to students. The teacher should have one area he's done much research about. Then he can guide students to learn more. (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006)

Moreover, most of the participants argued that there is no universal teaching approach for EFL teaching. In an effective EFL class, the use of a teaching approach should depend on whether it can effectively develop in-class interaction and contribute to students' motivation and learning occurrence. In Shasha's words, for instance,

No teaching theory can be used to explain everything in EFL teaching. We can't use one theory to explain all of teaching. I don't know what teaching approach I use, but I don't think there's a universal approach we can use for all students and all courses all the time. You know, everything is changing ... students, textbooks, classrooms. At least we need to consider whether the approach can motivate students' response in class. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Deng supported Shasha's argument by stating:

In class, you should at least get students actively involved, making your teaching fun and your students curious. Then all students will be attentive in class. If you

can do that with whatever methods you use, you're a great EFL teacher. (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

Some participants also provided their understandings of the communicative approach. In their views, the communicative approach seems to be more appropriate for teaching EFL speaking than reading. They also tend to maintain that students may be resistant against its overuse in EFL teaching. For example, according to Lin, "Many people think this approach is good, but I think it isn't all the time. We can use it more often in a speaking class than in a reading class" (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006). Lili's views about the communicative approach are:

If I use this approach all the time, students may feel that they can't learn much in class. It's a waste of time to them. They may also think they aren't learning English. They're playing in class. So in my teaching, I use an integrated approach. Sometimes it's teacher-centered and sometimes it's student-centered. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

It seems that the participants' views about the communicative approach are consistent with what other researchers (e.g., Wang, Han & Liu, 2007; Yan, Zhou, & Dai, 2007) have found.

One more characteristic of an effective EFL class, in the participants' view, is that it should be well-organized. Two main dimensions seem to involve this characteristic. One is time management. All the participants argued that there should be an efficient use of class time in an effective EFL class. Lili plainly stated that "an effective English class should be tightly compact. Students should be involved all the time. They should always have something to do in class" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Shasha's view

about this dimension is that “I must make students feel that they have learned something in class. They should feel that it’s worth sitting in my class for 90 minutes and it didn’t waste their time. So I have to manage my time carefully. This minute is for doing this and that minute is for doing that” (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). The other dimension is related to lesson planning. For a well-organized class, the participants assumed that lesson planning plays a significant role. As Shasha put it, for effective EFL teaching, “I always plan my teaching for each class in great detail. Even for the courses I’ve taught five or six times, I also do very serious planning. The students are different and I also may have new teaching thoughts” (Shasha, Interview 4, October 31, 2006). In Fangfang’s opinion, when planning a lesson, the teacher should “set a clear goal for the lesson, including what should be covered, what should be taught, and what student should learn from this lesson” (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006).

Characteristics of an Effective Manager of EFL Learning

To achieve effective management of learning, the participants argued that an EFL teacher as the manager of EFL learning should possess certain qualities, which can be categorized as classroom personality. The employment of the term “classroom personality” is based on Zhang’s (2006) study. Analysis of the data in this study also indicates that one participant’s (i.e., Shasha) understanding in this regard is consistent with Zhang’s (2006) finding. As Shasha argued, a teacher could have a dual personality: classroom personality and out-of-classroom personality. In her words, “My students think I’m an extrovert, but actually I’m an introvert” (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). According to the participants, the classroom personality an effective EFL teacher

needs to have seems to consist of three salient qualities: being responsible, being flexible, and being humorous.

The first quality of an effective EFL teacher is that she/he should be a responsible teacher. Yao explicitly argued that this quality is the most important one for an effective EFL teacher besides content knowledge. In his words, “the teacher’s content knowledge and responsibility, these two qualities can generally guarantee his effective teaching” (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

Being a responsible EFL teacher, as the data demonstrates, can be reflected within two dimensions: caring about students and enjoying teaching. The first dimension “caring about students” is most frequently mentioned by the participants. This may suggest that most of the participants adopted a humanistic teaching approach to treat students. This approach also seems to be related to the issues of developing good classroom rapport and interaction with students, as discussed above.

Caring about students, as the data reveals, seems to concern two aspects. First, teachers need to care about students’ in-class performance. Shasha presented a detailed account of this aspect as follows:

In class, the teacher should care about students’ responses and involvement. Also he should always encourage students when they make progress and develop their confidence when they make mistakes. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

The teacher also needs to care about students’ futures. Fangfang argued that “the teacher should help students know how to be a successful and honest person and what to pursue in one’s life” (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006). The data further shows that for the Group A teachers, caring about students occurs not only in class but also after

class. Shasha, for example, often had private chats with students, as mentioned above. Lili held weekly office hours, which she volunteered to offer to students. In Lili's words, an effective EFL teacher "should devote time to communicating with students after class" (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006).

Being a responsible EFL teacher also means that the teacher should enjoy his/her own EFL teaching. The participants argued that enjoying teaching can make a teacher become more dedicated to his/her teaching. As Yao, Deng, Dandan, and Lin put it, "If you enjoy teaching, then you'll be more devoted to it and try to do it well" (Yao, Deng, Dandan, & Lin, Interviews 1, September 21-23, 2006). Shasha declared that "teaching is extremely important in my life. I may become ill or have an emergency sometime, but if I can stand up, I'll surely show up in front of students when the class bell rings" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). The participants also argued that enjoying teaching can stimulate the teacher's energy and enthusiasm.

In addition to being responsible, another trait of an effective EFL teacher's classroom personality is being flexible. In Shasha's view, "Students have individual differences. In class we need to treat them flexibly if possible" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Lili also argued that "from time to time we may need to give students some freedom since they have different interests" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). The participants' beliefs in this regard were also demonstrated in teaching. For example, most of the participants assigned students to read supplementary reading materials, which involved different areas. The data shows that all seven teacher participants are flexible in handling these reading materials. Shasha asked students to finish reading one novel in the semester; Deng assigned some papers on philosophy as

extensive reading materials; Fangfang used magazines and newspapers as supplementary materials. All of them informed students that if they were not interested in the assigned materials, they could choose their own materials for extensive reading.

The third salient quality of an effective EFL teacher's classroom personality is being humorous. According to some participants, this seems to be an optional trait, and an EFL teacher possessing this trait tends to achieve more effective teaching. In Yao's words, for example, "Students like a humorous teacher. If the teacher is very knowledgeable, humor will come out naturally, but humor isn't so important as content knowledge" (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). The participants agreed, as mentioned above, that in an effective EFL class, learning needs to occur with fun. Thus, students may become interested in English learning. However, as Deng pointed out,

An effective EFL teacher should first be able to get students interested in learning English. This is the most difficult part to do in English teaching. The students all know that English is very useful for them, but they don't know how much fun they can have through learning it. (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

In this sense, a humorous EFL teacher will make it easier to arouse students' interest in EFL learning because a teacher full of humor can "make teaching fun in class" (Fangfang, Dandan, & Lili, Interviews 1, September 21-24, 2006).

Management of Resources for EFL Teaching

The data shows that the participants' management of resources for teaching is featured by their variety, appropriateness, students' interest, teachers' interest, and authenticity. First of all, along with the textbook for their reading classes, the teachers utilized a variety of supplementary teaching materials. The employment of the materials

was aimed primarily at developing students' extensive reading skills. Supplementary materials were also used to make teaching fun. In Shasha's case, she collected ten e-version English novels (e.g., Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights) for students and uploaded them to a web-based learning center for students to download. Shasha also employed newly published English newspapers in China (e.g., China Daily, the 21st Century). She often read part of the newspapers in class, aiming, in her words, "to help students learn what happened most recently and make teaching fun" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). In Fangfang's teaching, she collected various English magazines (e.g., Reader's Digest, Geography, and Times) as extensive reading materials for students. In Yao's case, he frequently selected some short stories and read them in class in order to arouse students' interest. Lili chose some supplementary materials for reading she used in her course "English Listening & Speaking for Science & Technology". As she argued,

Our students will have to read a lot of academic papers about science and technology after they graduate. They need to develop academic reading skills, so I give them some academic papers as samples and they may have a try. (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006)

To practice students' reading skills, Dandan utilized supplementary materials such as travel pamphlets and brochures, which she collected for teaching when she studied in Great Britain. In Deng's case, the supplementary materials he utilized for extensive reading were concerned with philosophy.

The data also indicates that EFL teachers' selection of supplementary reading materials is based primarily on their understandings of students' English proficiency and interests along with teachers' own interests. First, when selecting teaching materials, the

participants considered whether the materials are appropriate for students regarding their English proficiency and interests. As Shasha suggested, “the materials selected shouldn’t be too difficult. The distribution of new words shouldn’t be too tense. If it’s beyond students’ English level, they may be discouraged and lose interest” (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Lili further pointed out that “we need to consider if the topic or content of the selected material is interesting to students. For example, one material I chose is about the Three Gorges Dam. Most students like it because the topic is closely related to their life” (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006). Moreover, it seems that the participants’ selection of supplementary reading materials was impacted by their own interests. For example, Shasha selected the materials mostly related to her research interest in literature; Lili chose the materials focusing on her teaching interest in general science and technology; Deng employed the materials concerning his research and teaching interest in philosophy. In selecting materials, there seems to be a difference between Deng’s view and other participants’. Deng’s selection of resources may be based more on his interest than on students’ English proficiency or interests. When asked whether students had difficulty in understanding Martin Heidegger’s speech “the Self-Assertion of the German University”, one material he selected for extensive reading, Deng explained as follows:

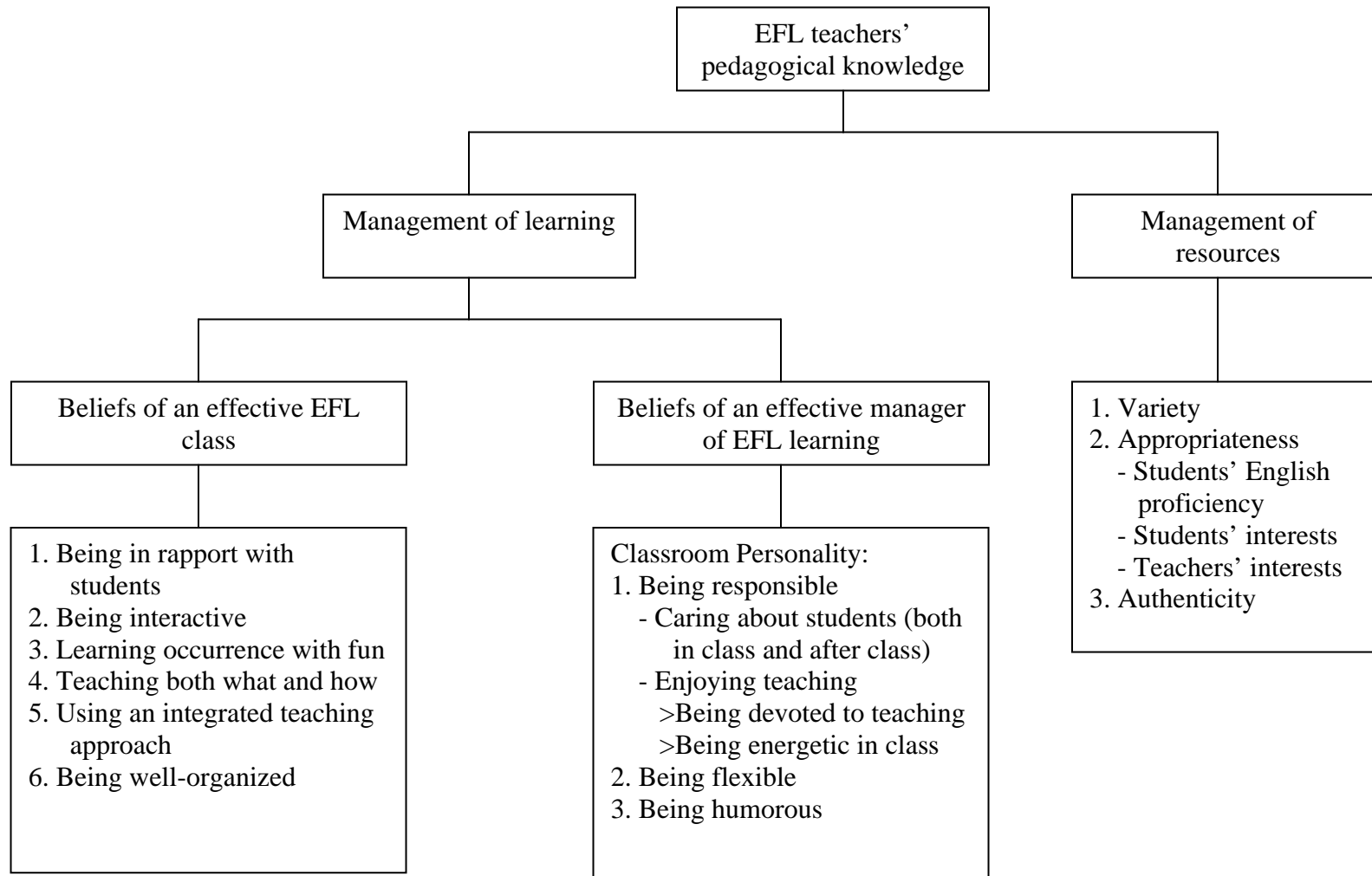
I think the materials I selected are worth reading for my students. Reading them can help develop students’ thinking ability and enquiring ability. If they can’t understand what they read, it doesn’t matter... Even if they don’t read them, I can help them understand all the stuff in class. (Deng, Interview 4, November 14, 2006)

Finally, authenticity is another dimension that EFL teachers consider in material selection. Regarding the selection of extensive reading materials, the participants tended to employ authentic texts. As Fangfang put it, “authentic texts occur in real life situations. I think using authentic materials for extensive reading may give students a different feeling. If they finish reading them, they’ll have a sense of achievement” (Fangfang, Interview 2, October 17, 2006). Lili also argued that “reading authentic academic papers may help develop students’ awareness of how to write academic papers in English” (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006). In Deng’s words, “authentic materials can directly reflect the writer’s views, but adapted materials may distort them. We’d better not make changes” (Deng, Interview 3, October 10, 2006). Moreover, the Group A teachers realized the challenge in selecting authentic materials for extensive reading due to EFL students’ English proficiency. As Lili pointed out, “authentic materials usually have a lot of new words for students, which affect their understanding” (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006). To solve this problem, the Group A participants tended to suggest that students should consult dictionaries when needed.

Summary

The analysis reported above indicates that EFL teachers’ pedagogical knowledge consists of two main dimensions: the management of learning and the management of instructional resources. This section focused mainly on the dimension of management of learning, which was represented with two aspects: teachers’ beliefs of an effective EFL class and an effective manager of EFL learning. The detailed components of EFL teachers’ pedagogical knowledge can be summarized in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 *Components of EFL teachers' pedagogical knowledge*



Knowledge of Students

Another salient theme about EFL teachers' knowledge emerging in the data is their knowledge of students. All the participants admitted the importance of EFL teachers' knowledge of students. In Lin's explicit words, for example, "it's very important and necessary to know students for effective teaching" (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006). Lili also employed a simile to highlight the importance of understanding students. As she put it,

The teacher-student relationship is somewhat like that of merchant-customer. We should try to improve our service to meet students' needs and interests, making them happy. That is, to improve our service, we should know students' needs and interests. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Despite the importance of knowledge of students, the participants argued that there are some challenges in knowing students. The major one lies in class size and the total number of students they taught. As Lin and Fangfang stated, "we teach around 40 students each class and meet them once a week. Our teaching loads are five classes. Teaching 200 students a week, I think it's really hard to know each student deeply" (Lin, Fangfang, Interviews 1, September 23-24, 2006). The data further shows that teachers employ various strategies to understand students. To have a general understanding of all students, most of the participants (i.e., Shasha, Yao, Lili, Fangfang, and Dandan) used a questionnaire to collect students' information in the first class of the semester. Through this questionnaire and based on their previous teaching experience, the participants obtained general information about students' strengths, challenges, interests, and needs in English learning from students' perspectives. They also learned students' weekly

working loads in the questionnaire: Students normally have to take 7 to 8 courses besides English each semester. As Shasha summarized,

Generally speaking, my students are good at English reading but weak at writing and speaking. Their grammar knowledge is very strong but their vocabulary size is quite small. Many of them are interested in western culture. (Shasha, Interview 2, October 17, 2006)

In addition, the participants tried to understand individual students, particularly those having difficulty in the EFL reading course. For this purpose, the participants made use of various techniques, for instance, Shasha's private chats with students, Lili's office hours to students, and Yao's approach of making friends with students.

One difference between the Group A teachers and the Group B teachers in knowledge of students is that they tend to use different methods to treat students' challenges in EFL learning. For example, all the participants understood that students had their own majors and had to take 7-8 courses besides the weekly 90-minute English course, which constrained their devotion to English learning. To handle this challenge, the Group A teachers usually employed an awareness-raising approach to help students become conscious of this issue. In Shasha and Lili's teaching, for instance, they tried to handle this challenge in the first class of the semester. They initially asked students to work in groups or pairs and make a comparison about the English course in high school and at university. Thus, as Lili stated, "all students figured out one big difference. That is, in high school they had a daily English class each week and they met their English teacher every day but at university they only have one English class each week and can meet the teacher once a week" (Lili, Interview 2, September 28, 2006). After this, the

teachers asked students to calculate the total number of class hours for the English course they would have in the whole semester at university. Here is Shasha's summary about her students' calculation:

We have the English class once a week and can cover six to seven units of the textbook this semester. There are 18 weeks in the semester, the last two for the final exam, the third one for the national holiday, and the first one for syllabus introduction. We only have 14 weeks left for this course. Each week we have 90-minute in-class teaching, so we totally have 21-hour English teaching in the semester. (Shasha, Interview 2, October 17, 2006)

Therefore, this consciousness-raising activity helps the students become aware that, in Shasha's words, "it's impossible for students to learn English well only by using the 21-hour in-class time and they have to spend a great amount of time learning it after class" (Shasha, Interview 2, October 17, 2006). The Group B teachers, on the other hand, tended to adopt a direct approach explicitly informing students of the challenge (e.g., Dandan and Fangfang). In Deng's teaching, he did not invest time in notifying students of the differences in English teaching between high school and university.

The data also shows that the theme of "knowledge of students" is intertwined in the above discussions regarding the participants' understandings of an effective EFL class, an effective EFL teacher as the manager of learning, and effective management of resources. Specifically, the participants tried to picture an effective EFL class (e.g., learning occurrence) and an effective EFL teacher as manager of learning (e.g., being humorous) through considering students' needs and interests. It can be seen that in classroom teaching, one key issue of EFL teachers' knowledge of students centers on

students' in-class performance, including their participation, interaction, and learning occurrence. Teachers' knowledge of students in this respect may help them realize how to perform effectively in class so as to match students' expectations. As regards effective management of extensive reading materials, the participants agreed that they need to have an understanding of students' interests as well as their English proficiency. As mentioned above, the EFL teachers, though selecting extensive reading materials based on their own interests or students' English proficiency, also offer freedom for students to choose the materials they are interested in.

Overall, the EFL teacher-participants all admitted the importance of knowledge of students. To understand students and recognize their needs, they generally employed a variety of techniques. Their knowledge of students mainly involved students' background, challenges, interests, and needs regarding EFL learning. In class, their knowledge of students primarily focused on students' classroom performance (e.g., students' involvement, interaction, and learning occurrence). It was also found that both the Group A teachers and the Group B teachers tended to use different techniques to handle students' challenges in EFL learning.

Summary

This chapter reported the results about EFL teachers' knowledge of EFL teaching and learning, which involves three salient components identified in the data: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of students. The data also reveals another important component of EFL teacher knowledge, i.e., pedagogical content knowledge. This component of teacher knowledge, however, was not reported in this section because it is generally considered as being situated in the teaching of specific

curricular aspects and “closely tied to the specific context of the classroom and ... embodied in teachers’ classroom practices” (Tsui, 2003, p. 59). Therefore, the component of EFL teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge will be reported in Chapter 6, which presents the results about Chinese EFL teachers’ knowledge of vocabulary learning and teaching.

CHAPTER 6

EFL TEACHER KNOWLEDGE OF VOCABULARY TEACHING

The purpose of this study was to investigate EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction through addressing the following four research questions raised in Chapter 2:

1. What beliefs do Chinese EFL teachers hold about vocabulary learning?
2. What are their beliefs about vocabulary teaching?
3. What is the relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning vocabulary instruction and their classroom behavior?
4. How do they develop knowledge of vocabulary instruction?

The results to be reported in this chapter focus on the teacher-participants' beliefs and teaching behaviors specifically related to EFL vocabulary instruction, through which to explore EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction. The chapter consists of five sections: a) EFL teachers' beliefs about the position of vocabulary in EFL learning and teaching, b) teacher knowledge about vocabulary learning, c) teacher knowledge about vocabulary teaching, d) the relationship between teacher knowledge about vocabulary instruction and their classroom behaviors, and e) sources of EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction.

The Position of Vocabulary in EFL Learning and Teaching

All seven participants maintained that vocabulary occupies a critical position in EFL learning and teaching. They posited that vocabulary is one of the most fundamental elements in English learning and teaching. As Lili stated, "without vocabulary, we couldn't listen, speak, read, or write" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). With a

similar argument, Lin held that language learning is equal to vocabulary learning and that vocabulary teaching is equal to language teaching. In Lin's words,

In my experience of English learning and teaching, vocabulary is the most important part. Why? When you have commanded a foreign language, you can read, speak, write, and translate. All these abilities are actually represented through appropriate and creative use of vocabulary. Grammar is closely related to vocabulary. Grammar actually is an extension of vocabulary. It's embedded in the usage of vocabulary. For example, if I explain how to use a verb, I should teach its syntactic structure as well. I think that English learning is actually vocabulary learning and English teaching is vocabulary teaching. (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006)

Most of the teacher-participants pointed out that for university students learning English, vocabulary and reading are the two most important aspects, though they also admitted the importance of other aspects of language learning, for example, grammar, speaking, writing, listening, and translation. There are two major arguments to support their understandings in this regard. One argument involves the inter-relationship among the various aspects of the English language. According to Deng,

Reading and vocabulary are the two most basic elements for a language learner. Vocabulary is the base and reading is essentially a competence of comprehension. Without vocabulary, it's impossible to do reading, listening, speaking, or writing. Also with reading abilities, it's easy for the learner to develop other language abilities. So the learner first needs to have vocabulary and reading abilities and then practice listening, speaking, and writing.

