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**Participant perceptions about speaking and  
listening in modern foreign language classes  
in China and England, and their relationship  
to classroom practices**

**By**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Institute of Education, University of Warwick**

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## **Declaration**

I declare that all the materials contained in this thesis are my own work and have not been published before. This work has not been previously submitted for a degree at another university.

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**Min Song**

## **Abstract**

This research will examine participant perceptions about speaking and listening in modern foreign language classes in China and England, and focus on a number of case studies of teaching and learning speaking and listening in a foreign language. The question underpinning my research is: What are participant perceptions about speaking and listening in modern foreign language classes in China and England and their relationship to classroom practices?

My chosen research approach is case study because this research seeks to illuminate the perceptions of teachers and learners in China and England about speaking and listening in modern foreign language and relationships between the issues within the topic of my research. For this study I have adopted a multiple case approach which included nine cases of a class, including the teacher, pupils and their perceptions about speaking and listening. In order to address the research questions in this research I used observation, questionnaire and interview to collect my data. This approach enables me to consider both my own observations and the views of the participants. When I was designing this research I did not anticipate that all nine cases would come to fruition. However all of them completed successfully. Therefore this study included 9 cases with a huge data set of 36 lesson observation charts and notes, 790 pupil questionnaires, 10 teacher questionnaires, 9 transcribed group interviews with pupils and 10 transcribed interviews with teachers.

The findings of this research indicates that despite the different educational

systems in China and England both the teachers and children in Chinese and English schools shared similar beliefs about the learning and teaching of a foreign language, especially speaking and listening. However there were differences between their practice and there was more variation in practice between the English teachers and children than between the Chinese teachers and pupils. Most of the Chinese teachers taught in ways which were substantially similar, but the English teachers taught in very different ways. I believe my results show that this is related to the cultural and educational differences between the two countries, in terms of time, practices of teaching and expectations about pupil activity. Although both Chinese and English teachers demonstrated similar beliefs about modern foreign language teaching and learning, especially speaking and listening, their practices were very different. My findings also suggest that the changing of teachers' pedagogy played a very important role in changing pupils' beliefs and their learning outcomes. The case study approach of this research has revealed very different relationships between the beliefs and practices of each teacher and their impact on the children.

This research has contributed to the under-researched area of the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in a modern foreign language by providing a thorough and holistic investigation of the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in a modern foreign language in Chinese and English secondary schools and is, as far as I can tell, the only research so far in this area.

## **Chapter One Introduction**

The choice of topic for this PhD thesis is related to my teaching experience and interest in the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in modern foreign languages (MFL) both in China and England. I have been a university English teacher in China for 27 years. My own teaching experience and some literature (Anderson 1993, Rao 1996, Hu 2002a, Xie 2010, Xu 2010) suggest that Chinese students who have studied English for many years still find it difficult to understand and speak English fluently. This is a major problem that is worrying both the government and the teachers in China (Wu 2004). I also wondered why the UK, as one of the pioneers of a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, does not seem to give high status to learning MFL. Therefore this research will focus on a number of case studies of teaching and learning speaking and listening in a foreign language (FL) in China and England.

### **1.1 Background of my research**

It is researched and documented that in the exam-orientated Chinese educational system, both teachers' and students' focus are on English grammar and vocabulary and reading skills (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Hu 2002a, Hu 2005). The result of this is that the students tend to acquire linguistic competence (Allwright 1979; p.168), but not communicative competence (Hymes 1972, Allwright 1979) which should be the focus of language teaching (Richards 2006). In order to investigate the theoretical basis for this problem I am exploring the literature about CLT which underpins the curriculum, policy and the teaching of MFL in

both China and England.

This PhD thesis is based on my 27 years' teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) experience and my interest in the role of teacher and pupil perceptions (including teacher and pupil beliefs and pupil motivation) in the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in China and England. This is not well researched in relation to the teaching of speaking and listening in MFL in China and England but it is an area which the existing EFL and MFL literature suggests is important in the teaching and learning of FL (below) and may be central to how policies and practices of teaching and learning actually operate. For this reason, I draw on the literature from both EFL teaching and MFL teaching, which have much in common.