The other argument concerns an understanding of students' background. In Yao's view,

Most of our students, after graduation, will pursue their master or doctoral degrees and do research work. They'll need to read many papers about science, particularly those about front-line science, which are published mostly in English. So it's important to develop their English reading skills. But for this purpose, they have to command enough English vocabulary. A large vocabulary size is a guarantee for effective reading.

The interview data also indicates that most of the participants employed metaphors to elicit the role of vocabulary in English learning and teaching. Researchers have suggested that teachers' knowledge can be better understood through the metaphors that they use (e.g., Grant, 1992; Tsui, 2003) in that the metaphors are usually derived from teachers' past experiences. There were two metaphors the participants used to describe the role of vocabulary in language learning. The most frequently used metaphor is "bricks". Six of the participants stated that vocabulary is to a language as bricks are to the process of building a house. In Fangfang's words, "without bricks, you couldn't build the house. Without vocabulary, you couldn't read, speak, listen, write, or translate" (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006). Shasha echoed Fangfang's view by saying that "I often tell students, 'If you don't have bricks, how can you build a house? If you don't have vocabulary, how can you communicate?'" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). The other metaphor used to illustrate the importance of vocabulary is that vocabulary is the tentacles of an octopus. Lin employed this metaphor as follows: "Vocabulary in a language is the tentacles of an octopus. The octopus' tentacles can reach out in all directions for various purposes. Vocabulary also is associated with all aspects of

the language, like grammar, semantics, pronunciation, and pragmatics” (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006).

To sum up, it seems that all the EFL teacher-participants appreciated the value of vocabulary both in EFL teaching and learning. They argued that vocabulary is one of the most fundamental elements in language learning and teaching and that vocabulary knowledge plays a vital role in the development of EFL students’ English proficiency and their appropriate use of English. This finding confirms the studies of Knight (1994), Marcaro (2003), and other researchers on the role of vocabulary in L2 learning and teaching.

EFL Teacher Knowledge of Vocabulary Learning

This section will report two dimensions of EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary learning: what to learn about vocabulary and how to learn vocabulary. It seems that the dimension of what to learn about vocabulary mainly represents EFL teachers’ content knowledge about English vocabulary and the dimension of how to learn vocabulary mainly involves their pedagogical knowledge about vocabulary and knowledge of students.

What to Learn about Vocabulary?

EFL teachers’ knowledge about what to learn about English vocabulary mainly concerns the following three components: the components learning a word involves, receptive and productive knowledge of a word, and the words selected for learning.

The Components Learning a Word Involves. The participants tended to maintain that knowing a word is associated with four components: its pronunciation, form, meaning, and usage. With respect to how to say a word, all the participants argued that a

learner should know how to accurately pronounce different sounds in the word. In addition, three participants (Fangfang, Lili, and Yao) maintained that knowing how to stress a multi-syllable word is particularly important to Chinese learners. As Fangfang stated,

Just as an English word has no four tones, so there is no stress in a Chinese character. I think it's difficult for a native speaker of English to say the four tones in Chinese characters, and it's also difficult for Chinese EFL learners to stress an English word of more than one syllable.

As regards a word's form, the participants argued that it is mainly related to its spelling and word formation. In their opinion, it would be the best case if the learner could spell any word he/she learned. The participants' emphasis of word spelling can be displayed in their teaching because of their frequent use of dictation in class. In one stimulated recall, Shasha explained that "dictation can test students' word spelling, and knowing how to spell a word is part of how to use the word productively" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Most of the participants also pointed out that knowing an English word also concerns what it consists of (i.e., its formation). As Lili stated, "I often tell students that many English words are formed by combining a root with affixes. When you learn a word, it's better for you to know how the word is formed" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). In Lin's words, "many English words have their derivatives, and their derivations follow some rules. Language learners should know how to generalize the rules about word formation" (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006).

Knowing a word also involves knowing its meaning, which is, as the interview data displays, related to three dimensions. First, the participants pointed out that an

English word generally has more than one meaning. As Yao put it, “almost all the English words, except some concrete nouns, have more than one meaning” (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). A second dimension lies in which meaning should be learned first. According to the participants, there seem to be two criteria a learner can follow. One concerns the frequency of the meaning that occurs in the word. As Lin said, “an English language learner should first learn the most common meaning of a word, then learn the more common meaning, and finally if possible, learn the least common meaning. This is a learning principle” (Lin, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). The other criterion is concerning the context of a word. As Fangfang claimed, “the context in which a word is used determines its meaning, so the learner should learn the word’s meaning determined in context” (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006). The third dimension is about whether the word meaning should be learned in Chinese or in English. There seem to be different views about this dimension between the Group A teachers and the Group B teachers. The Group A teachers tended to have a flexible view about learning a word’s meaning in Chinese or in English. As Shasha put it, “if the students’ English level is very high, it’s good for them to learn the word meaning in English. If not, they’d better learn it in Chinese” (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Yao shared Shasha’s view and further added:

If a concrete noun is defined in English, it is generally not easy for learners to get its concept, whether their English level is high or low. It’s usually quite hard for them to match its English definition with its Chinese concept. For example, the word *tiger*, if defined in English, is very confusing to students, but in Chinese

lao(2)hu(3), it's really easy for them to get its meaning. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

The Group A teachers, however, tended to hold a comparatively rigid view about whether for a learner to learn vocabulary meaning in Chinese or in English. The three Group A teachers placed more emphasis on knowing a word's meaning in English than in Chinese. As Fangfang stated, "since you're learning English, you should try to get every chance to learn it, including learning a word's meaning. When learning a word's meaning defined in English, you're actually exposed to the English language" (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006). Dandan also echoed Fangfang by claiming that "English learners should learn to think in English and form a habit of thinking in English. Learning vocabulary meaning in English can train them to think in that way. If they learn a word's meaning in Chinese, their understanding of the word in the Chinese way may affect their use of the word. The English they produce may be a kind of Chinglish¹" (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006).

A word's usage is another component of knowing a word. The participants' conceptions about this aspect mainly involve the following two dimensions: proper use of the word and its collocations. Regarding how to use a word properly, all the participants emphasized its syntactic use. One syntactic feature of a word the participants often described is the word's part of speech. As Yao suggested,

When we learn a word, we should know its part of speech. If it's a verb, for example, we should know if it's transitive or intransitive. A transitive verb should be followed with an object but an intransitive verb can't. An intransitive verb can

¹ Chinglish is a pejorative term often used in China to refer to the written or spoken inter-language of Chinese learners of English who have not gained fluency. Chinglish consists of English words that display Chinese characteristics.

go with an object by adding a preposition in between. (Yao, Interview 3, October 10, 2006)

Dandan also provided an example about one syntactic feature of nouns, that is, whether a noun is countable or uncountable. In Dandan's view, for example, "when learning a noun, you should know if it is a countable noun or not. When you learn a word like *information*, you should know it's a non-countable noun and has no plural form. Then you can use it properly and wouldn't make any silly grammatical error" (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006). The appropriate use of a word also concerns its pragmatic use, which is more related to the semantic prosody of a word (Partington, 1998; Xiao, & McEnery, 2006). Sinclair (1987) first used the term *semantic prosody* to describe the phenomenon that "many uses of words and phrases show a tendency to occur in a certain semantic environment" (p. 112). For example, the lexical item *happen*, as he observed, is habitually associated with unpleasant events, such as in *Accidents happen*. The data in this study indicates that only one participant (i.e., Lin) explicitly argued that a word's pragmatic use is an aspect of knowing a word. In Lin's words, "to learn a word, the learner should also get to understand: Does the word have a derogatory sense or a complimentary sense? Is it a formal word or a colloquial word?" (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006)

The other dimension involving a word's usage is its collocations. The participants tended to define a collocation as a phrase consisting of two or more words that syntactically or semantically occur together. The interview data indicates that they all admitted the importance of learning collocations. Most of them argued that learning collocations can help to avoid making collocational errors in word use. For example, as

Yao pointed out, “learning collocations can help us use the English language in chunks and not in single words only” (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Shasha also stated that “learning and using collocations can make our English more native-like” (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Based on the collocations provided by the participants in interviews and observed in their teaching, three groups of collocations were identified. First, their knowledge about syntactic collocations focuses mainly on the pattern *verb/adjective/noun + prepositions*. This can be seen from the following examples of the syntactic collocations the participants provided: *lead to something* (Lin), *similar to something* (Lili), *result in something* (Deng), and *deal with something* (Dandan), *confidence in something* (Shasha), and *a key to something* (Fangfang). The second group of collocations refers to semantic collocations. The data shows that the participants’ knowledge of this group of collocation may fall into three patterns: *verb phrases*, *prepositional phrases*, and *noun phrases*. The examples of the semantic collocations the participants provided include *make progress* (Yao), *make advances* (Yao), *perform one’s duty* (Shasha), *arrive at a solution* (Lili), *by means of* (Deng), *in advance* (Fangfang), *by way of* (Lili), *a financial center* and *a center of finance* (Yao), and *the United Nations* (Fangfang). The third group of collocations focuses on the collocations with both syntactic and semantic features. This group of phrases mainly involves the pattern *verb phrases + prepositions*. Some examples of the syntactic and semantic collocations the participants presented are as follows: *attach importance to something* (Shasha), *arrive at a solution to something* (Fangfang, Lili), *extend an invitation to somebody* (Shasha, Deng, Yao), and *there is no denying that+ a clause* (Lin, Deng, Dandan, Yao).

Receptive and Productive Knowledge of a Word. The second salient theme involving what to learn about English vocabulary lies in participants' understandings of receptive knowledge and productive knowledge of vocabulary. Receptive knowledge of a word requires that the learner recognize the word and recall its meaning when encountered while productive knowledge of a word refers to what the learner needs to know about the word in order to use it. The interview data shows that all seven participants divided vocabulary into two groups: one for recognition and the other for production. For example, Lili provided a fairly complete picture describing the characteristics of the two groups of words. As she put it,

We learn vocabulary for recognition or for use. That is, we can divide words into two groups: One group is the words for recognition. For this group of words, it'll be ok if you can recognize their meanings when seeing them in reading, but you yourself don't need to use them freely to make sentences. The other group is the words for use. That is, when you're able to use these words to make sentences by yourself, it means you are in command of them. This is an ideal type of vocabulary learning, but actually it's impossible that you're able to use all of the words you've learned. (Lili, Interview 4, October 31, 2006)

All the participants tended to believe that students need to gain the productive knowledge of the frequently used general words, particularly the words listed in the College English Syllabus² and that students' receptive knowledge of vocabulary mainly involves low-frequency words. For example, as Dandan argued,

² The College English Syllabus refers to the one revised in 1999 and being used for non-English majors in Chinese universities, as discussed in Chapter 3.

I think students should learn how to use the general words, I mean, the words concerning daily English. They should learn how to use all the Band-4 and Band-6 words. But for the less commonly used words, particularly those used in specialized fields, like the word *hepatitis*, it's enough if students can know their rough meanings. For example, it's enough if they know that the word *hepatitis* roughly means a kind of disease through its suffix *-itis*. (Dandan, Interview 2, September 28, 2006)

Moreover, three Group A teachers (i.e., Lili, Lin, and Yao) further maintained that students also should learn how to use high-frequency academic words. As Yao stated, since the students they taught will have more chances to be exposed to academic English after they graduate, they should grasp frequently used academic words. The participants also were aware that what a learner first learns about an English word is the receptive knowledge of a word. On this basis, the learner may gain the productive knowledge of the word. In Lin's words, "it's hard for you to know how to use a word when you see it the first or even several times. You should first recognize its meaning in context and then gradually learn how to use it" (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006).

The Words Selected for Learning. Another theme about what to learn about vocabulary is related to participants' understandings of what vocabulary to select for learning. All of the Group A teachers agreed that the words to be selected for learning may follow the following two principles: frequency and the College English Syllabus. As Lili stated, "since our students have limited time to learn English, the vocabulary worth learning should include general words and academic words that are frequently used" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). For this purpose, some participants argued that the

words selected for learning should be grouped into different levels according to their frequency. In Shasha's view, for example, "students should learn all the words listed in the College English Syllabus (Band 4) and some words in College English Syllabus (Band 6). The words collected in these syllabi generally have a high frequency" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Meanwhile, Lili suggested that some words, despite their low frequency, should be learned because of their close relationship with daily life. As she said, "I also think students need to learn the words closely related to their daily life like *hamburger* and *panda*. Every one, even a little kid, knows the name *hamburger* in the United States, though it may not be highly frequently used" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

The Group A teachers, however, tended to hold that it is not necessary to categorize words into different levels based on their frequency and that students need to learn any words they encounter. In Fangfang's words,

Our textbook uses different signs to show the words of different levels in the wordlist following each text, for example, bold words standing for Band-4 words and italicized words for Band-6 words. I think these signs may misguide students. They may misunderstand that some words aren't necessary for them to learn, but actually they should memorize all the words in the wordlists. Grading words into different levels isn't necessary. Who knows when and where they will meet these words? (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006)

Deng also agreed with Fangfang that students should learn all the new words in their textbook, but he further argued that the words selected for learning could also be based on learners' intuition. As Deng put it, "while doing extensive reading, you can select

words to learn by yourself. If you feel a word is worth learning, just learn it. The word worth learning, I mean, is the one you think you want to learn” (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006).

On what words to select for learning, three of the Group A teachers (i.e., Yao, Shasha, and Lili) raised the issue of practicality in word learning. They argued that students as non-English majors have their own majors and have insufficient time for English learning. Therefore, it is not practical or possible for them to learn all of the words they encounter. For example, the two groups of words they perceived as of little practicality for students to learn are slang and idioms. In Yao’s words,

Slang and idioms are usually used in informal or casual English. Our students will mainly read or use formal and academic English in the future. Also they have many courses to take each week and they don’t have much time to learn English. To make the limited time more efficient, they should learn the words most useful to them and most related to their future work. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Lili also echoed Yao by saying:

I don’t think it’s necessary for students to spend much time learning slang or idioms like *face the music* or *hold water* in our textbook, though it may be fun sometimes. Learning slang or idioms is not practical because our students won’t have many chances to use them in the future. (Lili, Interview 4, October 31, 2006)

Shasha agreed with Yao and Lili and further added:

I think slang and idioms are the most difficult parts in English learning. Maybe it’s not useful for students to spend so much time learning the most difficult parts

in English. Sometimes we may integrate a few idioms into our teaching, but its purpose is to make fun and help students know English learning is fun. (Shasha, Interview 5, November 7, 2006)

As a result, it seems that the Group A teachers' argument against learning idioms and slang is rooted in their knowledge of students. It implies that the Group A teachers attach more attention to understanding students' background in teaching, including vocabulary teaching.

To sum up, regarding what to learn about vocabulary, the teacher participants' beliefs regarding learning different aspects of a word, receptive vs. productive knowledge of a word, and words selected for learning are consistent with what researchers have suggested in the literature (e.g., Decarrico, 2001; Nation, 1990, 2001, 2005; Nation & Newton, 1997). The results reported above also indicate that there are some different understandings of what to learn about vocabulary between the Group A teachers and the Group B teachers.

How to Learn Vocabulary?

The salient themes involving EFL teachers' knowledge of how to learn vocabulary mainly fall into the following four dimensions: intensive and extensive reading, the use of dictionaries, word formation, and vocabulary recitation. These dimensions are perceived to be the broad strategies that students employ to learn English vocabulary.

Intensive and Extensive Reading. All seven participants argued that reading is one of the main strategies that EFL students use to develop vocabulary knowledge and that vocabulary should be learned through reading. Their main argument is that reading can

not only help learners review the words they have learned but also introduce them to new words. For instance, as Fangfang stated, “after learning a new word, you need to see it again and again. Then you can know it. Reading can give you more chances to see the word” (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006). Lili also pointed out that “through reading, you’ll meet new words. In many cases, you can deduce their meanings from context. That means you’re learning new words. If you continue to read, you may see the words in context again, which means reading helps you review them” (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

The data also shows that EFL teachers divide reading into types: intensive and extensive. The teachers maintained that intensive reading and extensive reading perform different functions in vocabulary development. Two major differences have been identified between them. One lies in the depth of vocabulary knowledge developed through reading. Most participants agreed that accurate and productive vocabulary knowledge can be developed through intensive reading while through extensive reading, learners can mainly obtain rough and receptive vocabulary knowledge. As Yao argued,

We generally do intensive reading very carefully. We need to understand all the new words in the reading and also have to know how to use them. The words we learn through intensive reading usually leave us with a deep impression. But through extensive reading, the words we learn are mainly for recognition. These words mostly give us a vague impression. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Fangfang also supported Yao by saying that “the words’ meanings we get through intensive reading are quite accurate because we often use dictionaries. In extensive reading, we often guess their meanings in context, so we usually get their rough

meanings” (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006). The other difference between intensive and extensive reading in vocabulary development is their influence on the speed of vocabulary learning. According to the participants, vocabulary development through intensive reading tends to be slower than through extensive reading. In Yao’s view,

In intensive reading, we usually focus on one short passage every two weeks, so the learning is slow and the number of words we see is limited due to the passage length. ... For extensive reading, we could read many more passages with the same amount of time for intensive reading. We can come across more words and we have more chances to learn or review new words. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

The teachers also realized the issue of conscious learning of vocabulary through extensive learning. They agreed that attention generally is not paid to vocabulary in extensive reading, but conscious learning of vocabulary can occur according to learners’ needs. In Lili’s words,

To learn a new word through extensive reading, you should notice it. For example, when you’re reading a passage, you should notice whether you know the word or not. If you don’t know it, you need to realize if the word is worth learning or not. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Considering the differences in vocabulary development between intensive reading and extensive reading, the EFL teachers, particularly the Group A teachers, suggested that intensive reading and extensive reading should be integrated for effective vocabulary learning. Two of the Group B teachers (i.e., Deng and Dandan), however, presented

different understandings in this regard. Deng argued that intensive reading is for short-term learning while extensive learning is for long-term learning. As he put it,

If you learn vocabulary for a test, do intensive reading because testing requires your accurate understanding of word meanings. If you develop vocabulary to improve English proficiency, do extensive reading. The more reading you do, the more vocabulary you'll learn. (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

As a result, Deng viewed extensive reading as one primary strategy for vocabulary development. Different from Deng, Dandan suggested that intensive reading should be the major strategy for vocabulary learning. As she argued,

Extensive reading can't greatly bring about vocabulary development. When you do extensive reading, your attention focuses on content and text structure but not on vocabulary. So it's hard to learn new words. In intensive reading, you need to know almost all the words. That is, you need to refer to the wordlist or a dictionary for the new words. So you pay your attention to the words, and you can learn them. (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

As regards intensive reading, most of the teacher participants (i.e., Lili, Shasha, Fangfang, and Dandan) also suggested the technique of reading aloud for vocabulary development. As Fangfang claimed, "every time I enter the classroom, I prefer students to read aloud the text they've learned. I often tell them that they can't learn English well by only reciting vocabulary lists" (Fangfang, Interview 4, October 31, 2006). Lili also pointed out that "intensive reading doesn't mean just silent reading. If you have time, read the text aloud. Listen to yourself. The words you learn in this way are more impressive than through silent reading" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Dandan

encouraged her students to develop a regular habit of reading aloud for 15 minutes a day for vocabulary development. In her words,

To help you memorize the words you've recited, you'd better read aloud the texts containing the words every day. Reading aloud for 15 minutes a day is enough... Reading aloud can stimulate your vision and hearing. ... You should develop it into a daily habit, which will be more beneficial to you than doing it only once a week, say, spending three hours reading aloud only on Sunday. (Dandan, Interview 4, November 2, 2006)

These participants further argued that text recitation can be another technique for vocabulary development. Lili described her teaching experience with this technique as follows:

I often suggest that students recite passages to develop productive vocabulary knowledge. The passages they need to recite usually have high vocabulary density. Through this recitation, the vocabulary in the passages leaves them with a deeper impression than through reading aloud or wordlist recitation. (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006)

Another issue related to vocabulary development through reading is the selection of reading materials. The teachers pointed out that the reading materials they employed consist of three aspects. First, the materials for intensive reading are 10 passages (i.e., Part A of each unit) in the textbook used for classroom teaching. The EFL teachers mainly handled these materials in class. Second, the materials for extensive reading are 20-30 passages (i.e., Part B of each unit) in the textbook. Finally, the EFL teachers also recommended supplementary extensive reading materials to students. These materials are

not the focus of in-class teaching because students are required to finish reading them after class. The data shows that the supplementary materials that the participants recommended fall into four types as shown in Table 6.1. Apparently, as reported in the section “Management of resources for EFL teaching”, the selection of supplementary reading materials is closely based on the teachers’ research interests and academic background.

Table 6.1. *Types of extensive reading materials recommended*

| Type of English materials | The teacher(s) recommending the materials |
|--|---|
| Novels or short stories | Fangfang, Shasha, Yao |
| Magazines | Fangfang, Lin |
| Newspapers, travel pamphlets or brochures | Fangfang, shasha, Dandan |
| Academic papers | Deng, Lili |

In addition to the materials shown in Table 6.1, all the EFL teachers suggested that for extensive reading, students as non-English majors themselves can select specialized materials they are interested in, for example, English journal papers and English textbooks about their majors. As Yao explained,

Non-English major students don’t have much time to learn English, so I also prefer that they read some stuff about their majors if they don’t like the materials I recommend to them. For example, students majoring in electronics can download English journal papers from the internet or check out some textbooks about their majors from the library. Reading these materials can be beneficial to their majors

as well as English learning. That is, it can kill two birds with one stone. (Yao, Interview 4, November 2, 2006)

Deng further argued that

Since students have disciplinary knowledge about their majors, it can be easier for them to understand the specialized reading materials. Through this reading, they can learn vocabulary, including the academic vocabulary of their majors. (Deng, Interview 4, November 14, 2006)

Regarding the selection of the materials for intensive and extensive reading, the EFL teachers also were aware of the issue of unknown vocabulary density in reading materials. They all held that intensive reading materials should have a higher unknown word density than extensive reading materials. Lili, for example, suggested that students should read intensively the verbal passages used for GRE (the Graduate Records Examination). As she clearly stated, “though the GRE passages are difficult, students can surely enlarge vocabulary and improve reading skills after they intensively read, say, 100 GRE passages” (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006). For extensive reading, the teachers argued that the materials should be selected carefully in terms of their new word density. As Lili stated,

One challenge for selecting extensive reading materials is that it’s difficult to find out the materials suitable for students. If the materials have too many new words, it’ll be too hard for students to understand them and they will lose interest. If the materials are too easy, students may not learn vocabulary effectively. (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006)

Another finding about learning vocabulary through reading is EFL teacher's understandings about how to treat the new words in intensive reading and extensive reading materials. As mentioned above, the EFL teachers tended to maintain that students mainly develop productive vocabulary knowledge in intensive reading and receptive vocabulary knowledge in extensive reading. Therefore, new words should be handled in different ways. As Shasha put it, "for the new words in intensive reading, you should know how to spell them and how to use them to make sentences. For the words in extensive reading, you should at least be able to recognize them in context" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). The EFL teachers also suggested that students should use dictionaries more frequently to handle new words in intensive reading than in extensive reading. When doing extensive reading, however, students should first try to guess the meanings of new words in context and then consult dictionaries for the words affecting their understanding of the text.

The Use of Dictionaries. The second dimension of how to learn vocabulary involves EFL teachers' understandings of the use of dictionaries for EFL students' vocabulary learning. All the EFL teachers admitted that the use of dictionaries is compulsory for vocabulary learning. Yao employed a simile to describe the importance of a dictionary in vocabulary learning: "A dictionary is like a teacher always available. Whenever you have an inquiry about vocabulary, you can come to consult it" (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Deng also used a simile to picture the function of a dictionary. As he said,

A dictionary is like a crutch. When your English vocabulary size isn't very large, you need to use it for vocabulary development, but when you have learned

enough vocabulary, you should try to throw it away and avoid using it. (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

Meanwhile, the teachers realized that a dictionary has its own constraints. Some participants (i.e., Yao, Deng, and Dandan) pointed out that a dictionary, especially an English-Chinese bilingual dictionary, may misguide learners' vocabulary learning mainly due to mistranslations or artificial examples that occur in it.

Regarding what to focus on when looking up a word in a dictionary, the EFL teachers took two situations into consideration. First, the teacher-participants tended to maintain that using a dictionary for a new word in intensive reading, the learner needs to pay attention not only to its meanings and pronunciation but also to its examples, collocations, and if any, derivatives. Second, consulting the dictionary for a new word in extensive reading, the learner needs to focus on the word's semantic meaning. Deng, however, held a different view from the others in this regard although he admitted the importance of using a dictionary to learn vocabulary. Deng argued that using a dictionary for a word either in intensive or extensive reading solely involves one focus, that is, the word's meaning. He suggested that students not refer to the examples, collocations, or other usage provided in the dictionary because, as he argued, they are too artificial. In his view, students should rely on extensive reading to learn how to use the word and "shouldn't spend too much time in using the dictionary" (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006). It seems that Deng overemphasized the constraints of a dictionary.

Another finding is associated with the teachers' understandings of when to use a dictionary. Most of the teachers argued that the dictionary is used when guessing a word in context fails and the word also affects the learner's understanding of the reading text.

Lili, based on her learning experience, made a detailed suggestion about when to use a dictionary. As she said,

The textbook I learned as a college student had no wordlist. So I underlined the new words in the text and looked them up in a dictionary. Each text had nearly 100 new words. I used the dictionary a lot, but I forgot almost all the words after looking them up. So now I don't recommend that students consult a dictionary as soon as they see a new word. I encourage them to guess its meaning first. When they see the word over 3 to 5 times and still don't know its meaning, they can turn to the dictionary. After seeing the word several times in the reading material, they may get familiar with the word form. After they use the dictionary, they will memorize this word. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Fangfang also echoed Lili by saying:

I don't suggest that students look up the new word in a dictionary when they see it the first time. It's a waste of time because many words, you only see them once. You can't remember it even if you look it up in the dictionary. (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006)

One MET (i.e., Lin) seemed to hold a different view in this regard. Lin argued that “whenever you have a question about any word, you should turn to your dictionary” (Lin, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Lin's view about the use of a dictionary is consistent with his classroom teaching behavior. Lin taught in a multimedia classroom. The observation data reveals that when teaching vocabulary in class, Lin frequently consulted an e-dictionary installed into the classroom computer. In the interview, he explained,

I often use the e-dictionary in class. From the dictionary I get the examples of the words I want to teach. I also use the e-thesaurus to get the synonyms of a word. I encourage students to use a dictionary in class. When they come across any words I didn't teach or taught incorrectly, they can immediately look them up in the dictionary, so I often encourage students to bring a dictionary to class. (Lin, Interview 4, October 19, 2006)

The data also shows that the teachers tended to perceive verbs, adjectives, and abstract nouns derived from verbs or adjectives to be the major words worth looking up in a dictionary. For example, as Lili argued,

A verb is the central part of a sentence and an adjective usually represents the writer's view and attitude. These words are very important in a sentence. If you don't know them, you can't understand the text. So you need to use a dictionary for these words. For the concrete nouns, you don't need to turn to a dictionary. You can guess their rough meanings through context. For example, for the word *chrysanthemum*, if you can guess its rough meaning like a kind of flower, you don't need to check the dictionary. The rough meaning doesn't affect your comprehension of the text. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

When preparing for teaching, however, as all the teachers pointed out, they would look up every unknown word in the textbook. The main reason is, as Shasha stated, that "I want to make sure that I'm able to answer any of students' inquiries about vocabulary" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). It was also found that when preparing new words, the participants generally collected the example sentences from their dictionaries (another major source is Teachers' Guidebook written for the textbook). Though

Fangfang stated that she disliked her university teacher's 'dictionary-copying' method to teach vocabulary, the data shows that she also relied on dictionaries as a major source to prepare for vocabulary teaching. As she recalled about her teacher's vocabulary teaching, "I don't think he was teaching vocabulary but copied dictionaries.... He copied the collocations and sentences from a dictionary and showed us... I don't think this is an effective way to teach vocabulary" (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006).

The final issue about the use of a dictionary concerns EFL teachers' understandings of what kind of dictionary to use for vocabulary development. The data indicates a mixed finding about this issue. The Group A teachers raised three different criteria about the use of an English-English monolingual dictionary or an English-Chinese bilingual dictionary. One criterion is related to students' English proficiency. In Shasha' opinion,

I suggest that the students below the intermediate levels use an English-Chinese dictionary. For them, it's difficult to understand the English definition of a word.

The advanced students can use an English-English dictionary. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Another criterion is concerned with a word's part of speech. As the observation data indicates, Yao once suggested to his students in class that it is better for them to consult an English-Chinese dictionary for concrete nouns and an English-English dictionary for other words. He explained in the stimulated recall that his suggestion was based on his learning experience. As he put it,

Many concrete nouns about animals and plants are quite confusing to me when I read their English definitions. In Chinese, they're very simple and easy to

remember. Using an English-Chinese dictionary for concrete nouns seems to be more efficient and accurate. For other words like verbs, adjectives, and abstract nouns, the Chinese translations may be confusing because there may be no accurate equivalents in Chinese. For accurate definitions of these words, it's better to use an English-English dictionary. (Yao, Stimulated Recall 2, December 12, 2006)

The third criterion about what dictionary to use for vocabulary learning is based on students' preferences. According to Lili and Lin, it is better for students to keep an English-English and English-Chinese dictionary, which is featured with a lexical item defined both in English and in Chinese. These students can use the English-English or English-Chinese function of the dictionary according to their needs and preferences.

The Group B teachers, however, revealed different views about what type of dictionary to use for vocabulary learning. Deng argued that there is no difference between an English-English dictionary and an English-Chinese dictionary. Deng cared more about the time-saving issue of using a dictionary. As he stated, "the less time it takes to get a new word's meaning, the better" (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006). Dandan, on the other hand, preferred to use an English-English dictionary for vocabulary learning because, in her words, "reading the English-version definitions can give you another chance to learn English" and "the definitions provided by an English-Chinese dictionary are not very accurate" (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006).

The teachers also showed interest in the use of e-dictionaries. They held that compared with its hard-copy counterpart, an e-dictionary is time-saving and efficient for looking up words. The teachers tended to maintain that with the development of

technology, an e-dictionary is becoming more like a hard-copy dictionary. As Yao pointed out,

When the e-dictionary first appeared, it's too simple, only providing a word's meanings and pronunciation. You couldn't get its collocations, examples or derivatives. Now there may be no differences between e-dictionaries and paper dictionaries. The e-dictionaries also have the functions of a word's examples, collocations, and derivatives. Some even provide the function of thesaurus, listing a word's synonyms and antonyms. (Yao, Stimulated Recall 2, December 12, 2006)

Word Formation. The third dimension concerning how to learn vocabulary is EFL teachers' knowledge about word formation. All of the teachers perceived word formation to be an important strategy for vocabulary learning and most of them recommended that students use it. Deng argued that along with extensive reading, word formation is a major strategy for vocabulary learning. Lin, based on his learning experience, posited that word formation is a quick way for vocabulary development. As he put it,

In one summer vacation, I read a book about word formation. This book helped me realize that vocabulary learning has so many rules I can follow. That is, a word has its root, prefix, and suffix. It has its derivatives. Word formation is a quick way for vocabulary learning. I also realized that it's a big mistake through rote learning of vocabulary. (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006)

Yao also agreed with Lin as follows: "Word formation knowledge can make vocabulary learning more efficient. If you know a root or an affix, you can easily recognize the words containing the root or the affix" (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Lili

compared the strategy of word formation with that of vocabulary recitation in isolation.

In her words,

Knowing word formation, you can quickly become familiar with the words concerned. For example, if you know the root *astro-* in *astronaut*, it's easy for you to recognize or learn other words like *astronomy*, *astrology*, and *asterisk*. This way is much more effective than vocabulary recitation in isolation. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Two of the teachers (i.e., Shasha and Dandan), however, claimed that they would not suggest that students use word formation to learn vocabulary, though they considered it an important strategy for vocabulary development. In Shasha's view,

I think using word formation to learn vocabulary is quite boring. I don't like this way. I seldom teach word formation rules in class. Actually students have learned the common affixes like *un-* and *im-* in high school. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Dandan also pointed out that her teaching rarely involved word formation analysis and that she never took any course about word formation when she was a university student. It seems possible that the reason for Dandan's unenthusiastic attitude towards work on word formation may lie in her lack of confidence in this area. Thus, she seldom initiated word formation teaching in class.

Meanwhile, the teachers realized the constraints of word formation in vocabulary development. They argued that word formation rules can be applied to a certain number of words but numerous words are hard to analyze through word formation. As Yao stated,

It is often the case that we know the meaning of the prefix, the root and the suffix of a word, but if we put them together, it's still hard to know what the word means. So many words can't be learned through word formation. Only some words from other languages, like Latin or French, can be learned through word formation.

(Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Some teachers also maintained that the strategy of word formation analysis is applicable to a certain group of learners and that it is used to develop receptive knowledge of vocabulary. In Lili's words,

It's important for intermediate or advanced EFL students to learn word-formation. It's not very meaningful for beginning learners to learn it. Also, knowing word formation can guide you to guess the rough meaning of a word. It's hard to get the accurate meaning through word formation analysis. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Participants also provided three major suggestions about what word formations should be learned. One suggestion is that students should command the frequently used affixes and roots. The frequently used affixes and roots refer to, as Yao defined, those worth learning according to experienced teachers' intuition. As Yao stated,

We teachers have many years' experience of learning and teaching English, so we have a good sense of which affixes and roots are frequently used. That is, the most familiar ones are frequently used because we learn and teach English every day.

We can work out a list of such affixes and roots for students to learn. (Yao, Interview 5, November 9, 2006)

Another suggestion is that the frequently used roots and all the affixes should be learned. For this suggestion, Lili provided some specific examples of roots and affixes that students need to learn:

Students need to know the common roots, like *-vert-* in *convert*, *-rupt-* in *interrupt*, *-scribe* in *describe*, and *trans-* in *transport*. The number of affixes is quite limited. The affixes mainly include those standing for antonyms (e.g., *un-*, *im-*, *-less*), verbs (e.g., *-en*, *en-*, *-ate*), adjectives (e.g., *-able*, *-ful*, *-ive*), and nouns (e.g., *-tion*, *-er*, *-ness*, *-ology*). Students need to know all of these affixes. (Lili, Stimulated Recall 1, November 23, 2006)

The third suggestion is that all the affixes and roots should be known. As Deng argued, “I don’t think it needs to grade affixes and root into different levels. Students should learn all the roots and affixes”. (Deng, Interview 3, October 10, 2006)

The teachers also presented suggestions on how to learn vocabulary through the strategy of word formation analysis. Most of the teachers maintained that it is not necessary for students to self-study word formation rules and that a better way is integrating word formation analysis into EFL teaching. In Yao’s view, for example,

I don’t suggest that students read a book about word formation because this may require too much of them. First, students need to have a strong self-learning ability. Also it’s hard for them to decide which affixes and roots to learn. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Deng further stated,

Word formation knowledge is a long-term process of learning. It is unnecessary to learn and teach it intensively. The better way is to learn this knowledge through

teaching. For example, in one class, you can teach one root or affix through analyzing one word's structure. In next class, you use another word to teach another root or affix. (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

Lili echoed Yao and Deng and further used her learning experience to illustrate that word formation knowledge needs daily accumulation. In her words,

It's hard for students to learn word formation alone. It's boring and students won't like it. It's better to put it into teaching. We shouldn't teach word formation intensively, for example, covering 20 prefixes or suffixes or roots in one class. It's too overwhelming for students. This knowledge needs to develop step-by-step. I often share with students my experience about how to learn vocabulary through word formation. For example, I learned the root *-scope* as in *telescope* and *microscope*. Later I learned two other words with this root *gastroscope* and *enteroscope* in a hospital where I went to see a friend. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Lin and Fangfang also argued that EFL teachers should teach word formation knowledge, but meanwhile, they suggested that students study word formations for themselves. As Fangfang put it,

In the first class this semester, I introduced one book about English word-formations to students: *The Secrets of English Vocabulary*. I think the first thing for students to learn is word formation. I benefited a lot from learning word formation. I didn't recite word by word. So I often discourage students to recite vocabulary. What I dislike most when going to class is that students are reciting a wordlist. (Fangfang, Interview 5, November 7, 2006)

The observation data further shows that Lili, Yao, Lin, Deng, and Fangfang's teaching often involved word formation analysis, which will be further reported below in the section "How to teach vocabulary". Curiously, I also observed that Shasha and Dandan seldom focused on word formation in teaching, as they claimed above.

Vocabulary Recitation. The fourth dimension concerning how to learn vocabulary is EFL teachers' understandings about the strategy of recitation. One agreement the teachers shared is that for the purpose of preparing for an English test, vocabulary recitation is generally employed. In Deng's words, "if you prepare for a test, like CET 4 or CET 6, just get a vocabulary book for that test, and recite the words from A to Z" (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006). In Lin's case, he suggested a scanning approach for vocabulary learning. As he put it,

To prepare for a test, you can use a scanner approach to develop vocabulary. That is, you choose one vocabulary book for the test and quickly scan the vocabulary. Scanning means your recitation of a word just focuses on its Chinese meaning. Scanning can give you some impression of the word, which helps you retrieve its meaning in context. (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006)

It is apparent that Lin's scanning approach for a test is associated with the recitation strategy. For the purpose of developing English proficiency, however, a mixed finding emerges in the data about the role of recitation in vocabulary development. Four of the teachers (i.e., Lili, Fangfang, Deng, and Lin) held that vocabulary recitation is not an effective way for vocabulary learning while the other three (i.e., Yao, Shasha, and Dandan) recommended that students use this strategy. It seems that those who viewed recitation as an ineffective strategy of vocabulary learning maintained that vocabulary

recitation is a synonym for rote learning of vocabulary. The participants who advocated the strategy of vocabulary recitation, however, argued that recitation is distinct from rote learning and that recitation should be combined with other techniques, which will be reported below.

The data shows that all the EFL teachers except Fangfang had the experience of using recitation to learn vocabulary when they were university students. It seems that the teachers who discouraged students' use of recitation were unhappy about their experience with this strategy. Lili recalled her use of vocabulary recitation as follows:

I tried to recite a vocabulary book about the GRE when I was a university student. I even recited it three to four times. But now I open the book and find that I still don't know the words I didn't know. The words I know aren't because I recited them but because I read them or taught them somewhere ... So I think reciting words alone is meaningless and ineffective. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Deng also echoed Lili by saying:

I used the vocabulary recitation strategy as a student, but I found it didn't work well. Recitation may work well for a short-term purpose, for example, for taking a test. For a long-term purpose, I think extensive reading is a better choice for vocabulary development. (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

Fangfang, though she stated that she had no experience of using vocabulary recitation, provided an explicit suggestion to her students: "If you want to learn English well, don't recite words. It's useless. ... It's easy to forget what you've recited. Also the word's meaning you recited can't always match its meaning in context. So it's not effective at

all” (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006). The other three teachers who advocated vocabulary recitation, however, tended to be happy about their experience of vocabulary recitation. As Yao said,

I often recited the words in the wordlist I set up. My wordlist included the new words I came across in English reading or listening. It’s quite effective and gave me a sense of achievement. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Another pattern emerging in the data is that the teachers with happy experience of using vocabulary recitation did not solely rely on this strategy to develop vocabulary. They generally combined vocabulary recitation with the strategy of extensive or intensive reading. As Yao stated,

When I was reciting words, I also did a lot of extensive reading. The reading involved the words I recited and helped me review the words I recited. In one month, I could memorize hundreds of new words in this way. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Shasha’s recall about how to recite vocabulary indicates that her recitation was combined with intensive reading. The words she recited were those from her intensive reading materials. In her words,

When I did intensive reading, I underlined the new words in the material and made a wordlist of my own. Then I recited the wordlist. After that, I did intensive reading again to review the words. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

One more finding about teachers’ understandings of vocabulary recitation centers on what vocabulary recitation involves. According to the participants, vocabulary recitation mainly involves gaining receptive knowledge of a word. In Shasha’s opinion,

When you recite a new word, you should pay attention to its pronunciation, spelling, and meaning. After the recitation, you'd better know how to say it, how to spell it, and what it means. This recitation can help you recognize the word in context. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

The participants who valued the strategy of vocabulary recitation also presented some suggestions about how to conduct effective vocabulary recitation. One is that students should integrate vocabulary recitation with extensive and/or intensive reading. This suggestion seems to be based on their previous learning experience. Shasha suggested that students develop vocabulary through vocabulary recitation, intensive reading, and extensive reading. She provided a detailed description as follows:

Students often ask me how to enlarge vocabulary. I always tell them that practice makes perfect. They need to recite vocabulary in the textbook every day and repeat each word 3-5 times. Also they need to read an English passage every day. I also ask them to read one English novel or one English book about their major in one semester. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Yao also offered his suggestion about how to combine intensive vocabulary recitation with extensive reading:

I suggest that students recite vocabulary intensively and meanwhile do extensive reading. Recite words like this: Select a wordlist and recite it. ... During vocabulary recitation, they should do extensive reading containing the vocabulary they recited. The more times they meet the words they recite, the more familiar they'll get with them, which can give them a sense of achievements and develop their confidence. This approach may be boring but is very practical for students

with a small vocabulary size. It can help students quickly enlarge their vocabulary in a short time. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Another suggestion about effective vocabulary recitation is using the recurring vocabulary recitation technique raised by Yao. As he put it,

When reciting, you may feel that the more you recite, the more you forget. How can you solve this problem? You can use a recurring recitation technique. That is, you need to make a plan of reciting, for example, 100 words a day. The first day you recite 100 words; the second day you add another 100 words and meanwhile, review the first 100 words you recited the first day; the third day, you add another 100 words and also review the 200 words you recited the first two days. Each time when reciting words, you scan them quickly and skip those you know and mark those you don't know. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

The suggestion Shasha provided is that grouping words by semantic relationships can be useful for vocabulary recitation. In her words,

Recitation doesn't mean rote learning. When you're reciting, you can use some techniques. For example, you may put the words you want to recite into different groups according to their semantic relationships, like synonyms, antonyms, homophones, hyponyms, or homonyms. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Dandan suggested that for effective vocabulary recitation, students should focus on the syllables of a word. The following is her description of how she taught her students to recite vocabulary:

... I used *encyclopedia* as an example. Most students didn't know this word. First, I asked them to read ...each syllable without referring to its phonetic script. Then they looked at the script to check its pronunciation. If there is a syllable they mispronounced, they should have a problem in spelling it. Then I asked them to focus on that syllable... So for this word, they just paid attention to one syllable but not the whole word. It should be easier to recite one syllable than the whole word. I tried this way and it worked well. Almost all of the students memorized this word. (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

Overall, EFL teachers' knowledge about vocabulary development involves four broad strategies: intensive and extensive reading, using dictionaries, word formation analysis, and vocabulary recitation. The data indicates that the teachers do not perceive these strategies as having equal positions in the process of vocabulary development. Although the teachers have different emphases on the use of these strategies, there seems to be a general approach underlying how to learn vocabulary, which may be categorized as an integrated approach. Specifically, the approach involves some or all of the four broad strategies for vocabulary development depending on the teachers' preferences. Below is a summary of the integrated approach of vocabulary development suggested by the individual teacher-participants.