In 2008 I came to the University of Warwick as a visiting professor for the purpose of learning and understanding the most advanced education theories and teaching experience, especially the teaching of speaking and listening in MFL. What surprised me was that the UK as one of the world's most developed countries and one of pioneers of CLT approach, for which I assumed that FL learning should have high status in the school curriculum and in the society and the teaching of FL should be the forefront of the world. However the learning of MFL has been a big issue because children's motivation for learning MFL has been declining (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007). This suggests to me that there may be interesting parallels with the Chinese situation. I decided to investigate the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL in both China and England so as to understand the broad picture of teaching and learning of MFL,

and, in particular, speaking and listening in China and England.

## **1.2 Rationale for my research**

Both China and England seem to exhibit unbalanced development of literacy and oracy in MFL. In China the English Language Curriculum Standards (Chinese National Curriculum for English language) (MOE 2011) states that the mid and end of term examinations can include speaking, listening, reading and writing (MOE 2011). However it does not make speaking and listening an integral part of the assessment. Therefore, schools are free to choose whether oracy is included in the mid and end of term examinations. Under the exam-oriented educational system (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Hu 2002b) and the wash back effect of the National Matriculation Exam (entrance exam for university) (Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011) teachers and students may not bother to teach and learn speaking and listening because they are not assessed. This has resulted in a situation where the Chinese students find it difficult either to understand English or communicate in fluent English (Anderson 1993, Rao 1996, Hu 2002b, Xie 2010, Xu 2010). The literature about the teaching and learning of MFL suggests that in England the teaching and assessment of speaking and listening is as statutory as reading and writing because they are stipulated in the National Curriculum and enforced through Ofsted inspections. Therefore the teachers cannot choose not to teach speaking and listening. However the students' learning outcomes in speaking and listening are not seen as satisfactory (Ofsted 2008, Ofsted 2011) and this will be discussed in details in Section 2.3.3. My interest in this area lead me to investigate the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL in England and China and to find out the differences and

similarities between these two countries.

### **1.3 Structure of my research**

This research is divided into six chapters. Chapter one introduces the background of this research which is based on my 27 years' experience of teaching English in China and my interest in the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL in China and England. Chapter One also discusses the rationale of my research. This is on the basis of the situation of the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in China and England.

Chapter Two is the review of literature. This chapter consists of discussions of the status of MFL in China and England, theoretical approaches to teaching MFL in China and England which is about how CLT underpins the Curriculum of MFL and the teaching practice, theory into practice which is about the role of target language (TL) in MFL classes in China and England and students' speaking and listening outcomes and the relationships between participant perceptions and practice. This research is the basis of my questions.

Chapter Three is the method and methodology of this study. My chosen research approach is case study because this research seeks to illuminate the perceptions of teachers and learners in China and England about speaking and listening in MFL and relationships between the issues within the topic of my research. For this study I have adopted a multiple case approach which included nine cases of a class, including the teacher, pupils and their perceptions about speaking and listening. In order to address the research questions in this research I used

observation, questionnaire and interview to collect my data. This approach enables me to consider both my own observations and the views of the participants. When I began the data collection, I did not anticipate that I would be able to complete all nine cases but, in fact, all were completed successfully and provided rather a large amount of data.

Chapter Four discusses the results of this research. This chapter demonstrates the findings of my data which gives a very broad base of research evidence which would be taken as qualitative and quantitative evidence of participants' perceptions of speaking and listening in China and England. However, each of the settings is a case, and this approach to research was selected to identify the issues at work in each case. Therefore, analysis will be done across cases but the most important analysis will be of each case. It is by comparing each case with the whole data set that we see the importance of a case study approach.

Chapter Five addresses the discussion of my findings. My findings indicate, perhaps surprisingly, that both the teachers and children in Chinese and English schools share similar beliefs about the learning and teaching of FL, especially speaking and listening. However there are differences between their practice and there was more variation in practice between the English teachers and children than between the Chinese teachers and pupils. I believe my results show that this is related to the cultural and educational difference in the two countries, in terms of time, practices of teaching and expectations about pupil activity. This chapter addresses these issues raised from the findings and how they answer the research questions in this study.