On how to develop vocabulary, the participants tended to maintain that the strategies involved vary from purpose to purpose. For an English test, all the participants argued that the main strategy to be employed is vocabulary recitation. For the purpose of improving English proficiency, different participants display different strategy preferences for vocabulary development. In Yao's view, to develop vocabulary quickly,

the EFL students with a small vocabulary size need to employ intensive vocabulary recitation along with extensive reading. For the students with a large vocabulary size, Yao argued that they should develop vocabulary mainly through extensive reading. It seems that Yao's suggestion about vocabulary development mainly concerns two components: vocabulary recitation and extensive reading. Similar to Yao's method, Shasha proposed a reading plus word recitation method. In her opinion, reading includes both intensive reading and extensive reading. The words students need to recite are mainly related to the intensive reading materials they work with. In Lili's case, vocabulary learning involves intensive reading plus word formation analysis. For intensive reading, Lili maintained that reading aloud and passage recitation should be employed for vocabulary development. Fangfang and Deng proposed a word-formation plus extensive reading method for vocabulary development. In their views, learners should combine English word-formation analysis with extensive reading to enlarge vocabulary. Fangfang also encouraged students to read passages aloud for vocabulary learning. Different from other participants, Dandan suggested a specific method for vocabulary development: vocabulary recitation plus daily 15-minute reading aloud exercises.

To sum up, the four broad strategies identified in the data match what contemporary researchers have found regarding L2 vocabulary learning (e.g., Gu, 2005; Schmitt, 1997, 2000). However, another vocabulary learning strategy *note-taking* (e.g., vocabulary notebooks, vocabulary cards) that many researchers have found L2 learners frequently employ was seldom mentioned by the teacher participants. When explicitly asked whether they used this strategy as a student, most of them stated that they had the

experience but they also claimed that they seldom suggested that students use this technique. The reason may be that, as Lili explained, “students have developed their own vocabulary learning strategies because they have learned English ten years” (Lili, Interview 5, November 7, 2006).

Summary

EFL teachers’ knowledge of vocabulary learning involves their beliefs of what to learn about vocabulary and how to learn vocabulary. The salient themes regarding what to learn about vocabulary include teachers’ understandings of the components that learning a word involves, receptive and productive knowledge of a word, and selection of words for learning. In the participants’ views, learning a word should involve the word’s pronunciation, syllabic stress, spelling, meaning, and usage. It was also found that the participants tended to underemphasize the component of the word’s pragmatic usage or semantic prosody. EFL teachers, particularly the Group A teachers, further argued that the practicality of the vocabulary selected for learning should be considered. As regards how to learn vocabulary, four broad strategies have been identified based on the teacher-participants’ beliefs. It seems that reading, both intensive and extensive, is generally perceived to be a significant strategy in vocabulary development. The participants suggested that students use the materials they recommended and also argued that the students should select specialized English materials from their majors for extensive reading, which can develop academic vocabulary as well as general vocabulary. The participants also tended to suggest an integrated approach to vocabulary development, which involves some or all of the four strategies identified.

EFL Teacher Knowledge of Vocabulary Teaching

In this section, EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary teaching will be reported from the following four dimensions: the role of teaching in vocabulary development, what to teach about vocabulary, how to teach vocabulary, and pedagogical content knowledge about vocabulary teaching. What is reported in this section seems to be concerned primarily with four components of EFL teachers' knowledge about vocabulary instruction: their content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of students.

The Role of Teaching in Vocabulary Development

This section will report EFL teachers' understandings of what role teaching plays in vocabulary development. As reported above, EFL teachers perceive vocabulary as a critical component in EFL learning and teaching. One teacher-participant (i.e., Lin) argued that language learning can be equated to vocabulary learning and that vocabulary should be at the centre of language teaching. The classroom observation data also indicates that vocabulary is one of the teacher-participants' teaching focuses in the reading course.

Regarding the role of teaching in vocabulary development, the EFL teachers agreed that vocabulary teaching can impact students' vocabulary learning through the following three ways. First, EFL teachers maintained that vocabulary teaching can assist students in learning vocabulary more effectively. In their views, for the students who are adults, EFL learning is different from their Chinese acquisition in that EFL needs to be consciously learned while the latter was naturally acquired. As a result, EFL vocabulary also needs conscious learning. Teaching can help students become aware of, in Lin's

words, “the most frequent words, collocations, word formation rules and the like that they need to learn” (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006). Yao also pointed out that “vocabulary teaching can help students develop English vocabulary in increments” (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Second, the participants argued that vocabulary teaching can help develop students’ word knowledge systematically. Through vocabulary teaching, students can learn the rules, for example, about how to pronounce a word, how to analyze a word’s meaning through its formation. In vocabulary teaching, different activities the teachers design can help consolidate the words that students have learned. Finally, vocabulary teaching can help students learn how to learn vocabulary. All the participants claimed that vocabulary teaching should focus not only on vocabulary itself but also on how to learn vocabulary. Fangfang argued that teaching how to learn vocabulary is more important than what to learn about vocabulary. It was also observed that teachers often devoted considerable amounts of time to teaching vocabulary learning strategies. For example, Shasha taught students how to memorize words through word grouping. Lili, Fangfang, and Lin provided students with word formation rules. Lili and Fangfang taught students the rules about how to stress a multi-syllable word. Yao also presented some suggestions on how to use a dictionary effectively.

What to Teach about Vocabulary?

The second issue about vocabulary teaching involves EFL teachers’ knowledge of what to teach about vocabulary. The data indicates that participants’ understandings of this issue are highly associated with their knowledge about vocabulary learning. In this section, the results will be reported from two dimensions: what words are selected to teach in class and what components teaching a word involves.

What Words are Selected to Teach? As regards the selection of words for teaching, it was found that the teachers tended to take the following four factors into consideration: frequency and the College English Syllabus, productivity, general and academic vocabulary, and intuition. First, the participants argued that the words they selected are based on frequency and the College English Syllabus. Specifically, most of the words selected for teaching are those listed in the Band 4 and Band 6 College English Syllabi. In Lili's words, "the words I teach mostly are those required in the College English Syllabi for both Band 4 and Band 6. In general, the words are frequently used in English" (Lili, Interview 4, October 31, 2006). Yao also echoed Lili and provided a detailed account about his selection of words for teaching as follows:

Generally, I teach the commonly used words. For example, the word *make* is frequently used. Students just know its first meaning as a verb, but they don't know *make* can be a noun. So we need to teach such words. If a word is rarely used, I don't take the initiative to teach it. It's enough if students can retrieve its Chinese meanings when seeing it. (Yao, Interview 4, November 2, 2006)

Moreover, the participants tended to treat high-frequency words differently. Most of them held that the words they selected to teach mainly involve verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Among the three groups of words, participants tended to teach verbs more frequently than other types of words. One participant (i.e., Lili) held a different view about how to treat concrete nouns. In Lili's opinion, she seldom taught frequently used nouns, particularly concrete nouns. In her view, "students can handle concrete words themselves. I don't need to teach them" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Further, to determine a word's frequency, the participants primarily relied on the College English Syllabi, as

mentioned above. Some participants also argued that they often used intuition to judge whether a word has a high frequency or not. In Lin's words, for example, "I've been an English teacher many years. I don't have any difficulty in identifying a frequently used word. My intuition can tell me that" (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006). Shasha also stated that "I can feel if the word is commonly used or not at first sight" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

Another factor that the participants considered about what words to teach concerns a word's productivity. A productive word, in Lin and Lili's view, means that the word is active and powerful in derivation, collocations, and usage. Lin employed the word *present* as an example to demonstrate his view about a productive word. As Lin put it,

I teach the words with high productivity, like the verb *present*. This word has its derivatives like *presentable*, *presentation*. This word also can be a noun and an adjective. For the words that have no derivatives, I don't teach them even if they are frequently used, like the word *toss*. (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006)

In Lili's opinion,

I often teach the word that is productive in derivation. I mean, the word can be transformed into other forms, like noun, verb, or adjective. For example, the word *originally*, I'll teach it. After teaching it, I hope students can learn the word and also recognize its other four forms: its verb form *originate*, its noun forms *origination* and *origin*, and its adjective form *original*. This word is productive in derivation. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

The third factor involving the participants' selection of words for teaching lies in a distinction between general vocabulary and academic vocabulary. All the participants felt confident that they should teach the frequently used general words listed in the College English Syllabus. However, the Group A teachers also argued that the frequently used academic words should be taught. In Lin's view, for instance, "students will read a lot of academic papers in the future" (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006). Lili also argued that "in teaching, I often choose the academic words that I think are frequently used. For example, the word *paradox* I taught is a Band-6 word, but I think it's often used in academic English" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

Finally, some participants maintained that their selection of words for teaching is based on intuition. As Yao plainly stated, "if I feel a word is worth teaching, I will teach it. That is, if I feel I have something to teach about the word, I'll teach it" (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Lili also said that "in teaching, I often feel that I need to teach this word and students should learn it. Why? This word, when I see it, reminds me of many things that I can teach, like its derivatives, its usage, its collocations, etc. My selection isn't based on any theory but it's just my feeling, my intuition" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006).

What Components does Teaching a Word Involve? The participants argued that EFL vocabulary teaching mainly includes the following components of a word: its pronunciation and stress, meanings, word formation, and usage (syntactic structure and collocations). Lili provided a complete description about this issue:

Teaching a word should first focus on its pronunciation, accurate pronunciation; then its word formation, for example, roots, prefixes, and suffixes; then its

meanings, then its usage, i.e., how to use it properly; finally, its collocations.

Sometimes you need to provide some example sentences if the word is hard to understand. (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

As regards a word's pronunciation, all the participants, as reported in the section "EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary learning", held that learning a new word, students should learn its pronunciation. Three participants also argued that students should know how to stress a word with more than one syllable. In teaching, the participants, depending on their previous learning experience or their understanding of students, demonstrated different views about the component of a word's pronunciation and syllabic stress. In Shasha, Lin, Dandan, and Deng's teaching, for example, they paid less attention to this aspect. In their view, students have learned this knowledge in high school and it is not their teaching focuses. In Fangfang, Lili, and Yao's teaching, however, they attached considerable importance to the stress of a multi-syllable word. These three participants' beliefs in this regard, as the observation data shows, are fairly consistent with their classroom teaching behaviors. In Fangfang's class, for example, she asked one student to read aloud some sentences and then corrected the student's misuse of stresses of the words *sentential*, *circumstance* and *permanently*. In the follow-up stimulated recall, she explicitly stated that "the stress of an English word is very important in communication" and that "if you say the word *`sentence* as *sen`tence*, *`circumstance* as *cir`cumstance*, or *`permanently* as *per`manently*, it's very weird and confusing to a native speaker of English even if you say every sound right" (Fangfang, Stimulated Recall 1, November 23, 2006).

The data also shows that when teaching how to stress a word, the participants tended to teach phonological rules about syllabic stress. Some examples of the generalized phonological rules that they taught are as follows:

- In most cases, the third syllable from the back is usually stressed in a multi-syllable word, for example, *com`municate*, and *e`conomy*. (Fangfang)
- With respect to a multi-syllable word with the suffixes *-ic*, *-ics*, and *-tion*, the stress falls on their previous syllable, for example, *eco`nomic*, *his`toric*, *communi`cation*, and *compe`tition*. (Fangfang, Lili)
- The last syllable of a word with the suffix *-ee* is stressed, for example, *employee*, *testee*, and *examinee*. (Fangfang, Lili, Yao)

It was also found that the three participants' understandings of teaching syllabic stress are impacted by three major factors. One concerns the participants' understanding of students' background. As Fangfang and Yao stated, students are weak at pronunciation and stress because they were not well trained in high school. In Yao's words,

We need to teach students how to say a word, which is beneficial to their listening and speaking. Many students' pronunciation is uneven due to their poor English training in high school. Many high school teachers' pronunciation isn't good. At the university level we should teach them how to say a word and how to stress it. (Yao, Interview 3, October 10, 2006)

Another factor involves the participants' learning experience. In Lili's opinion, she taught how to stress a multi-syllable word because her learning experience showed her that this was a difficult area to learn. As Lili recalled,

My teachers never taught me the rule about how to stress a long word. But when I came across a long word, I felt I had trouble saying it. I didn't know how to stress it. Later I found that a long word usually has some affixes, like *-ology*, *-ography*. Then I began to check their pronunciation and stress and found the words follow a rule. That is, the words with the same affix have the same syllable stressed. (Lili, Interview 4, October 31, 2006)

Finally, the participants' understanding of the differences between English and Chinese impacted their views about teaching syllabic stress. As Fangfang argued, it is difficult for Chinese students to stress a multi-syllable word in that a Chinese character has no phonological feature of syllabic stress.

Another component of a word in teaching is its meaning. There are two salient themes that emerged on this topic in the data. One theme concerns which meaning of the word should be taught. Each English word generally has more than one meaning. The meaning of a word for teaching, in the participants' views, generally should be the one determined in context. The observation data indicated that the teacher-participants' beliefs in this regard are consistent with their classroom behaviors. It was also observed that when teaching a new word, most of the participants tended to teach not only its meaning determined in context but also its other meanings which they thought are worth teaching. There are two major reasons for the participants' vocabulary teaching in this way. First, as Yao argued, teaching a word's meanings in this way "can help students realize that the word has not only the meaning in the text they've learned but also other meanings they need to know" (Yao, Interview 4, November 2, 2006). Second, in Lin's

view, teaching vocabulary in this way “can help students learn vocabulary systematically in terms of its meanings” (Lin, Interview 1, September 23, 2006).

The other theme about teaching a word’s meanings is whether the word’s meaning should be taught in Chinese or in English. As reported earlier, the Group A teachers tended to hold a flexible view that students can learn a word’s meanings in English or in Chinese while the Group B teachers tended to argue that students had better learn a word’s meanings in English. As regards what language is used to teach a word’s meanings, the teaching observation data indicates that all the participants used both English and Chinese to teach a word’s meanings. In many cases, the participants tried to define a word in English first and then provided a Chinese definition. As Fangfang explained, “I first gave students an English definition. If they get it, I won’t say it in Chinese. If not, I’ll explain it in Chinese” (Fangfang, Interview 2, October 17, 2006). Lili also agreed that “what language I use to teach a word’s meanings depends on whether or not students can follow me” (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006).

Word formation is another component of a word that most of the participants argued teaching should involve. As reported in the section “How to learn vocabulary”, Shasha and Dandan did not suggest that students use the strategy of word formation to develop vocabulary. The other five participants, however, perceived word formation analysis to be an important component in vocabulary learning. The classroom observations also reveal that these five participants’ vocabulary teaching frequently involves the technique of word formation analysis. For example, in one class, when teaching the word *outpace*, Lin analyzed the affix *out-* and presented some more example words with this affix (e.g., *outnumber*, *outman*, *outgun*, and *outstrip*). In the follow-up

interview, Lin articulated his rationale of teaching word formation. He stated that he always tried to teach word formation rules to help students develop vocabulary. As he put it,

I always try to generalize a language rule from specific examples and teach students the rule. The word *outpace* has a word formation rule. That is, it has the prefix *out-*. After learning *outpace*, students should be able to get the meaning of the affix *out-* and then they can figure out the rough meanings of the words with this suffix: *outnumber*, *outman*, *outgun*, and *outstrip*. A good student, after learning the word *outpace*, should consult a dictionary to see any other words sharing this prefix. (Lin, Interview 4, October 19, 2006)

In Yao's case, he also emphasized word formation in vocabulary teaching. He argued that teaching word formation mainly aims to develop students' receptive knowledge of vocabulary and it is also what students are interested in. As he stated,

...We should teach a word's structure. For example, the word *bicycle* consists of the prefix *bi-*, which means two, and the root *-cycle*. After we teach the prefix *bi-* and the root *-cycle*, we may guide students to guess the rough meanings of the words *bimonthly* and *tricycle*. Once their guess is right, they may feel excited and have a great sense of achievement. So they'll be interested in learning this. (Yao, Interview 3, October 10, 2006)

A word's usage is perceived to be one of the most important components of vocabulary teaching. As reported in the section above, knowing a word's usage concerns three dimensions: its syntactic structure, pragmatic use, and collocations. In vocabulary teaching, all the participants tended to agree that the final goal of teaching a word is to

help students learn how to use the word. The observation data illustrates that the participants' teaching about a word's usage involves two aspects. One is the word's syntactic structure and the other is its collocations. As regards a word's syntactic structure, the participants' teaching involves the issues about, for example, whether a verb is transitive or intransitive, whether a transitive verb is followed by a noun or a clause, and whether a noun is countable or uncountable. The following is an example of how Shasha taught the verb *inform*.

inform: vt. to tell; to give information to *gao(4)zhi(1), tong(1)zhi(1)*

- 1) I will *inform* you of the test date next week.
- 2) The students were *informed* that they were selected as volunteers for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

(Shasha, Teaching Materials, October 24, 2006)

In this case, Shasha aimed to teach students the two syntactic structures of the verb *inform*: a) *inform somebody of something* and b) *inform somebody+ that clause*. This example is selected from one of her PPT teaching handouts. It is obvious that Shasha first presented the word's part of speech, then provided a definition in both English and Chinese, and finally provided several example sentences showing how to use the word. In Deng's case, however, though he argued that "we should teach how to use vocabulary" (Deng, Interview 1, September 21, 2006), his vocabulary teaching, as the observation data shows, mainly focused on teaching a word's meaning. That is, if there was a new word in a text he wanted to teach, he would explain the word's meaning in the context and provide no examples to show how to use the word. As he argued, "I'd like students to

feel how to use a word from extensive reading themselves. If I gave them examples, the examples wouldn't be genuine" (Deng, Interview 4, November 14, 2006).

Regarding a word's pragmatic use, as reported in the section "What to learn about vocabulary", only one participant (i.e., Lin) explicitly viewed a word's pragmatic use as one component of knowing the word. The observation data shows that two participants (i.e., Lin and Lili) tried to involve this component in vocabulary teaching. In Lili's case, she taught the difference between the two words *cheap* and *inexpensive* in terms of their semantic prosodies. As she said, "the word *cheap* tends to be used in a negative semantic prosody while the word *inexpensive* often has a positive semantic prosody" (Lili, Fieldnotes, November 30, 2006). The follow-up stimulated recall data shows that Lili also attached much importance to knowing a word's semantic prosody. As she put it, "if students don't know the two words' difference in usage, probably they'll make some pragmatic errors" (Lili, Stimulated Recall 2, November 30, 2006). Lili further pointed out that EFL teachers usually lack the knowledge of a word's semantic prosody. As she stated,

It's really hard for teachers as non-native speakers of English to get this knowledge because they don't have the intuition of native speakers of English. Also we can't gain this knowledge from dictionaries because they don't provide such information. I know the pragmatic differences of *cheap* and *inexpensive* because one of my friends, a native speaker of English, told me that. Then I consulted some dictionaries, but they didn't include this difference. (Lili, Stimulated Recall 2, November 30, 2006)

In Lin's case, he tried to teach the new word *seek* regarding its semantic prosody. As he said in class, "the word *seek* is generally followed by an abstract noun but not a concrete noun. For example, you can say *seek protection*, but you can't say *seek an egg*" (Lin, Fieldnotes, October 19, 2006). In the follow-up interview, Lin displayed his beliefs about the importance of involving semantic prosody in word teaching and learning. As he put it,

I generalize this rule based on my knowledge of the word *seek*. An EFL teacher should know what kind of semantic prosody a word has. If not, that teacher isn't that qualified. Also we teachers need to teach students how to use a word properly. Students often make this type of mistake in writing or speaking. For example, one student wanted to say that he's a normal student but he's an extraordinarily able student. He wrote like this: 'I'm a normal student, but I have abnormal abilities.' This is a good example showing the importance of knowing a word's semantic prosody. (Lin, Interview 4, October 19, 2006)

The finding reported above suggests that the reason for EFL teachers' unenthusiastic teaching of the semantic prosodies of words may be due to their lack of knowledge in this regard though it was argued that a qualified EFL teacher should have this knowledge.

Teaching a word's collocations is viewed as another aspect of the word's usage. As reported in the section "What to learn about vocabulary", the participants attached much importance to learning collocations and encouraged students to learn English through memorizing collocations. The teaching observation data also reveals that most of the participants frequently taught students a word's collocations. One example is that when Yao taught the verb *extend* and the noun *advance*, he provided their collocations: *extend an invitation to somebody* and *make advances*. The participants tended to argue

that conscious learning of collocations is necessary for students. They also maintained that it is hard for students themselves to identify the collocations and therefore, explicit teaching could help students notice them.

To sum up, two salient themes have emerged on the issue of what to teach about vocabulary: what words to select for teaching and what components of a word are involved in teaching. The EFL teacher-participants tended to maintain that selection of words for teaching is impacted by a variety of factors such as the College English Syllabus about vocabulary teaching, a word's frequency and productivity, and a teacher's intuition. They also argue that the components of a word that teaching focuses on are mainly made up of the word's pronunciation and stress, meanings, affixes and root, and usage (particularly referring to the word's syntactic features and collocations). The teachers also demonstrate various understandings of what to teach about vocabulary (e.g., words selected for teaching, and pragmatic use of vocabulary) because of their different understandings of students, linguistic knowledge, and EFL learning and teaching experience.

How to Teach Vocabulary?

What is reported in this section focuses on EFL teachers' knowledge about how to teach vocabulary. The results mainly involve EFL teachers' pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of students. The issue of how to teach EFL vocabulary will be reported from two dimensions: A taxonomy of EFL teachers' vocabulary teaching techniques and an integrated approach in vocabulary teaching.

A Taxonomy of EFL Teachers' Vocabulary Teaching Techniques. As the classroom observation data indicates, the participants employed various techniques to

teach vocabulary. In all, fourteen techniques were identified in the data. It was found that eleven of the techniques are shared by all or most of the participants and the other three are individualized techniques. The taxonomy of vocabulary teaching techniques is shown in Table 6.2. The data shown in the table indicates that eight of the shared techniques are used to evaluate students' vocabulary learning. Some example activities involving these techniques that the participants designed to evaluate students' vocabulary learning are shown in Appendix F. In the following section, the participants' use and their understandings of these techniques will be reported.

Introducing a word in context is a technique that the participants commonly used to teach vocabulary. The participants picked up the word for teaching in the text the class was studying. They first read or asked students to read the text in which the word was located. Then the teacher-participants either explained or asked students to guess the meaning of the word by referring to the clues about the target word in context. Finally, if they wanted to develop students' productive knowledge of the target word, they provided some examples to demonstrate how to use it. The use of this technique, as some participants maintained, can provide students with a deeper impression about the target word than teaching it in isolation. One example of how to use this technique is based on Yao's teaching. I observed that the target word Yao planned to teach was *dwell* . The text where the word was located was as follows: "Some green plants live on the land and others *dwell* in the waters of the earth" (Yao, Fieldnotes, October 10, 2006). He asked students to do silent reading of the text and guess the meaning of *dwell* in context. After students succeeded in guessing its meaning, he informed them that synonymy is frequently used as a context clue for word guessing.

Table 6.2. *A taxonomy of EFL teachers' vocabulary teaching techniques*

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Techniques shared by the participants | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introducing a word in context 2. Dictation 3. Translation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English-Chinese - Chinese-English 4. Word formation/ Affixation 5. Exemplification: Teaching a word by providing sentences to show how to use it. 6. Collocation 7. Semantic relationship (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms) 8. Word association: Teaching words associated with each other regarding a certain topic. 9. Making a sentence 10. Reading words aloud in class 11. Definition |
| Individualized techniques | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contextualization: Teaching vocabulary through telling stories or jokes (Lin, Fangfang) 2. Listing key words on the blackboard (Shasha) 3. Using a dictionary in class (Lin) |

Dictation is a technique that the participants frequently employed to evaluate students' vocabulary learning (See Appendix F1). For example, Shasha used it in each class and Lili used it every two weeks. This technique is generally used, in the participants' views, to test students' vocabulary pronunciation and spelling. The main reason for its use can be illustrated by Shasha's words:

I give students a dictation each class. They have to recite the wordlist for each text before class. I choose some words from the wordlist and dictate them.

Students may dislike the dictation, but I know, if I don't dictate the words, they won't spend time memorizing them because they have their own majors. I ask them to recite a certain number of words every day and dictate them weekly. I record their dictation scores each time, so they can't be lazy. (Shasha, Interview 4,

October 31, 2006)

One special case is related to Deng's use of dictation. Deng combined word definition, word formation analysis and collocations with the dictation technique. The following is an example showing the procedure of how he used the technique: It was observed that before the dictation, Deng asked students to close their textbooks. He first dictated the word *imaginary*. Then he began to teach students its meaning, derivatives, and usage as follows:

imaginary means what? It means *not real, unreal, not based on facts*. It comes from the verb *imagine*. How can we use the word *imaginary*? We can say *an imaginary story, an imaginary land, and an imaginary character in a novel*.

(Deng, Observation Recording, November 14, 2006)

In the follow-up interview, Deng explained why he integrated vocabulary teaching into dictation. As he stated, his purpose was to help students review the new words without seeing them. It seems that Deng's integration of vocabulary teaching into dictation was not very effective, particularly for the students who could not write down the word *imaginary* in the dictation. It also may be ineffective for the students who wrote down the word in the dictation in that their attention was focused on dictation rather than on taking notes about what was taught about the word.

Translation, both English-Chinese and Chinese-English, is another technique frequently used for vocabulary teaching. According to Sokmen (1997), this traditional vocabulary teaching activity has been found effective in building vocabulary in a linguistically homogeneous teaching context as in the Chinese EFL setting. Using the technique of English-Chinese translation, the participants usually selected one sentence involving the target word for teaching from the text the class was studying and asked students to translate it into Chinese. English-Chinese translation and Chinese-English translation are also employed to evaluate vocabulary learning (See Appendices F2 and F3). The participants argued that English-Chinese translation can help develop students' receptive knowledge of vocabulary and Chinese-English translation aims to develop the productive knowledge of vocabulary. In other words, English-Chinese translation mainly involves developing students' ability to recognize the target English word in context. In Chinese-English translation, students have to know how to use the target word to produce sentences. The observation data indicates that in class, the teacher-participants tended to ask students to fulfill English-Chinese translation orally. As regards Chinese-English translation, the Group A teachers and the Group B teachers treated this technique

differently. The Group A teachers preferred students to complete this translation in a spoken form. As Lili argued, “Doing Chinese-English translation orally can save much time. After students do the translation exercise, I’ll normally give them the answers, so they’ll need to review the words after class” (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006). The Group B teachers tended to ask students to write down their answers to the Chinese-English translation questions. In Dandan’s view, “writing down the translation work in class may leave a deep impression on students about the words they’ve learned” (Dandan, Interview 2, September 28, 2006). It seems that the Group A teachers focused more attention on making classroom teaching more efficient and motivating students to study after class while the Group B teachers preferred to achieve students’ learning occurrence in class.

The technique of word formation or affixation is also frequently used not only to teach vocabulary but also to evaluate vocabulary learning. Three examples of how the participants utilized the affixation technique for vocabulary learning evaluation are shown in Appendices F4, F5, and F6. As reported in the above section “How to learn vocabulary”, the affixation technique is used primarily to develop students’ receptive vocabulary knowledge. The observation data shows that five of the teachers’ vocabulary instruction involved affixation while two (i.e., Shasha and Dandan) were not very passionate about this technique. One finding is that the participants tended to use the affixation technique in different ways. The Group A teachers (i.e., Lili, Lin, and Yao) normally integrated the technique of affixation into the technique of “introducing a new word in context”. It was also observed that their teaching practice is fairly consistent with their beliefs that it is not appropriate to teach affixes or roots intensively. The Group B

teachers (i.e., Deng and Fangfang), however, tended to use the affixation technique intensively to handle the words in the wordlist of each text the class was studying although they also maintained that affixes and roots should not be taught intensively. For example, Deng taught nearly twenty affixes and roots in one wordlist in 40 minutes. Another finding is that when teaching a new affix or root, the participants generally followed a similar procedure: First, they picked up a word which contained the target affix or root to teach. Then they defined, or asked students to define, the meaning of the affix or root. Finally, they provided, or asked students to provide, more example words containing the affix or root. One example of how one teacher-participant taught the root *astro-* as in *astronaut* is shown in Appendix G.

Exemplification is another technique that the participants employed to teach a word by providing example sentences or phrases to show how to use it particularly in terms of its syntactic structures. One example about how Shasha taught the verb *embarrass* by using the exemplification technique is shown below:

- 1) Mark *embarrassed* his friends by singing very loudly on the bus.
- 2) It's *embarrassing* to be caught telling a lie.
- 3) Everyone laughed when I fell off my chair—I was really *embarrassed*!

(Shasha, Teaching Materials, October 24, 2006)

Shasha provided these three example sentences to demonstrate three different syntactic features of the verb *embarrass*. This technique is used mainly to develop students' productive knowledge of vocabulary. It is frequently integrated into the use of the techniques of "introducing a word in context", "translation", and "making a sentence".

The technique of collocation is frequently used to teach or evaluate students' productive knowledge of vocabulary. For the purpose of evaluating vocabulary learning, the participants designed various collocation activities. One example exercise is demonstrated in Appendix F7. This exercise was designed by Lili. In the follow-up interview, she explained why she designed this blank-filling exercise about collocation. In her words,

I designed this exercise to help students notice the key parts of the collocations. Students often make collocational errors in these parts when using the collocations. For example, for the collocations *meet a deadline* and *make a phone call*, students have little difficulty getting their meanings in context, but their problem is that they usually use a wrong verb to collocate the nouns. In *arrive at a solution* and *attach importance to something*, students' problem usually lies in the prepositions. (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006)

One more example is that Yao designed a task to test students' command of the collocations of the verb *save*. He wrote down the word on the blackboard and asked students to add an object to the verb *save* to generate a phrase. The collocations the students provided include, for example, *save money*, *save time*, *save energy*, and *save face*. Then he suggested that students find more objects to the verb by referring to dictionaries. In his view,

This task aims to make students aware of what words often go together with the verb *save*. It also can help students learn how to use dictionaries for vocabulary learning. (Lili, Interview 2, September 26, 2006)

These examples demonstrate that the participants' teaching involves both the syntactic and semantic features of collocations. The data also shows that the technique of collocation is normally integrated into the technique of "introducing a new word in context". As regards how to use the collocation technique, two different approaches were identified. One is a direct approach, which is featured with direct and explicit teaching of collocations. For example, Dandan explicitly informed students of the target collocations she asked them to learn, like *there is no denying that*. The other approach is an indirect approach. One technique the participants employed seems to be the consciousness-raising teaching of collocations. Specifically, the teachers asked students to identify the collocations they needed to learn. For example, it was observed that Shasha employed an indirect approach to teach the collocations *attach meaning to* and *make a phone call* in the sentence "The same meaning is attached to telephone calls made after 11:00 p.m.". She first informed students that there were two collocations they needed to learn, and then she asked them to find them out themselves. Finally, she confirmed students' findings of the two collocations and asked them to translate the collocations into Chinese.

Semantic relationship, mainly including synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, and homographs, is the technique that the teacher-participants used to develop students' receptive knowledge and productive knowledge of vocabulary. For his employment of this technique, Yao presented a detailed rationale as follows:

Vocabulary teaching should involve the issue of semantic classification. We can group words with similar semantic relationships. For example, the word *plant* has many hyponyms. Its hyponyms can be put into one group. This teaching strategy can help students memorize a group of words through their lexical relationships.

These words have interrelations. If students remember one of them, it can remind them of other words in the group. This strategy is better than just suggesting that students recite a wordlist because the words in the wordlist have no internal relationships, which is unfavorable to their memory. If you just suggest that students recite wordlists, I don't think this is real vocabulary teaching. (Yao, Interview 4, November 2, 2006)

The data shows that the technique of semantic relationship can be used to evaluate students' vocabulary learning. Two example exercises are demonstrated in Appendices F5 and F8. The teacher-participants mostly employed this technique to introduce new words. This technique is usually integrated into the technique of "Introducing a new word in context". In Yao's teaching, for example, it was observed that when he taught the new word *economical* in a text, he utilized the technique of synonyms, homographs, and hyponyms. He compared three synonyms *economical*, *thrifty*, and *frugal* and two near-homographs *economic* and *economical*.

Among the different semantic relationships, synonymy was found to be the most frequently used in vocabulary teaching. There are two ways to handle synonymy in the teacher-participants' teaching. One is to help students develop receptive knowledge of vocabulary. For instance, when Shasha taught the adjective *prompt*, she first asked students to define it in Chinese and then asked students to speak out its synonyms based on their vocabulary knowledge. Students provided the word *timely* and the phrase *on time*. Then Shasha presented two more synonyms: *punctual* and *immediate*. Shasha finally suggested to students that they could put the four items together and recite them. As Shasha argued in the follow-up interview,

Teaching vocabulary in this way can help students set up a lexical relationship among the words. It can help students enlarge vocabulary. When learning the word *prompt*, they also became familiar with other words like *punctual*, though they might not know how to use them. (Shasha, Interview 4, October 31, 2006)

The use of synonymy in this way was also frequently identified in the participants' teacher talk. That is, realizing that there was a new word in teacher talk, the participant might select a synonym of that word to paraphrase it. One example shown below concerns Yao's teaching of the verb *option*: "We had no *option* but to agree to his request. *no option* means *no choice*".

The other way of using synonymy is to develop students' productive knowledge of vocabulary. One example is concerned with Lili's teaching of the verb *substitute* and its synonym *replace*. Lili employed an integrated teaching approach to handle the two words, which will be reported in detail in the following section "An integrated approach in vocabulary teaching". Lili first employed example sentences demonstrating the syntactic and semantic differences between the two synonyms. Then she asked students to identify their differences. Finally, she used a Chinese-English translation task to help students practice how to use the words. As Lili argued, "the comparison I made about the two synonyms can help students learn how to use them properly" (Lili, Interview 4, October 31, 2006).

Word association is another technique that the teacher-participants shared to teach students' receptive knowledge of vocabulary. With this technique, the participants categorized or asked students to categorize into one group the words associated with each other regarding a certain topic. This technique is often integrated into the strategy of

vocabulary recitation. As the observation data shows, Fangfang designed a task requiring students to list all the words associated with a kitchen. Then she shared a list of words she collected with students and asked them to learn these words. Lili also conducted an activity by using the word association technique. She asked students to write down the words about stationery. In Shasha's class, she frequently employed this technique to teach vocabulary. She was fairly happy and excited about her experience in using this technique. It seems that Shasha developed a systematic way to utilize this technique in terms of how to help students enlarge vocabulary and how to evaluate the words students learned in her teaching. As she put it,

I often classify words into groups for teaching. For example, to teach the words about appearance and personality, I asked students to describe their ideal boyfriends or girlfriends. Students were very interested in this topic. I designed a pair work activity for this. Before they did the pair work, I asked them to write down the words they knew about appearance and personality. I checked their words and then gave them a list of words I collected. During the pair work, they were suggested to the word list for the task. Finally, I asked them to recite the words in the list after class and told them I would give them a dictation about the words the next time. (Shasha, Interview 5, November 7, 2006)

In addition, Shasha employed another task to handle the word association technique. That is, she asked students to develop a wordlist of their own for a certain topic. As she recalled,

I also gave students a topic like weather and asked them to collect the words about the topic before class. Some students collected over 100 words. They got these

words from the internet. I put the words together and made a workable list of words for them. Then I asked students to recite the words, and dictated them in class. I taught them in this way to help develop their vocabulary. (Shasha, Interview 5, November 7, 2006)

For the word association technique, the participants' main argument, similar to that about the technique of semantic relationship, is that the words through grouping are interrelated. The use of word association is favorable for students' vocabulary memorization.

The technique of "making a sentence" is generally used to develop students' productive knowledge of vocabulary. Participants normally followed an input-output process for this technique. Specifically, they employed this technique after completing the exemplification technique. As the observation data shows, after presenting example sentences to show how to use a new word, the teacher-participants usually asked students to generate sentences with the word they learned. The main purpose, according to the participants, is to consolidate students' learning of the word. One case worth mentioning is Fangfang's use of the "making a sentence" technique. It was observed that she first used the technique of word formation to teach several new words. Then she asked students to make sentences with the words. It was observed that her students had difficulty in completing this task. In the follow-up interview, Fangfang stated that "they should have known how to use the words because I asked them to self-study the words after class last week" (Fangfang, Interview 3, October 24, 2006). This incident may suggest that Fangfang overestimated students' motivation in vocabulary self-learning outside of class.

Another technique that the participants used to teach vocabulary is reading words aloud in class. This technique is normally utilized to handle the wordlist attached to the end of the text that the class is studying. The data indicates that the participants employed two different ways to handle this technique. One is that the Group A teachers tended to ask all students to read words aloud together in class. For these teachers, this technique was usually used before the technique of introducing a word in context. That is, after students finished the reading-aloud task, the teacher-participants usually began to handle the new words in the text. In Shasha's class, for example, she asked students to read aloud the new words together. Her requirement was that students read each word twice, with a rising tone in the first time and a falling tone in the second time. Shasha argued that this technique aimed to develop students' pronunciation and stress of vocabulary. She further stated that reading words aloud together by the whole class provided a chance for every student to practice word pronunciation and stress. In her view, this technique also was a way to achieve interaction between the teacher and the whole class in that all students got involved in this task. The other way of using the technique of reading words aloud is that the teacher-participants selected one or two students to read aloud the words in the wordlist to the whole class. The Group B teachers (i.e., Dandan, Deng, and Fangfang) preferred this way. As Dandan argued, asking students to read words aloud individually highlighted the problems in their pronunciation. After using this technique, the teachers usually turned to the techniques of introducing a new word in context, word formation, exemplification, collocations, or definition.

Definition is the final technique that the teacher-participants shared to help develop students' receptive knowledge of vocabulary. It is used to teach the meanings of

a word. There seem to be two different ways to handle this technique. One is that the participants combined this technique with the technique of introducing a new word in context. In this case, the teacher either directly provided a definition of the new word or asked students to guess its definition by referring to the clues in context. The other way is that the definition technique is utilized in isolation for the purpose of assessing students' receptive knowledge of vocabulary. One example task of how to use this technique for vocabulary evaluation is shown in Appendix F9. The observation data also displays that for vocabulary evaluation, this technique was used in a spoken form. For example, in Fangfang's class, she provided a word's definition orally and asked students to name the word. It was also observed in Lili's teaching that she gave students a word and asked them to speak out their definition either in English or in Chinese.

All of the eleven techniques reported above were shared among the participants. One salient theme is that the Group A teachers tend to integrate these techniques to provide multiple encounters with words students learned. For example, in Lili and Shasha's teaching, they often designed several different review activities (e.g., dictation, translation, word formation, and synonymy) highlighting the new word students just learned, which can contribute to students' long-term retention of vocabulary.

There are also three individualized techniques identified in the data. One is the technique of contextualization, which is featured with teaching vocabulary through telling stories or jokes. The observation data shows that Lin often employed this technique in teaching and Fangfang, though seldom using it, showed interest in it. In Lin's case, for example, he utilized the technique of contextualization when he taught the noun *venture*. Lin first provided one collocation of the word (i.e., *venture capital*) and explicitly

informed students of the meaning of the collocation. Then he told students a story about the person who was first awarded *venture capital* in China. Another example about Lin's use of contextualization is his teaching of the adjective *tyrannical*. He used the story of Saddam Hussein in Iraq to teach the word. When teaching the noun *shield*, he utilized the story about the U.S. Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system. In the follow-up interviews, Lin stated that "using a story to teach vocabulary can provide students with a vivid context which can easily remind them of the words when they see them again" (Lin, Interview 5, October 26, 2006). In Fangfang's case, it seems that she was interested in the technique of contextualization. She recalled her experience of learning the word *deposit*, which one of her university teachers taught her by using the contextualization technique. As she said,

I remembered how one of my teachers taught the noun *deposit* to us. He just told us a situation in which a dog is defecating. The feces fall down on the ground and later become a *deposit*. After he finished the story, he explained the meaning to us: deposit is something like sediment or something put somewhere, like the money put in a bank. Since he taught this word in this way, I've never forgot it.

(Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006)

Fangfang further argued that vocabulary teaching should not focus on what a word means but on how to help students remember it. In her view, though she enjoyed her teacher's story-telling method to teach vocabulary, she seldom used this technique because she was not competent in it.

Listing key words on the blackboard is the individualized technique used by Shasha. It was observed that Shasha listed eight words on the blackboard that were

included in the text the class was studying. Then she asked students to work in pairs to locate the words in the text and guess their meanings in context. In the follow-up interview, Shasha explained that this technique aimed to make students aware that the words listed on the board were the key words they must command in the text. She also stated that she wanted to practice students' skills in word guessing in context.

Another individualized technique is Lin's in-class use of a dictionary. When teaching a word he was not sure about, he usually consulted an e-dictionary installed in the classroom computer and asked students to share the word meanings and example sentences he located in the e-dictionary. In the stimulated recall, Lin stated as follows:

In my teaching, I always encourage students to turn to a dictionary whenever they have a question. I also want students to realize that even their teachers like me have to rely on dictionaries to learn English. I suggest that they form a habit of using a dictionary. (Lin, Stimulated Recall 2, December 12, 2006)

An Integrated Approach in Vocabulary Teaching. The second dimension about how to teach EFL vocabulary concerns a vocabulary teaching approach that the participants adopted. As the observation data indicates, the participants tended to employ an integrated approach in vocabulary teaching. This approach may be characterized as integrating incidental vocabulary teaching with explicit vocabulary teaching. The results about the taxonomy of vocabulary teaching techniques can display this integration. For example, the technique of introducing a word in context is more related to incidental vocabulary teaching, but in the process of using this technique, the integration of other techniques (e.g., translation, affixation, exemplification, semantic relationship, and definition) is more associated with explicit vocabulary teaching. As regards the technique

of collocation, the teacher-participants employed two different ways to handle it: indirect and direct. The indirect approach seems to be concerned respectively with incidental vocabulary teaching while the direct approach involves explicit vocabulary teaching. The techniques of dictation, reading words aloud, word association, and making a sentence generally involve explicit vocabulary teaching. Moreover, almost all of the participants encouraged students to conduct extensive reading and recommended different types of reading materials to students, which is associated with incidental vocabulary learning.

The participants' integrated approach in vocabulary teaching also included a combination between traditional EFL teaching and communicative EFL teaching. According to the observation data, the participants' teaching was teacher-centered from time to time. For example, when using the technique of introducing a word in context, the teacher-participants usually dominated their teaching. They explicitly presented the word's meanings and then provided some example sentences to show how to use it. Students were passively involved and took notes while the teacher was lecturing. However, it was also observed that the teacher designed some learner-centered tasks to handle new words. These tasks were usually completed through pair work or group work. As observed, some Group A teachers employed an inductive approach involving students' participation to handle new words. That is, they provided example sentences of a word and students needed to arrive at the meaning or usage of the word on their own. For instance, when teaching the verb *inform*, Shasha utilized the inductive approach. She first provided two example sentences representing two syntactic features of the verb. Then she asked students to work in pairs to find out the word's syntactic features. Another example of using the inductive approach involves Lili's teaching of the

synonyms *replace* and *substitute*. In the process of teaching, she seemed to have combined traditional teaching with communicative teaching effectively. Lili first used an inductive approach to help students generate their hypotheses about the two words' differences. Then she used a traditional teaching approach to confirm students' hypotheses. Specifically, Lili first provided two example sentences to students as shown below:

1) The coach *substituted* Smith *for* Jones because Jones was not fine.

2) We'll *replace* this old computer *with* a new one.

(Lili, Fieldnotes, October 31, 2006)

Then she asked students to work in pairs to discuss their differences. After that, she asked the whole class to answer her questions together. Finally, she designed a Chinese-English translation task to consolidate students' learning of the two words. The following are the transcripts about her teaching:

.....

L: What's the difference between *replace* and *substitute*?

S: *replace something with something*

L: ok, replace something with something else. What about *substitute*?

S: *substitute something for something else?*

L: good. Actually these two words are often used with two different prepositions.

Here we learn the two patterns: *substitute A for B* and *replace B with A*. They share the same Chinese meaning. That is, *yong(4) A dai(4)ti(4) B*. Any other difference between the two words?

S: (silent)

L: (waiting a few seconds) Look at the first sentence again. Jones wasn't fine, but if Jones became fine, what would happen?

S: Maybe he would come back.

L: Yeah. It means that Smith is a temporary substitute. A temporary substitute means *zhan(4)shi(2)dai(4)ti(4)*. What about the second sentence? Can we put the old computer again to replace the new one?

S: No.