Chapter Six is the conclusion section which illustrates the implications, contributions, limitations of this study and recommendations for future research. It is surprising to find that the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL is a less researched area. I hope that this research will attract more study to investigate this area.

## **Chapter Two Review of Literature**

### **Introduction**

This research will examine participant perceptions about speaking and listening in MFL classes in China and England, and focus on a number of case studies of teaching and learning speaking and listening in a FL. This will enable me to consider how participant perceptions may affect practice in both countries. It is important to review the background to this topic fully to show what existing research in the area underpins this research. This chapter will review the literature leading to the research question, to do this I will begin by comparing the background of FL teaching and learning in China and England through discussion of the theories which underpin the curriculum in each country, and practices which the literature suggests dominate in these countries. I will then analyze some of the factors which are likely to be important when investigating cases of the learning and teaching of speaking and listening in schools in England and China. These include teacher and pupil perceptions about teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL classes, pupil motivation, the nature of the languages being learned and role of pupils and teachers in both countries.

### **2.1 The status of modern foreign language in China and England**

This chapter will first consider the status and practices of FL teaching in China (PRC) and England so that the status, expectations and challenges for speaking and listening as part of language teaching are set out as a background to the

research questions. This review draws on literature from both MFL teaching in England and English language teaching (ELT) internationally. The research from a number of different fields has been drawn together in this review.

## **2.1.1 The status of English in China**

### **2.1.1.1 Number of students learning English in China**

An issue which is very relevant to my study is the number of people learning languages in both countries, especially as a proportion of the population. MFL enjoys very high status in China. Indeed, the word “English” is virtually a synonym of “modern foreign language” in China because the majority of students in all levels of schools study English as a FL (BritishCouncil 1995; cited in Hu 2003, Adamson 2001, Liu 2008, Adamson and Feng 2009, Yu and Wang 2009). There is no doubt of the popularity of studying English in China: some estimates suggest there are about 400 million users of English in China (Zhao and Campbell 1995, Li 2006) and it is possible that there are more learners of English in China than English speakers in America and Chinese English learners account for about 20% of the total in the world (Taylor 2002). Therefore it is no exaggeration to say that China boasts the largest population of English language learners in the world (Cheng 2008). Learning English is seen as a key government priority for education, trade and modernization ( Hu 2002b, Hu 2003, Edwards 2007a). Learning English is also regarded by the Chinese people as a valuable means to pursue personal welfare, like entering and graduating from university, getting better jobs, getting promotion, reading modern technical materials and studying abroad (Zhou and Chen 1991, Ross 1992, Cortazzi and Jin 1996a). “English is therefore considered by many Chinese to be the bridge to

the future, both for the country and for the individuals (Jin and Cortazzi 2002; p. 54).” English proficiency has been widely considered as a national and personal asset as well (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Adamson 2001, Hu 2002b, Jin and Cortazzi 2003, Hu 2005). In fact people with higher English language proficiency are paid more in China (Li 2003). Around 270 million school students in China in 2010 were studying English as a FL and since 2001 English has been taught from Grade 3 (age 9) to all primary school pupils (Liu 2007b). There are more English teachers and learners in China than in any other country in the world and this number is rapidly expanding (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Jin and Cortazzi 2002). China’s entrance into WTO and the successful bid for 2008 Olympic in Beijing have exerted enormous influence on the booming of English language learning in China (Hu 2005, Li and Moreira 2009) as the Chinese government announced ‘learning English is for the whole nation’. This has not only motivated students and young adults but also those of all ages and occupations to learn English (Guo 2001). With the opening-up policy and the trend of globalization more and more visitors and businessmen come to China from all over the world, increasingly more Chinese students go to study abroad, which has resulted in a growing demand for people with good English competence (Ng and Tang 1997b).

According to the report of the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China in 2010 the numbers of students at different levels of schools are as follows (MOE 2010):

- A. The number of postgraduate students which include full time students and part time students is: 1,958,710.