L: Ok, if you *replace* something, it means that you don't want to use it any more. Can you see the difference between the two words in meaning?

S: Yeah.

L: Here I have two Chinese sentences. Please translate them into English by using the two words. I read them. You speak out your answers. Ok?

.....

(Note: L = Lili; S = students)

(Lili, Observation Recording, October 31, 2006)

In the post-observation interview, Lili explained her teaching of this pair of synonyms. The reason why she asked students to work in pairs for discussion is, as she stated, as follows:

Pair work helps them to think before they know the answer and their discussion may arouse their interest. Pair work also means there is kind of student-student interaction in class. Students won't feel as bored. (Lili, Interview 4, October 31, 2006)

It seems that Lili's understandings in this regard are consistent with the findings reported about the characteristics of an effective EFL class in Chapter 5. In other words, an effective EFL class should be interactive and appealing to students. As regards why she confirmed the answers after the pair work, she explained:

Students have got some ideas after pair work, but they're not sure. They need to know the definite answers. When I confirm their answers, they can take notes and

review them after class. That means they may feel that they do learn something in class. (Lili, Interview 4, October 31, 2006)

To summarize, regarding how to teach EFL vocabulary, a taxonomy of vocabulary teaching techniques that the teacher-participants utilized has been identified. Most of the techniques are shared by the teachers and a few of them used by individual teachers only. Most of the techniques are used to teach vocabulary and evaluate students' vocabulary learning. The data also indicates that there are some different ways of using the techniques between the Group A teachers and the Group B teachers. Another finding about how to teach vocabulary is that the participants tended to employ an integrated approach to vocabulary teaching (i.e., an integration of incidental and explicit vocabulary teaching and a combination of traditional and communicative language teaching). This approach was dominated by explicit vocabulary teaching. Most of the techniques they used to teach vocabulary, for example, exemplification, word formation, semantic relationship, and definition, were associated with explicit vocabulary teaching. The participants also advocated implicit vocabulary teaching by suggesting the learning of vocabulary through extensive reading.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge about Vocabulary Teaching

Another dimension concerning EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary teaching involves their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). PCK is a blending of content and pedagogy (Shulman, 1987; Tsui, 2003) and represents the relationship between what teachers know about subject matter and how effectively they communicate that knowledge to students (Grossman, 1990). PCK is different from pedagogical knowledge

because of its direct relationship with subject matter; it is also different from content knowledge because of its focus on the communication between teacher and students.

EFL teachers' PCK about vocabulary teaching refers to their ability to present English vocabulary knowledge (e.g., a word's form, meaning, and usage) in ways that students can understand and appreciate. Data analysis indicates two salient themes regarding the participants' PCK about vocabulary teaching: the use of examples and the use of the participants' and students' native language (i.e., Chinese) in class. With regard to the use of examples, the technique of exemplification reported above is associated primarily with the participants' PCK in terms of teaching how to use a word syntactically. In addition, the participants' use of examples involves teaching other components of a word. For instance, to show students how to concentrate on a word's syllables to memorize the word, Dandan used the example word *encyclopedia*. To demonstrate the affixation rules about how to stress a multi-syllable word, Fangfang and Lili employed a variety of example words. To teach a specific affix or root, Lin, Lili, Fangfang, Yao, and Deng all turned to various example words. To compare synonyms, Lin, Yao, Shasha and Lili also employed example sentences or phrases containing the target words. To illustrate why it is better to consult an English-Chinese dictionary for concrete nouns, Yao used the example words *tiger*. All the participants agreed that the effective use of examples is necessary for vocabulary teaching. As Lin stated, "one good example works better than a 1000-word explanation" (Lili, Interview 1, September 23, 2006).

Another theme regarding the use of examples in vocabulary teaching concerns the criteria that participants followed in selecting examples. As the interview data indicates, all the teacher participants tended to suggest that selection of examples should follow two

criteria. One is that the example should represent the component of the word that the teacher intends to teach. The other criterion involves students' interests. As Lili argued, "the example you choose should be appealing to students" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Shasha presented a specific suggestion that "the example should be closely related to students' life" (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). The observation data, however, shows that there seems to be a difference between the Group A teachers and the Group B teachers in terms of their actual selection of examples in vocabulary teaching. The examples that the Group A teachers selected are more consistent with the two criteria. For instance, the two example sentences that Shasha provided to teach how to use the verb *inform* reveal that she followed two criteria in her selection of examples.

- 1) I will *inform* you of the test date next week.
- 2) The students were *informed* that they were selected as volunteers for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

(Shasha, Teaching Materials, October 24, 2006)

The two sentences above represent the two syntactic features of the verb *inform* (i.e., *inform somebody of something* and *inform somebody that + a clause*). Their meanings also are closely related to students' life. The Group B teachers, however, tended to closely follow the first criterion but paid little attention to the second criterion in the selection of examples. The following are two example sentences that Dandan used to teach the verb *check*:

- 1) Check the tiles carefully before you buy them.
- 2) Check that all the doors are locked securely.

(Dandan, Teaching Materials, October 12, 2006)

These two example sentences demonstrate the two syntactic features of the verb (i.e., *check + an object* and *check that + a clause*) but their semantic meanings may not be that appealing to students.

The use of the Chinese language in teacher talk is another salient representation of EFL teachers' PCK in vocabulary teaching. The participants stated that in their EFL teaching program, there was no tacit policy or written guidelines that discouraged the use of the Chinese language, the students' and the teacher-participants' native language, in EFL teaching. It implies that they had freedom to select the language to teach EFL. However, most of the participants argued that the dominant language they should use in class is English because using English in class can provide more English exposure to the EFL students. Meanwhile, the participants tended to disagree on the exclusive use of English in class to teach vocabulary although Deng and Dandan argued that EFL teachers should try to speak English in class.

The observation data displays that although all the participants except Lin tried to employ English as the dominant language to teach vocabulary, they also frequently utilized the Chinese language. First, the participants' vocabulary teaching involved the use of Chinese when they employed the technique of translation, as reported in the above section "How to teach vocabulary?". It was also observed that the participants frequently utilized code switching with Chinese words embedded in the English sentences. Specifically, the participants' teacher talk is featured with the frequent use of Chinese to define or paraphrase the new words. The following is one example about the participants' code switching in terms of the use of Chinese, which is based on Fangfang's teaching of how to stress the multi-syllable word *communicate*. It can be seen that Fangfang mainly

used the English language to explain the rule with code switched to the Chinese language to define the new word in her talk.

F: *communicate* is a verb, right? (S: Yeah!) It's a multi-syllable word. multi-syllable? *duo(1)yin(1)jie(3)de*. Which syllable is stressed in *communicate*?

(Note: F = Fangfang; S = students)

(Fangfang, Observation Recording, November 23, 2006)

The interview data demonstrates that there are three major situations in which the participants tended to employ the Chinese language in vocabulary teaching. One is associated with the teaching purpose. For example, to develop students' vocabulary knowledge, the participants utilized the technique of English-Chinese or Chinese-English translation, as reported above. The second situation is concerned with teachers' English proficiency. As Lili explicitly stated, "I'm not a native speaker of English. To explain a new word or phrase in English, I may know only one definition. It's hard to find other ways to define it in English. In this case, it's better to use Chinese" (Lili, Interview 3, October 12, 2006). The third situation involves students' English proficiency. The participants maintained that when a teacher realizes that students cannot follow his/her English, it is appropriate to provide a Chinese explanation. For example, in Yao's opinion,

When you use English to explain a new word or a sentence, you need to keep an eye on students' response. Do they look puzzled? Can they follow you? You also need to think of whether or not there is a new word in your explanation? In that case, a quick way is to give a Chinese explanation. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Dadan also suggested as follows:

What language to use in vocabulary teaching, English or Chinese, should depend on students' English proficiency. You can use English if they've no trouble following you, but if they can't, you can use English and meanwhile try to integrate Chinese into your vocabulary teaching. In this way, your students can follow you. (Dandan, Interview 2, September 28, 2006)

One special case about the use of Chinese in vocabulary teaching is associated with Lin's teaching. The dominant language Lin used to teach vocabulary was Chinese. He argued that teaching methods should serve teaching goals and what language to use in teacher talk should depend on what to teach. As he put it,

In my class, I focus on teaching reading and vocabulary. If I use English to teach them, it may affect my teaching efficiency and students' understanding. For this reading course, using the Chinese language, I can quickly realize my teaching goals. My class isn't for listening or speaking. I don't think it's necessary to speak English in a reading class. Using Chinese can make my teaching more efficient. Some teachers may say that as a university EFL teacher, I shouldn't use Chinese to teach English, but I don't care. A cat, whether it's white or black, is a good cat if it can catch mice. (Lin, Interview 4, October 19, 2006)

The results reported above suggest that EFL teachers' use of examples and the Chinese language in vocabulary teaching aims to make their vocabulary teaching effective and help students comprehend what they teach about vocabulary. The two representations of the EFL teachers' PCK about vocabulary instruction also indicate that the teachers tried to understand what makes vocabulary learning easy or difficult for students and what techniques can be effective in teaching vocabulary. As a result, as the

observation data displays, through using examples and the Chinese language, all the EFL teacher participants had little difficulty in making vocabulary teaching comprehensible to students. The key difference between the Group A teachers and the Group B teachers in this regard seems to lie in how to make vocabulary teaching appealing to students and motivate them. The Group A teachers generally employed a variety of techniques together with the use of examples and Chinese. For example, Lin combined contextualization with the use of examples and Chinese. In Shasha, Lili, and Yao's vocabulary teaching, they integrated various techniques (e.g., translation, word association, and synonymy) and activities (e.g., pair work, group work, and role play) into the use of examples and Chinese. In the Group B teachers' vocabulary teaching, however, their use of examples and Chinese was usually featured with their dominance in class and lack of variety in designing activities and employing vocabulary techniques.

EFL Teacher Knowledge and Classroom Behaviors

What is reported in this section focuses on the relationships between EFL teachers' knowledge and their classroom behaviors in terms of vocabulary teaching. It can be seen in the earlier sections of this chapter that the relationships between what the EFL teacher-participants believed about vocabulary instruction and how they conducted vocabulary teaching in classrooms have been, to a great extent, demonstrated. In this section, I will present a summary of the major findings in this regard.

One major finding is that in most cases, EFL teachers' classroom behaviors about vocabulary teaching are consistent with their teaching beliefs. For example, regarding what words teaching should center on, the participants argued that they should mostly select verbs, nouns, and adjectives to teach. It was observed that their actual vocabulary

teaching generally involved these parts of speech. Regarding what aspects of a word teaching should involve, the participants tended to teach a word's pronunciation and stress, meaning, and usage (mainly involving its syntactic usage and collocations), which is also consistent with their beliefs in this regard. Moreover, the participants assumed that reading (both intensive reading and extensive reading) is one important strategy for vocabulary development. Congruent with their beliefs, the participants' classroom behaviors also demonstrated that they integrated vocabulary teaching into intensive and extensive reading.

On the other hand, some specific instances also have been identified indicating that inconsistencies exist between EFL teachers' teaching behaviors and their knowledge about vocabulary instruction. These inconsistencies are particularly associated with the Group B teachers' vocabulary teaching. The inconsistencies may fall into two categories. One involves the Group A teachers' knowledge of what to teach about vocabulary and what they actually taught about vocabulary in class. For example, all the teacher-participants argued that vocabulary teaching should involve a word's usage (i.e., its syntactic structure and collocations). In Deng's case, however, it was observed that his vocabulary teaching usually concentrated on new words' meanings, affixes, and roots with less attention to how to use the words.

The other category of inconsistency rests with the Group B teachers' beliefs about how to teach vocabulary and their actual in-class vocabulary teaching behaviors. One example lies in the inconsistency between the Group B teachers' beliefs of how to use the technique of affixation and their actual classroom teaching of affixes and roots. The teacher-participants, including the Group B teachers, tended to argue that affixes and

roots should not be taught intensively. The Group B teachers (e.g., Deng and Fangfang), however, employed this teaching technique in an intensive way. Another example is related to the selection of examples in vocabulary teaching. The EFL teacher participants held that the selection of examples should follow two criteria: the typicality of an example to the target word and students' interests. In teaching, the Group B teachers tended to follow the first criterion but did not fully take the second criterion into account. Finally, inconsistency has been identified between the Group B teachers' beliefs about an effective EFL class and their vocabulary teaching practice. The teacher participants argued that an effective EFL class should feature considerable student-student or teacher-student interaction. The observation data, however, indicates that the Group B teachers' classes (especially Deng and Dandan) were generally teacher-centered. To be specific, in both Deng and Dandan's teaching, when handling a new word in a text, they tended to first read the text word by word, then explained the word's meaning, and analyzed its structure. In Fangfang's case, though trying to develop an interactive classroom atmosphere, she focused more attention on teacher-student interaction than student-student interaction.

Sources of EFL Teacher Knowledge of Vocabulary Instruction

The results to be reported in this section center on when and where the EFL teachers developed their knowledge of vocabulary instruction. The data shows that the EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction derived from a variety of sources. Based on the categorization about the sources of teacher knowledge by Grossman (1990), Richards (1998), and Tsui (2003), a framework to categorize the sources of ESL teacher knowledge about vocabulary instruction was established as shown in Table 6.3. This

framework consists of four major sources and each source includes specific categories identified in the data. The table also shows that the two most frequently mentioned sources are the participants' formal education and teaching experience. What is worth mentioning is that the categories identified are not always mutually exclusive but

Table 6.3. *Categories of sources of EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction*

| Categories of sources of teacher knowledge (Adapted from Grossman (1990), Richards (1998), and Tsui (2003)) |
|---|
| <p>Formal education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school EFL education • Undergraduate EFL education • Graduate education – mainly involving EFL teacher education: e.g., courses about linguistic knowledge. |
| <p>Teaching experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own learning – associated with personal learning based on classroom teaching • Textbooks • Students' feedback • Impact of teaching other courses • Peer communication – e.g., interaction with fellow teachers |
| <p>Personal life experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intuition – explanations in terms of 'feeling natural to do' • Experience of studying abroad |
| <p>Research on teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development: gained through workshops and conferences • Professional reading: e.g., associated with journals and books |

interrelated. For example, the teachers' knowledge of the use of dictionaries in vocabulary learning could be developed through their formal education, teaching experience, or personal life experience.

Formal Education. The first source of teacher knowledge is associated with the EFL teachers' formal education, which refers to their experiences of being high school students, undergraduates, and graduate students. Table 6.4 provides a summary of the teachers' formal education as a source of their knowledge in vocabulary instruction. The number of mentions for each category is also included.

Table 6.4. *Classification of sources of knowledge from formal education*

| Source | No. | Verbatim examples from transcripts |
|---------------|-----|--|
| High school | 28 | In high school, I didn't stay in class to recite words but went out of classroom every afternoon to read the text aloud. I learned new words in this way... (Fangfang) |
| Undergraduate | 58 | I always took a big dictionary with me. I used it to look up the new words in the intensive reading text... (Shasha) |
| Graduate | 6 | The course History of English helped me know a lot about the origin of English vocabulary. (Lili) |

According to the participants, the formal education that they received as undergraduates and high school students exercised considerable impact on their vocabulary teaching while their graduate education, which they viewed tightly focused on teacher education, exerted less impact on their EFL teaching (including vocabulary teaching). In the following, the results will be reported from two perspectives. One is

related to the teachers' high school and undergraduate EFL education and the other is concerned with their graduate education.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, before starting to teach English, all the teacher participants had spent over ten years learning the language as learners of English as a foreign language. Their EFL learning experience mainly involves their high school and undergraduate education. Two major findings have been identified about these two periods of EFL education. One is that, as the participants put it, their formal undergraduate education impacted their teaching more than their high school education. The reason seems to be that at university, they majored in the English language and literature, thus devoting most of their time to learning the English language. In high school, however, they took English merely as a course to prepare for their National Matriculation Examinations. Moreover, the interview data suggests that the impact of their high school and undergraduate education on vocabulary teaching mainly involves the development of two components of their knowledge: pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge. To begin with, the data shows that the participants developed their pedagogical knowledge of vocabulary instruction under the influence of their formal high school and undergraduate education. For example, the participants stated that almost all the eleven techniques that they shared to teach vocabulary, as reported above, were based on their apprentice of observation in formal education. When they were students, their teachers mainly employed these techniques to teach them vocabulary. On the other hand, the data shows that some participants had negative perceptions about their apprentice of observation in high school or at university. One case worth mentioning is about Fangfang's understandings of vocabulary teaching. In the first interview, Fangfang

explicitly said that “I don’t teach vocabulary” (Fangfang, Interview 1, September 24, 2006). The observation data, however, shows that she invested lots of time in teaching vocabulary. In one post-observation interview, she clarified her view as follows:

I said ‘I don’t teach vocabulary’. I mean I don’t want to teach vocabulary like my teacher did when I was a college student. He taught vocabulary in this way: He read the text sentence by sentence to us. For the word he wanted to teach, he explained all the meanings to us and gave us many collocations he copied from dictionaries. From his vocabulary teaching, I learned nothing. (Fangfang, Interview 5, November 7, 2006)

In addition, most of the participants’ beliefs on how to teach and learn vocabulary were associated with their own vocabulary learning experience in high school and at university. The following are some specific instances of the vocabulary learning strategies the participants used when they were students. The source of Yao’s suggestion that vocabulary learning should integrate intensive vocabulary recitation into extensive reading was his learning experience as a university student. Yao’s frequent use of synonyms in vocabulary teaching was also related to his own learning experience:

As a university student, I often used synonyms to enlarge vocabulary. I took a lot of notes about synonyms. Now we have many books about synonyms in bookstores, but there were no such books when I was a student. I had to set up synonyms myself while reciting new words. (Yao, Stimulated Recall 2, December 12, 2006)

Lili’s suggestion of using a dictionary after several encounters of a new word was associated with her ineffective experience in the use of a dictionary when she was a

university student. Fangfang's argument that vocabulary should be learned through extensive reading and reading aloud rather than wordlist recitation is rooted in her vocabulary learning experience in high school and at university.

The interview data also reveals that the participants' formal high school and undergraduate education contributed to the development of their content knowledge, primarily involving their English proficiency in terms of vocabulary knowledge. Most of the participants stated that when they graduated from high school, their English vocabulary sizes ranged from 1500 to 3500 words. They also knew how to read a new word by referring to its phonetic transcripts. After their four-year undergraduate studying as English majors, their vocabulary sizes were 5000-8000. Most of them argued that after they studied the English language systematically at university, their vocabulary size was large enough for basic English communication (e.g., speaking and writing). The participants also pointed out that the university courses that contributed most to their vocabulary development were Intensive Reading and Extensive Reading. In Shasha's words, for example,

In the Intensive Reading course, the textbook my teacher chose had 100-200 new words in each passage. I spent a lot of time studying the new words in each passage. For example, I looked them up in a dictionary. I put the words together and recited them. Teachers also helped us review the words through quizzes, dictations, translation, and so on. In the Extensive Reading course, I also had many chances to see the words I learned, which also helped me review the words. (Shasha, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

Regarding their graduate education, most of the participants majored in applied linguistics and they viewed this period of education as their EFL teacher education, which aimed to develop their disciplinary knowledge in linguistics, language learning and teaching. One salient theme is that, as most of the participants argued, this stage of education has less impact on their EFL teaching, as reported in the section of Chapter 5 ‘Knowledge of the language system and the language learning system’. As to vocabulary teaching, the teacher participants also explicitly stated that during this stage, they did not take any course that was designed for vocabulary teaching. Though some of them took the course *Language Teaching Approaches*, they pointed out that the course focused on introducing general teaching methodologies without specifically involving vocabulary introduction. However, two participants (i.e., Lili and Fangfang) posited that only a couple of courses they took had some impact on their EFL vocabulary instruction. Lili argued that the course *History of English* she took was beneficial to her vocabulary teaching regarding the technique of word formation. In her words, “the course gave me some ideas about how to involve a word’s origin into vocabulary teaching, which can make vocabulary teaching more informative” (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Fangfang stated that the course *General Linguistics* she took partly helped her realize how to teach word formation rules.

Teaching Experience. The second source of EFL teachers’ knowledge is concerned with their EFL teaching experience. Table 6.5 presents a summary of the teachers’ EFL teaching experience as a source of their knowledge in vocabulary instruction. The data presented in the table indicates that the participants are heavily reliant on their own learning while teaching to develop vocabulary teaching knowledge.

Table 6.5. *Classification of sources of knowledge from teaching experience*

| Source | No. | Verbatim examples from transcripts |
|----------------------------------|-----|---|
| Own learning | 29 | When I began my EFL teaching, I didn't ask students to look at the syllables of a word. Later I found their spelling errors were often due to their mispronunciation of a syllable of the word... (Dandan) |
| Textbooks | 10 | I often see some words I don't know in the textbook I teach, so I look them up in a dictionary and learn new words through teaching... (Shasha) |
| Students' feedback | 8 | When I first integrated word affixes and roots into my teaching, I taught many each time. Later one of my students told me he couldn't learn so much each time ... (Yao) |
| Impact of teaching other courses | 4 | I began to involve word formation in teaching in 1999, when I was teaching the course <i>English Listening & Speaking for Science & Technology</i> After that, I started to teach word roots and affixes in other courses. (Lili) |
| Peer communication | 2 | I chatted with my colleague XXX and got some ideas about how to teach vocabulary and how to evaluate students' vocabulary teaching... (Dandan) |

For example, in Fangfang's case, her teaching of how to say a word reflected her own learning while teaching. As she recalled,

When I graduated, I knew how to say a word, but this knowledge wasn't systematic. I didn't know the rules like how to stress a word. When I first taught how to pronounce English words, I had no idea about the rules, so I had to read

some books about English pronunciation. Then I taught this while I was learning it. I think the first few years of my teaching is the time when I learned most about EFL teaching. (Fangfang, Interview 4, October 31, 2006)

Shasha's use of the technique *listing key words on the blackboard* is another example indicating her learning through teaching. As she stated, "I didn't use this technique before. I use it because I want students to know which words they need to command in this passage. Also this is a new way to teach vocabulary for me, which may make students feel fresh" (Shasha, Interview 3, October 24, 2006). Another example concerns how Dandan changed her attitudes towards vocabulary teaching. In her words, "I taught reading without focusing on vocabulary two years ago, but I found students' performance in the final exam was very poor, and students said that they learned little from my teaching. So now I focus on teaching vocabulary" (Dandan, Interview 4, November 2, 2006).

The participants' knowledge development in vocabulary instruction also relies on the use of textbooks. For instance, as they argued, the reading textbooks included various suggestions on how to teach vocabulary. In Yao's words, "the textbook I'm using to teach designs a variety of exercises about vocabulary (e.g., synonyms, word formation, and Chinese-English translation), which gives me some tips about how to teach vocabulary" (Yao, Interview 4, November 2, 2006). On the other hand, the participants also pointed out that they often encountered new words in the textbooks, which they needed to understand before teaching. This suggests that the teacher-participants could enlarge vocabulary while teaching the textbooks.

In addition, EFL teachers' knowledge growth in vocabulary instruction relies on students' feedback. This source mostly contributes to the development of their pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, other courses the participants taught besides the reading course were viewed as another source of their knowledge of vocabulary instruction. One example concerns Lili's use of the affixation technique in vocabulary teaching. Her knowledge development in this regard was impacted by her teaching of another course. Specifically, as she put it,

I began to involve word formation in teaching in 1999, when I was teaching the course *English Listening & Speaking for Science & Technology*. In that course, the texts have high vocabulary density. I looked up all the new words in a big dictionary. Gradually I began to pay attention to word roots and affixes listed in the dictionary. After that, I started to teach word roots and affixes in other courses. (Lili, Interview 4, October 31, 2006)

Finally, it was found that peer communication also impacted the participants' knowledge development in vocabulary instruction. For example, Dandan recalled her experience in communicating with her colleague to exchange ideas about how to teach vocabulary and how to evaluate vocabulary learning. As she said, "students suggested to me that I should teach more vocabulary to them. So I talked to XXX and asked her how she handled vocabulary in class. She told me some techniques she often used, like grouping words and dictation" (Dandan, Interview 5, November 9, 2006). Another example is concerned with Lili's use of the technique of semantic relationship to teach the synonyms *cheap* and *inexpensive*. As she recalled, her knowledge of the semantic

prosodies of these two synonyms was developed through communicating with her friend, who was a native English speaker.

Overall, it seems that the knowledge that the participants developed in vocabulary instruction through their teaching experience mainly focuses on their pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. As the participants argued, through teaching, they accumulated more knowledge on how to teach vocabulary and how to assess vocabulary learning. As regards their content knowledge (mainly referring to their English proficiency), the participants tended to argue that their teaching experience impacted their vocabulary knowledge in two ways. First, in their view, with an increase of teaching experience, their vocabulary size becomes decreased though they could develop some words through teaching their textbooks. They also stated that their knowledge about the high-frequency productive words in terms of word formation rules and phonological rules seems to become more systematic as they are teaching.

Personal Life Experience. The third source of EFL teachers' knowledge lies in their personal life experience. This source is represented by two dimensions, as shown in Table 6.6. One is concerned with the teachers' intuition. The interview data indicates that the participants occasionally relied on their intuition to determine, for example, what words to teach (e.g., Lili, Lin, Shasha, and Yao) and what roots and affixes to teach (e.g., Yao). The other dimension identified in the data is the participants' experience of studying abroad, especially in English-speaking countries. Admitting that their stay in these countries helped improve their English proficiency (e.g., speaking and listening), the participants also pointed out that this experience impacted their knowledge

development in vocabulary instruction. For example, as Dandan stated about her experience,

My one-year stay in London helped me realize that some common words are used in a very colloquial way. Like the word *go*, I learned the phrase *have a go*. From this experience, I learned we paid too much time to teaching formal English. So many students often use too formal words, which may sound weird to native English speakers. (Dandan, Interview 1, September 21, 2006)

It seems that the influence of EFL teachers' personal life experience centers primarily on the development of their content knowledge (mainly involving their English proficiency) and pedagogical knowledge.

Table 6.6. *Classification of sources of knowledge from personal life experience*

| Source | No. | Verbatim examples from transcripts |
|-------------------------------|-----|--|
| Intuition | 7 | I can feel if the word is commonly used or not at the first sight... (Shasha) |
| Experience of studying abroad | 6 | My one-year stay in London helped me realize that some common words are used in a very colloquial way...(Dandan) |

Research on Teaching. Another source of EFL teachers' knowledge in vocabulary instruction is associated with their research on teaching. Two dimensions were identified about this source (See Table 6.7): professional development and professional reading. As regards professional development, two participant (i.e., Lili and Fangfang) stated that the conferences, seminars, or workshops about EFL teaching and learning they attended

impacted their knowledge development in vocabulary instruction. For instance, Lili mentioned that in the workshops the program organized for teachers to exchange teaching ideas, she found some teachers' suggestions about EFL teaching useful for her. As she said, "in one workshop, XXX told us that for effective EFL teaching, the teacher should design a variety of activities. Then students wouldn't feel bored. ... I think it's true in EFL teaching, including vocabulary teaching" (Lili, Interview 1, September 22, 2006). Lili also stated that her use of the remember-students'-name strategy to develop in-class rapport with students was impacted by a presentation in a conference she attended.

Table 6.7. *Classification of sources of knowledge from research on teaching*

| Source | No. | Verbatim examples from transcripts |
|--------------------------|-----|--|
| Professional development | 5 | Sometimes our EFL teaching program organized the workshops for us to exchange ideas about EFL teaching, like how to teach reading or how to teach vocabulary... (Lili) |
| Professional reading | 3 | I read a paper about immersion language teaching, which gave me some idea about teaching, so I try to speak English in class to teach it, also including vocabulary ... (Fangfang) |

Professional reading is another dimension of the source of research on teaching. The papers or books the participants read influenced their vocabulary teaching. For instance, Fangfang's belief of using the English language in class was impacted by a paper about an immersion language learning theory she read. Yao's use of the technique of affixation demonstrates the impact of his professional reading. As Yao recalled,

When I was a student, my teacher seldom taught me word roots or affixes in class.

When I began to teach, I didn't teach them either. But I started to teach it four or five years ago after I read some books about affixation. (Yao, Interview 1, September 22, 2006)

To sum up, four major sources impacting EFL teachers' knowledge development in vocabulary instruction have been identified: formal education, teaching experience, personal life experience, and research on teaching. It seems that the most influential sources are the EFL teachers' formal education (specifically referring to their high school and undergraduate education) and teaching experience. The impacts of these sources mainly involve three components of the teachers' knowledge in vocabulary instruction: pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge.

Summary

This chapter elaborated upon EFL teachers' knowledge about vocabulary instruction. The following issues have been examined in detail: what to learn about vocabulary and how to learn vocabulary, what to teach about vocabulary and how to teach vocabulary, how EFL teachers' knowledge about vocabulary instruction is related to their classroom behaviors, and how their knowledge is developed. Overall, based upon what was reported in the present chapter, five major findings, which are associated with the research questions posed in Chapter 2 about Chinese EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary teaching, have been identified as follows:

1. The teacher participants have well-developed knowledge of EFL vocabulary with regard to almost all the aspects of knowing a word.
2. They have well-established belief systems about how to learn and teach vocabulary.

3. Their beliefs about vocabulary teaching tend to be consistent with their vocabulary teaching practices while inconsistencies have also been identified particularly in the LET's vocabulary classroom teaching.
4. Their knowledge about vocabulary instruction is derived from a variety of sources, of which they viewed formal EFL education and teaching practices as the two most influential.
5. The "excellent" EFL teachers' vocabulary teaching is different from that of the "very good" EFL teachers' in terms of knowledge of students, management of learning, and teaching techniques.
6. The participants' individual differences (e.g., research interests, academic degrees, experience of studying abroad) seem to impact their belief systems about vocabulary teaching.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a discussion is first conducted about the major findings reported in Chapter 6. On this basis, the present chapter also elaborates upon the implications of this dissertation study. Finally, this chapter concludes with some suggestions for future research about EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction.

Discussion

This section focuses on the major findings addressing the research questions of the present study. First of all, the EFL teacher participants have well-developed repertoires of vocabulary knowledge. As the results reported in Chapter 6 indicate, the teacher-participants' understandings of what to learn and what to teach about a word are mostly consistent with what researchers maintain in terms of the aspects of knowing a word (e.g., Decarrico, 2001; Nation, 1990, 2001, 2005). To be specific, the components of knowing a word include knowing the form of a word (i.e., spelling, pronunciation, and word parts), knowing the meanings of a word, and knowing how a word is used (its syntactic feature, collocations, and pragmatic usage). The teacher participants' teaching practices also demonstrate that their teaching generally involves a word's spelling, meanings, syntactic features, and collocations. As regards a word's pronunciation, whether or not the participants' teaching includes it tends to depend on their knowledge of students (e.g., whether or not students are proficient at pronunciation).

However, one area that is inconsistent with researchers' argument lies in the pragmatic usage of a word, particularly involving a word's semantic prosody (e.g., whether the word is formal or informal, polite or rude, negative or positive in semantic

prosody). It was observed that most of the participants seldom concentrated on this area in vocabulary teaching. This finding, as the data shows, may be due to the teachers' lack of knowledge in this domain, which confirms Tsui's (2003) argument that teachers' subject matter knowledge affects their teaching decisions and teaching beliefs. Other researchers also have similar findings. For example, Numrich (1996) and Borg (2001) both found that the teachers who felt their own grammatical knowledge to be inadequate avoided teaching grammar.

Second, the EFL teacher participants have well-established belief systems about how to learn and teach vocabulary. They not only hold the general principles of effective EFL teaching (e.g., being interactive and in rapport with students) but also accept the principles of communicative language teaching, which advocates an inductive approach rather than a deductive approach in vocabulary teaching. Meanwhile, they incorporate traditional ways of vocabulary teaching (e.g., dictation, translation, word formation, and reading aloud). The participants' integrated vocabulary teaching approach, which combines incidental vocabulary teaching with explicit vocabulary teaching and communicative language teaching with traditional language teaching, matches other researchers' findings (e.g., Ao, 2005; Tong, 2000; Wang, Han & Liu, 2007; Yan, Zhou, & Dai, 2007). In addition, data analysis reveals that the participants' individual differences, particularly in terms of their academic background, research interest, and experiences of staying in English-speaking countries, may exert considerable impact on their beliefs of vocabulary teaching and classroom behaviors. For example, their various research interests contribute to their recommendations of different types of extensive

reading materials to students. This finding is consistent with Gao's (2007) research on Chinese EFL teachers' knowledge about grammar teaching.

Third, the EFL teacher participants' beliefs about vocabulary teaching, in most cases, tend to be consistent with their vocabulary teaching practices, which matches Johnson's (1992a) finding in the study about ESL teachers' beliefs and practices about reading instruction. Regarding the relationship between their vocabulary knowledge and their teaching practices, as reported in Chapter 6, the participants' actual vocabulary teaching involves various aspects of vocabulary that they maintained teaching and learning should focus on though their understandings of students' backgrounds may exercise some impacts on to what extent they need to teach these aspects of vocabulary. Consistencies have also been identified between the teacher participants' beliefs, especially those of the "excellent" teachers', about effective management of EFL teaching and their teaching practices regarding vocabulary instruction. For example, for the purpose of interactive vocabulary teaching, the "excellent" teachers tried to design interactive activities and motivate students to participate. Moreover, the integrated vocabulary teaching approach the participants employed, as discussed above, demonstrates another consistency between the teachers' beliefs about how to teach vocabulary and their classroom behaviors. However, inconsistencies have also been identified particularly in the "very good" teachers' vocabulary classroom teaching. The inconsistencies concern their management of vocabulary learning in class. For example, the "very good" teachers maintained that for effective teaching, affixes and roots should not be taught intensively but in teaching practices, they (e.g., Deng and Fangfang) tended

to employ an intensive affixation teaching method. Another example is Deng's integration of teaching vocabulary into the technique of dictation.

Finally, the EFL teacher participants' knowledge about vocabulary teaching is developed by drawing on a variety of sources. As reported in Chapter 6, the teacher participants viewed previous EFL learning experience (i.e., EFL undergraduate education and EFL high school education) and EFL teaching experiences as the two predominating sources of knowledge about vocabulary instruction. This finding echoed other researchers' studies concerning ESL teacher knowledge (e.g., Tsui, 2003) and EFL teacher knowledge (e.g., Gao, 2007). It is also worthwhile to mention that almost all of the participants considered their vocabulary learning experiences as supportive of their vocabulary instruction. There are also a few instances reflecting their negative attitudes towards their vocabulary learning experiences (e.g., Lili's unhappy experience of vocabulary recitation, and Fangfang's negative perception of her teachers' vocabulary teaching method). Moreover, though the teacher participants perceived EFL teaching experience as an important source of their knowledge development, it was also found that the participants did not highly value peer communication as a source of their knowledge, for example, through classroom observation. The participants stated that they seldom observed their colleagues' teaching. Furthermore, most of the teacher participants did not seem to value coursework of EFL teacher education as a source of their knowledge. In fact, only two of the participants (i.e., Lili and Fangfang) explicitly admitted the impact of one or two courses of their EFL teacher education on their EFL vocabulary teaching practices. In the participants' views, the two major reasons for this perception, as reported in Chapter 5, include: the ineffective combination of curricula in MA TEFL

programs with EFL teaching and unqualified EFL teacher educators. This finding matches Gao's (2007) research. Gao (2007) also maintained that most EFL professional education programs in China "cannot be claimed to be satisfactory" (p. 111). In addition to the two reasons, another possible explanation may be that the participants were unaware of knowledge development about vocabulary instruction. Through teaching practices and reflections, the teacher participants might have unconsciously integrated relevant theories they learned in coursework into their teaching beliefs. Therefore, it is possible that due to their unawareness of the integration and graduation a decade ago, they made no mention of the impact of EFL teacher education. Research on teaching was also not widely perceived as a source of the participants' knowledge of vocabulary instruction though Chinese universities attach considerable importance to research (Gao, 2007) and despite a large body of literature on EFL vocabulary teaching (e.g., Ao, 2005; Gu, 2003, 2005; Tong, 2001; Wang, 2001; Xu & Li, 2007). Only one participant (i.e., Fangfang) stated that a journal paper she read impacted her belief of using the target language to teach English, including vocabulary. One of the major reasons for this perception may be that Chinese EFL university teachers, as Gao (2007) and Zhang, Wang, Guo, & Yu (2003) have found, have not realized the importance of research and are lacking in motivation to do research except that they do it mainly for professional promotions. Another possible explanation is that EFL teaching research findings, as Gao (2007) argued, are not always consistent or compatible with teachers' experiences and understandings. Lightbown (2000) also maintained that when research is conducted in contexts that do not reflect realities with which teachers are familiar, it is likely to alienate teachers.

Implications

In this section, my focus is on elaborating upon the implications of the present study. Two major implications will be discussed. One concerns Chinese EFL teacher education programs and the other is associated with Chinese EFL teaching programs.

Implications for EFL Teacher Education Programs

Based on this study's findings, there are several implications for EFL teacher education programs in China. One implication concerns how to integrate the aspect of vocabulary teaching within Chinese EFL teacher education. First, it seems that Chinese EFL teacher educators need to improve curriculum design options for EFL teacher education programs, highlighting the role of vocabulary in EFL learning and teaching. As the participants reported, vocabulary occupies a significant position in both EFL learning and teaching, which is consistent with other researchers' findings (e.g., Knight, 1994; Marcaro, 2003; Schmitt, 2000). Chinese EFL teacher education programs, however, do not provide sufficient attention to the teaching of vocabulary. For example, the participants complained that few courses they took in formal teacher education focused on vocabulary learning and teaching. To meet EFL teachers' needs, it seems to be necessary that Chinese EFL teacher education programs should revise and expand curriculum design in this area. For instance, courses in *Language Teaching Methods* may provide teacher candidates with practical suggestions on how to teach vocabulary along with introducing them general teaching methodologies. Various vocabulary teaching techniques, as identified in this study, may also be introduced in this course.

Second, EFL teacher educators need to assist teacher candidates in developing teaching proficiency in the area of vocabulary instruction. One example is related to EFL

teachers' knowledge of pragmatic use of vocabulary, particularly involving the aspect of semantic prosodies of vocabulary. As the data indicates, the EFL teacher participants were less proficient in this knowledge. The major reason identified in this study is that the intuition of EFL teachers as non-native speakers of English differs from that of native speakers of English. Their intuitions are less reliable and tend to fail them in detecting the semantic prosodic information of a word. To help Chinese EFL teachers develop knowledge of semantic prosody, researchers (e.g., Partington, 1998; Xiao & Mcenery, 2004) suggest that developments in corpus studies should be integrated into EFL teacher education. The preliminary step may be to educate EFL teachers, helping them realize that corpus studies can provide them with tools to develop vocabulary knowledge. EFL teacher candidates can be trained to use data-driven approaches (i.e., using corpora in language learning and teaching) (Johns, 1990). Such approaches focus on vocabulary teaching and learning and have been widely accepted in ESL settings. They also can consult various corpus-based dictionaries (e.g., *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1995), which tend to include explicit semantic prosodic information (Partington, 1998). Another example concerns EFL teachers' lack of knowledge of word formation or affixation. This study has found that all the participants perceived word formation analysis to be an important strategy for vocabulary development. However, some reported that they lack confidence in this knowledge. As a result, teacher educators need to integrate the knowledge of word formation into EFL teacher education, focusing on what word formation is as well as how to teach it. One more example involves EFL teachers' lack of knowledge of students in vocabulary teaching. As the data indicates, some 'very good' teachers tend to teach vocabulary without paying sufficient attention to

students' English proficiency, needs, and backgrounds. EFL teacher educators, therefore, need to raise teacher candidates' awareness that knowledge of students plays a significant role in effective EFL teaching, including vocabulary teaching.

Another implication lies in how to combine theoretical validity with practical EFL teaching (including vocabulary instruction) in Chinese EFL teacher education. As reported in Chapters 5 and 6, the EFL teacher participants complained about the practicality of the courses they took in EFL teacher education programs. They argued that the linguistics courses were of little use to their EFL classroom teaching, including vocabulary teaching. Gao (2007) also pointed out that the coursework designed in Chinese EFL teacher education programs are mainly taught on the basis of decontextualized theories that teacher candidates perceive to be irrelevant to their daily practices. It is often difficult for teacher candidates to comprehend the concepts of formal theories of teaching. Other empirical evidence also shows that prospective teachers often resist theory, arguing that what they need is practical teaching skills (Hedgcock, 2002; Johnson, 1996). Crandall (2000) further claims that "there is a growing sense that language teacher education programs have failed to prepare teachers for the realities of the classroom" (p. 35). Therefore, to solve this problem, EFL teacher education programs in China may need to reform. Concrete and relevant connections between theories (particularly regarding courses in linguistics) and EFL teaching realities should be developed in EFL teacher education programs. Thus, teacher educators have responsibilities to investigate whether and to what extent their course content addresses teacher candidates' needs and what difficulties the candidates may experience in EFL

teaching, including vocabulary instruction. In this sense, teacher educators themselves may need to reconsider their teaching and make needed changes.

EFL teacher education programs in China also need to cultivate teacher candidates' research awareness and research interest, particularly involving vocabulary instruction. As reported in Chapters 5 and 6, EFL teachers demonstrated considerable resistance against theoretical knowledge about linguistics and language learning while they were taking MA courses. Thus, developing teacher candidates' interest in research may activate their interest in theoretical knowledge, and help them value and become actively engaged in academic studies about EFL learning and teaching (Gao, 2007). As researchers (e.g., Nunan, 1990; Roberts, 1998) posit, EFL teacher candidates participating in research may become more critical and reflective about their own learning and teaching practices. Meanwhile, along with developing teacher candidates' research interest, EFL teacher education programs need to help them construct their own theories of teaching through drawing on their own knowledge, skills, training and experiences (Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

Moreover, researchers and EFL teacher educators in China need to work on reconceptualizing the Chinese EFL teacher knowledge base. It is often the case that the framework of a knowledge base in a Chinese EFL teacher education program seldom changes once it has been established (Gao, 2007). This may be one reason why EFL teachers, as reported in Chapter 5, complained about ineffectiveness of their formal teacher education. Johnson (1999) also stated that most language teacher education programs "present teachers with a quantifiable amount of knowledge, usually in the form of general theories and methods that are characterized as being applicable to any

language learning or teaching context” (p.8). It seems that EFL teacher educators and researchers in China have not completely recognized the nature of knowledge base as situated, dynamic, or contextualized despite Freeman and Johnson’s (1998) reconceptualization of the knowledge base focusing on the social, cultural, and political context. Therefore, EFL teacher education programs in China also “should above all acknowledge the situated, process-oriented, contextualized nature of the knowledge base” (Johnston & Goettsch, 2000, pp. 464-465).

Finally, researchers and EFL teacher educators need to be aware of some possible misconceptions about EFL teacher knowledge research. One misconception concerns EFL teachers’ misunderstandings of language proficiency. As the data indicates in this study, some teachers tend to overemphasize the role of language proficiency in EFL teaching and comparatively neglect other components of teacher knowledge (e.g., pedagogical knowledge, PCK, and knowledge of students). To be specific, in vocabulary teaching practices, it was observed that some “very good” teachers tend to pay less attention to teaching techniques and students’ proficiency, needs, and interests. EFL teacher educators, therefore, need to develop teacher candidates’ awareness of the roles of other components of teacher knowledge in EFL teaching in addition to content knowledge. Another area that merits researchers’ and educators’ attention is the overemphasis of a knowledge transmission model in Chinese EFL teacher education programs. This model is characterized by educator-centeredness rather than teacher-candidate-centeredness. The application of this model ignores prospective teachers’ beliefs and cognitions. Researchers (e.g., Mann, 2005; Roberts, 1998) also argue that knowledge is not in any simple way transferred from teacher educators to teacher

candidates and that knowledge is at least partly constructed through engagement with experience, reflection and collaboration. Therefore, it is necessary that the knowledge transfer-oriented language teacher education programs in China should give way to more comprehensive ones. In other words, more work will be needed to explore new models and approaches to EFL teacher education that place prospective teachers at the center of the curriculum. For this purpose, as Velez-Rendon (2002) proposes, a reflective approach, which “views prospective teachers as active agents of their learning-to-teach and provides the groundwork for continuous self-development” (p.463), can be used in the preparation of EFL teachers. Specifically, the reflective approach will “engage teacher candidates in developing their personal theories of teaching, systematically examining their own decision process and teaching practices, and developing critical thinking skills that lead to self-awareness and change” (Velez-Rendon, 2002, p.463).

Implications for EFL Teaching Programs

This study also has implications for Chinese EFL teaching programs. First of all, the teaching programs need to take into account how to develop in-service EFL teachers’ content knowledge while they are teaching. In the study, participants reported that their vocabulary size tends to decrease as their lives become busy with EFL teaching responsibilities. Classroom teaching takes up considerable time and leaves limited time for private study of vocabulary. Another fact is that there is limited exposure to the target language in the EFL setting. Therefore, EFL teaching programs need to provide opportunities for EFL teachers to develop content knowledge (e.g., sending them to English-speaking countries).

Another implication is that EFL teaching programs need to expand their efforts to promote on-going professional development. Based on what was found in this study, EFL teaching programs in China should assume responsibility for developing increased opportunities for in-service EFL teachers to learn by teaching in supportive settings. There are two major areas that the EFL teaching programs may focus on in helping EFL teachers learn how to teach (including vocabulary teaching). First and foremost, the programs should take responsibility to support teachers' collaborative or peer learning and motivate them to participate more often in in-service professional developments. As reported in Chapter 6, EFL teachers who learn how to teach through teaching are mainly engaged in their individual learning. They are less involved in collaborative learning or peer learning. The advocates of teachers' collaborative or peer learning (e.g., Crandall, 1998; Nunan, 1992b) maintain that interactions among teachers can make positive contributions to teacher learning and that collaborative or peer learning can foster the development of critical thinking. Thus, developing opportunities for teachers' collaborative or peer learning can be beneficial for in-service EFL teachers. One measure the programs may take, for example, is to motivate teachers to conduct peer observations of teaching and learn how to improve EFL teaching from each other through formative observations and subsequent dialogue. Researchers (e.g., Crandall, 1998) argue that peer observation is a powerful source of insight and discovery and can help EFL teachers develop new strategies of teaching (including vocabulary instruction).

In addition, what was reported in Chapter 6 indicates that EFL teacher participants are seldom impacted by research on EFL teaching (including vocabulary teaching) although most of the EFL teaching programs in China value academic research

and require that teachers publish a certain number of research papers before their academic promotions. Therefore, EFL teaching programs need to take measures to promote EFL teachers to become classroom researchers (Cross, 1990; Nunan, 1993). As Cross (1990) argues, language teachers “bear the brunt of changes” in teaching (p. 33) and should be able to evaluate these changes and defend the teaching approaches they are using in “an objective and scientific way” (p. 33). Widdowson (1997) also maintains that “teachers develop as they research” (p.126), which emphasizes that language teachers’ participation in research can help them become reflective practitioners and facilitate their understanding of language teaching.

Suggestions for Future Research

This is an interpretative study exploring EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction from EFL teachers’ perspectives. This research provides a general picture of EFL teacher knowledge in this domain. Regarding the four research questions addressed by the present study, more in-depth investigations about teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction will be needed to explore the four and other areas such as the relationships between EFL teachers’ planning for vocabulary teaching and their actual classroom teaching of vocabulary, the effectiveness of vocabulary teaching techniques used in vocabulary teaching, and the impacts of vocabulary learning evaluation on vocabulary learning.

In addition, this study examined EFL teachers’ knowledge of vocabulary instruction by focusing on the reading courses they taught. Another future research issue may involve exploring EFL teachers’ knowledge of vocabulary instruction by centering on their listening teaching. Researchers (e.g., Nation, 2001; Vidal, 2003) have claimed

that for native speakers of a language, vocabulary is developed mainly through reading and listening and for L2 learners, listening can also be used for vocabulary development. Two of the participants in this study (i.e., Lili and Yao) also suggested that in addition to reading, listening can be an important means for EFL students' vocabulary development. Therefore, more research is needed to explore EFL teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction in contexts of teaching EFL listening.

Moreover, this study focuses on exploring the vocabulary instruction knowledge of experienced EFL teachers, whose teaching tends to include more than a decade of classroom experience. To develop a more complete picture of teacher knowledge in this regard, more research may be needed from the perspectives of inexperienced or pre-service EFL teachers. Furthermore, for the purpose of triangulation, further research can be conducted by examining EFL students' perceptions about teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction.

In terms of research design, this qualitative study employed the techniques of interviews, observations, and stimulated recall for data collection. To enhance the analysis of data, future research may also apply the technique of member checking (i.e., consulting with participants throughout data analysis in order to solicit their feedback on emerging findings) (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Thus, by consulting with participants, credibility and trustworthiness of the research will be enhanced.

Finally, as a qualitative study, the findings of this research cannot be generalized in a broad EFL context, but they can be utilized as a basis for further quantitative studies for the purpose of generalization. For example, Meijer, Verloop, and Beijaard (1999, 2001) have employed both qualitative and quantitative methods in their serial studies of

language teacher knowledge. Given these limitations, what was found in the present study can be used to design a questionnaire for future quantitative studies. In the future, quantitative methods can be integrated into this line of research.

Concluding Remarks

Following the line of enquiry about L2 teacher knowledge in the teaching of different curricular areas (i.e., grammar, reading, and writing), the present research expands studies of L2 teachers' knowledge base by investigating EFL teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction in the mainland of China. It focuses on four areas: teachers' beliefs about vocabulary learning, their understandings of vocabulary teaching, the relationships between their beliefs of vocabulary instruction and their classroom behaviors, and the sources of their knowledge of vocabulary instruction. The study has at least three potential contributions. First, this study is probably one of the first attempts to investigate teacher knowledge of vocabulary instruction in the field of L2 teacher education. It helps us understand EFL teachers' knowledge development in vocabulary instruction. Second, the study provides information about L2 teachers' knowledge in one less studied context, i.e., EFL vocabulary teaching in mainland China. The third contribution resides in the research method. Most previous studies of Chinese EFL teacher knowledge employed questionnaire and survey techniques, but failed to capture the information grounded in teachers' natural behaviors in language classrooms. The use of observations, interviews, and stimulated recall to collect data in this study, therefore, serves as an impetus for enriching techniques to examine Chinese EFL teacher knowledge.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Protocol for the Pilot Study

(Adapted from Borg, 1998a)

Section 1: Education

1. What do you recall about your experience of learning English as a foreign language at school?
2. Did you study any other foreign languages? What do you recall about these lessons?
3. What about EFL high-school, undergraduate, and graduate education in China? Did the study of the English language play any role there?
4. Do you feel that your own education as a student had any influence on the way you taught EFL?
5. What qualifications do you think an EFL teacher in China should have before he/she starts teaching EFL? How does he/she develop the qualifications?

Section 2: Entry into the Profession and Development as a Teacher

1. How and why did you become an EFL teacher?
2. Tell me about your formal teacher training experiences.
3. What were the greatest influences on your development as an EFL teacher?
4. What qualities do you think a qualified EFL teacher should have? How does the teacher develop the qualities?
5. What kind of EFL teacher do you think Chinese students prefer to have?

Section 3: Reflections on Teaching

1. What do you feel was the most satisfying aspect of teaching EFL, and what was the hardest part of the job?
2. What do you feel were your strengths as an EFL teacher, and your weaknesses?
3. Can you describe one particularly good experience you had as an EFL teacher, and one particularly unhappy one?
4. What is your idea of a 'successful' EFL lesson in China?

5. Do you have any preferences in terms of the types of students you like to teach in China?

Section 4: The School

1. Did the school you worked for promote any particular style of teaching?
2. How did the school help you learn how to teach?
3. Were there any restrictions on the kinds of materials you used or on the content and organization of your lessons?
4. Did students come here expecting a particular type of language course?

Appendix B

Consent Form approved by the Institutional Review Board (English and Chinese versions)

Georgia State University
Department of Applied Linguistics and ESL
Informed Consent Form

Title: In Search of EFL Teachers' Knowledge of Vocabulary Instruction

Principal Investigator: Dr. John Murphy

Student Principal Investigator: Weimin Zhang

I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate how EFL teachers develop their knowledge in vocabulary instruction. You are invited to participate because you are teaching English in China. A total of six participants will be recruited for this study. Participation will require 5 hours of your time over a 16-week semester.

II. Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed five times about your teaching practices and your teaching will be observed six times. Two of the 6 observed classes will also be digitally video recorded. The first interview will last around one hour and the other interviews around 30 minutes each time. The student investigator, Weimin Zhang, will conduct this research. The interviews will be conducted at your preferred time.

III. Risks:

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life. You might feel uneasy in front of my video camera if you have never been video taped. If this happens, I will discontinue recording immediately.

IV. Benefits:

Participation in this study may benefit you personally. This study may help you reflect on your teaching, and thus improve your teaching. Overall, we hope to gain information about how Chinese EFL teachers develop their knowledge in language teaching, which contributes to the research of language teacher education.

V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. You have the right to not be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. Your participation or declining to participate will not affect your pay, employment, or status at Tsinghua university



VI. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. We will use a pseudonym rather than your name on study records. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be summarized and reported in group form. You will not be identified personally. Only the investigators will have access to the information you provide. The digitally audio- and video-recorded data will be stored in the student investigator's personal laptop and the computer is password- and firewall-protected. These data will be deleted and destroyed as soon as this study is completed.

VII. Contact Persons:

Call Dr. John Murphy at 404-651-3224 or esljmm@langate.gsu.edu, or Weimin Zhang at 1-404-651-3650 (Atlanta) or 8610-62784037 (Beijing) or eslwzz@langate.gsu.edu or zhangwm@tsinghua.edu.cn, if you have questions about this study. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner in the Office of Research Integrity at 404-463-0674 or svogtner1@gsu.edu.

VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

Participant

Date

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent

Date



乔治亚州立大学
应用语言学系
知情同意书

题目：中国英语教师词汇教学知识结构的调查分析

主要研究人：John Murphy 博士

学生研究人：张为民

I. 目的:

今邀请你参加一项研究。这项研究的目的是了解中国英语教师词汇教学知识结构形成与发展。你被邀请参加因为你是教授英语。这项为期 16 周的研究将需要你花 5 小时的时间。我们将会邀请大约 6 人参加此研究。

II. 步骤:

如果你选择参加，我们将对你采访 5 次，听课 6 次，其中教学录像 2 次。第一次采访持续 1 小时，其他采访每次约 30 分钟。本研究由学生研究者张为民收集材料。你可以在你认为合适的时候参加采访。

III. 风险: 参加本研究的风险不会比在日常生活中遇到的大。教学录像时，如果你以前没有该经历，可能会感到不适。如果有此情况发生，我们会马上停止录像。

IV. 益处: 本研究对你也许有益。会帮你重新思考，以改进教学。总的看来，我们就中国英语教师在语言教学过程中知识的增长收集信息，进行研究，将对外语教师教育的研究大有益处。

V. 自愿参加和退出: 参加本研究完全出于自愿。你有权拒绝参加。如果在研究过程中你改变主意，你可以随时退出。你也可以不回答某些问题。

VI. 保密原则: 你填的所有信息将得到很好地保护。在处理数据中，我们会使用一个研究编号，而不是你的姓名或任何信息。关于你的任何个人信息都不会在我们日后的出版物中出现。只有研究者能看到你的数据。对你的录音和录像数字材料都会保存在用于处理数据的研究者私人电脑中，电脑有密码和防火墙保护。本研究完成，这些材料将立刻销毁。

VII. 联系人: 如有问题，请联系 John Murphy (404-651-3224 或 esljjmm@langate.gsu.edu) 或 张为民 (1-404-651-3650 (亚特兰大), 8610-62784037 (北京), eslwzz@langate.gsu.edu 或 zhangwm@tsinghua.edu.cn)。



如果你有有关研究者权利的问题，请联系大学核审会（IRB）(404-463-0674 或 reosev@langate.gsu.edu)。该核审会保护一切试验参与者的权利。

VIII. 实验参与者留底: 你将得到一份本同意书。

如果你愿意参加，请签名。

参加者

日期

主要研究人或实验人

日期



Appendix C

Guide Questions for the Preobservation Interview

(Adapted from Borg (1998a) and Zhang (2005))

Section 1: Education

1. What do you recall about your experience of learning English as a foreign language at school?
 - a) What approaches were used?
 - b) Was there any formal analysis of language?
2. Did you study any other foreign languages? What do you recall about these lessons?
 - c) What kinds of methods were used?
 - d) Do you recall whether you enjoyed such lessons or not?
3. What about high-school education? University? Did the study of the English language play any role there?
 - e) How was vocabulary taught?
 - f) How did you learn vocabulary?
5. Do you feel that your own education as a student has had any influence on the way you teach today?
6. Have you ever been to other countries? If yes, how did this experience impact your English teaching?

Section 2: Entry into the Profession and Development as a Teacher

1. How and why did you become an EFL teacher?
 - a) What recollections do you have about your earliest teaching experience?
 - b) Were these particularly positive or negative?
 - c) What kinds of teaching methods and materials did you use?
2. Tell me about your formal teacher training experiences.
 - d) Did they promote a particular way of teaching?
 - e) Did they encourage participants to approach vocabulary in any particular way?
 - f) Which aspects of the course did you find most memorable?
3. What have been the greatest influences on your development as a teacher?
4. What qualities do you think a qualified EFL teacher should have?
5. What kind of EFL teacher do you think students prefer to have?

Section 3: Reflections on Teaching

1. What do you feel is the most satisfying aspect of teaching EFL, and what is the hardest part of the job?
 - g) What about vocabulary teaching?
2. What do you feel your strengths as an EFL teacher are, and your weaknesses?
3. Can you describe one particularly good experience you have had as an EFL teacher, and one particularly unhappy one?
4. What is your idea of a 'successful' lesson?
5. Do you have any preferences in terms of the types of students you like to teach?

Section 4: The School

1. Does the school you work for promote any particular style of teaching?
2. Are there any restrictions on the kinds of materials you use or on the content and organization of your lessons?
3. Do students come here expecting a particular type of language course?
 - a) What about vocabulary?

Section 5: Vocabulary Instruction

1. Which do you think is the most important in EFL college teaching: reading, vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, or writing?
 - a) What role do you think vocabulary plays in EFL learning?
2. What do you think vocabulary learning involves? How do you judge that your students have commanded the vocabulary you require them to learn?
3. What do you think vocabulary teaching involves?
4. If your students asked you how to enlarge English vocabulary, what suggestions would you give them?
5. What type of vocabulary do you think you need to teach? What type of vocabulary don't you think you need to teach?
6. How do you teach English vocabulary in your class?
7. What strategies do you usually use to evaluate students' vocabulary learning?

Appendix D

Guide Questions for Post-Observation Interviews

(Adapted from Nelms, 2001)

Section 1: Overall Teaching

1. In light of your instructional goals, how do you think this lesson went?
2. What do you think the teaching methods you used went?
3. What do you think the activities you designed went?
4. What do you think the teaching materials you used went?
5. Did you depart from anything you had planned to do during the class period? If so, when and why?
6. If you could teach this class period again to the same class,
 - a) What would you do differently? Why?
 - b) What would you do the same? Why?

Section 2: Vocabulary Teaching

1. Why did you teach these words in this lesson?
2. Why did you use X to teach Y?
3. How do you think you got the idea about using X to teach Y?
4. Do you think that you were successful in using X to teach Y in the way that you intended?
5. Could there have been a different way to teach Y?
6. Would this have had the same effect in the classroom?
7. If you could teach this class period again to the same class,
 - a) What would you do differently about vocabulary teaching? Why?
 - b) What would you do the same about vocabulary teaching? Why?
8. Based on what you taught about vocabulary in this lesson, what do you plan to do next with this class?

Appendix E

Guide Questions for Stimulated Recall Interviews

(Adapted from Nelms, 2001)

1. What were you doing here?
2. What was the purpose? / Why were you doing this?
3. Why did you teach this word here?
4. Do you think that you were successful in using X to teach Y in the way that you intended?
5. Why did you use X to teach Y?
6. How do you think you got the idea about using X to teach Y?
7. Could there have been a different way to teach Y?
8. Would this have had the same effect in the classroom?
9. Why did you teach this word here?
10. How do you think the students felt when you handled the word in this way?
11. Do you remember how the student actually responded?
12. Overall, how successful was the lesson?

Appendix F

Examples of Using the Techniques in Vocabulary Learning Evaluation

Appendix F1

Dictation

Directions: There are 10 words for dictation. Each word will be read three times.

1. scholarship
2. substitute
3. deposit
4. confident
5. sour
6. evidence
7. eligible
8. confront
9. option
10. donation

Appendix F2

English-Chinese Translation

Directions: Translate the following sentences into Chinese. Pay special attention to the underlined words or phrases in your translation.

1. It speaks more plainly than words.
2. Time communicates in many ways.
3. It is not customary to telephone someone early in the morning.
4. Chinese government attaches great importance to education
5. It occurred to him that parts of the day have different meanings in different cultures.
6. I would like to extend my personal invitation to you to attend our conference.
7. It may be considered foolish to make an appointment too far in advance.
8. Misunderstandings arise between people from cultures that treat time differently.

Appendix F3

Chinese-English Translation

Directions: Translate the following Chinese sentences into English by using the words or phrases in the blanks.

1. 有人告诉我，他成功地通过了这次重要的考试。(inform)
2. 这个老师最近身体不好。我们需要找个老师替他。(substitute)
3. 他的讲话半小时前就结束了。(wind up)
4. 没有多少人有资格申请这个职位。(eligible; apply for)
5. 最近物价飞涨。(soar)

Appendix F4

Word Formation

Directions: Write down the derivatives of the following words:

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|
| 1. instruct (v.) | n. _____ | adj. _____ |
| 2. compare (v.) | n. _____ | adj. _____ |
| 3. profession (n.) | adj. _____ | |
| 4. fault (n.) | adj. _____ | |
| 5. flexible (adj.) | n. _____ | |
| 6. accurate (adj.) | n. _____ | |
| 7. fulfillment (n.) | v. _____ | |
| 8. sympathetic (a.) | n. _____ | |

Appendix F5

Word Formation and Semantic Relationship

Directions: Write down the antonyms of the following words by adding a prefix to each word.

1. fortunate
2. responsible
3. legal
4. polite
5. forgettable
6. natural
7. important
8. understand
9. possible
10. lucky

Appendix F6

Word Formation

Directions: Choose the correct word to fit into each sentence, using the proper form.

1. value, to value, valuable
 - a. The information has proved to be of much _____ to him.
 - b. The manager has always _____ your friendship very highly.
 - c. Her supervisor finds that book very _____ for her study.
 - d. Friendship is beyond all money _____.
2. polite, impolite, politeness, politely
 - a. One could always rely on him to be _____ and do the right thing.
 - b. I do expect reasonable _____ and consideration.
 - c. After knocking at the door _____, he went in.

Appendix F7

Collocation

Directions: Choose one of the following words to fill in the blanks in the following phrases. Some of the phrases are provided with their Chinese translation.

in, to, at, make, extend, meet, keep, run, employ

1. Arrive ___ a solution
2. ___ a phone call (打电话)
3. Attach great importance ___ education
4. It occurred ___ him that ...
5. Play an important role ___ social life.
6. ___ an appointment (定时间见面)
7. ___ an invitation to a dinner party (邀请参加晚宴)
8. ___ an apology (道歉)
9. Promises to ___ deadlines and appointments are taken seriously in the USA.
10. We should ___ this in mind.

Appendix F8

Semantic Relationships: Synonyms

Directions: Match the synonyms of the following words:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. claim (v.) | a) noticeable |
| 2. influence (v.) | b) actual |
| 3. stainless | c) maintain |
| 4. concrete (adj.) | d) have an impact on |
| 5. striking | e) speed |
| 6. skyscraper | f) not rusty |
| 7. rate (n.) | g) a tall building |
| 8. mostly | h) generally |

Appendix F9

Definition

Directions: Find in the text the words and phrases which fit the following definitions.

1. _____: clearly
2. _____: to consider as
3. _____: to carry out
4. _____: the army
5. _____: usual
6. _____: to come to one's mind
7. _____: to fix, fasten
8. _____: to understand wrongly
9. _____: to remember
10. _____: to make longer or greater

Appendix G

A Sample of How EFL Teachers Use the Affixation Technique

.....

T: Look at the word *astronaut*. What's its meaning?

S: [answer in Chinese] *yu(3)hang(2)yuan(2)*

T: Yeah. What's the root of this word?

S: [silent]

T: The root is *astro-*. It means 'star, outer space'. Anyone can give another word with this root?

S: *astronomy*?

T: Yeah, what's the meaning of *astronomy*?

S: [answer in Chinese]: *tian(1)wen(2)xue(2)*

T: yeah, the study of outer space. Here we have two more words with this root: *astronomer*, *astrology*. Can you guess their meanings? *Astronomer*?

S: [answer in Chinese]: *tian(1)wen(2)xue(2)jia(1)*

T: Good! *Astronomer* is related to *astronomy*. *-er* means? Yeah, a person. *Astronomer* means a person specializing in *astronomy*. And *astrology* means?

S: [silent]

T: *Astrology* has two parts: *astro-* and *-ology*. We've learned the suffix *-ology* before. Remember its meaning? Yeah, the study of sth., so *astrology* means?

S: The study of star?

T: Yeah, the study of stars, but this is its rough meaning. Actually it means *zhan(4)xing(1)shu(4)*. Got it?

S: Yeah.

T: Here we have another word you've learned before: *disaster*. Can you see any connection between this word and the root *astro-*?

S: *-aster-*?

T: Good! *aster-* is another form of *astro-*. We see the word *disaster* also has two parts: *dis-* and *-aster*. We've learned the prefix *dis-*, so we can associate the two parts with the meaning of *disaster*. Here we have one more word: *asterisk*. Its meaning is related to stars. It means a star-shaped figure. In Chinese, *xing(1)hao(4)*.

.....

Note: T = teacher

S = student