- B. The number of undergraduate students is: 32,209,760.
- C. The number of students in secondary education which includes students in senior high schools, vocational high schools and junior high schools is: 100,129,290.
- D. The number of students in primary schools is: 101,353,616.
- E. The number of students in pre-school education is: 29,766,695.

All together there were around 270 million school students in China in 2010 the vast majority of whom were studying English as a FL (Hu 2002b, Hu 2003).

Among these 270 million students some of them, especially some primary school pupils and students in high schools were not only studying English at schools but also at private weekend English training schools (Jin and Cortazzi 2002, Bolton 2003). Some of the university students either at undergraduate level or post graduate level, will take intensive English training courses in order to pass the CET4 (College English Test Band 4 for Chinese undergraduate students), CET6 (College English Test Band 6 for Chinese undergraduate and Master students), the Entrance English Exam for Master Degree or the Entrance English Exam for the PhD Degree (Cheng 2008). In the university where I used to work there is a big poster board which is always full of advertisements for English training courses of different levels. Many of my colleagues have made big money by teaching at weekend English training schools or some have made even more money by establishing their own weekend English training schools. Indeed, Crystal (1997; p. 103) argues that: “The English language teaching (ELT) business has become one of the major growth industries around the world in the past thirty years.” English language teaching has become a booming industry in

China (Jiang 2003). An estimate (Anicca 2007) indicates that the market value of the English language teaching industry in mainland China had reached around 15 billion € by 2005 (having doubled between 2005 and 2010). There are training schools run by tertiary institutions, overseas companies and Chinese owners, which charge different prices to address the needs of all incomes (Hu 2002b, Li and Moreira 2009). A report from People's Daily (06/11/2001) states that an expert estimation indicates that in Beijing there were as many as over one thousand languages training centres (companies) competing for a market potential up to 200 million RMB to provide various language training courses.

Chinese parents will spare no effort and money to send their child to study English at weekend training schools (Deng 1997) because English is considered as one of the three major skills of the Chinese people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (MOE 2001a, Jin and Cortazzi 2011b).

Besides those students who were studying English at schools a lot more other people were learning English as well. Among the 400 million people learning English in China some learn English for studying abroad. Statistics from the Chinese Academy of Social Science indicates that 1.07 million Chinese students studied abroad since 1978-2006 and in 2007 an additional 421,000 Chinese students contributed to this statistics of international student mobility (UNESCO 2009, Gu 2011). Among these people who want to study abroad some are self supported and some are supported by the government. For those visiting scholars funded by the government before they leave for the foreign country they must take one year English training course and they have to pass the English exams

( Cheng 2008, CSC 2010). Some people learn English in order to get a better job because CET scores are used by many personnel departments for recruitment purposes (Jin and Yang 2006, Wette and Barkhuizen 2009). In some big cities, like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, university graduates cannot get a government position without first obtaining a CET4 or CET6 certificate (Chen 2003, Cheng 2008, Li and Moreira 2009). Apart from academic requirement on English language skills, English ability is tested for all people who wish to be promoted in governmental, educational, scientific research, medical, financial, business and any other government-supported institutions (He 2001, MOP 2007). Every year millions of people in China will take English exams at different levels. Therefore these people will have to learn English (Cheng 2008).

#### **2.1.1.2 Length of time learners study English in China**

All school children and university students must study English. If they do not pass the English exams they cannot obtain their qualification (Wette and Barkhuizen 2009). From September 2001, almost all primary schools in China introduced English at Grade 3, which means that the age of compulsory instruction of English as a school subject has been lowered from Grade 5 (year 11) to Grade 3 (year 9) (MOE 2001a, Hu 2002b). The Primary School Curriculum for English Language states that children are required to study English language from the first year to the sixth year, age 7 to 12. And English is one the major subjects in primary education (MOE 2001b, Hu 2002b) . The children will continue to learn English when they are in high schools for another 6 years, age 12 to 18. English is also the major component and it is a must because if the students cannot pass the English exams they will lose the chance

to enter good senior high schools or good universities in China. When they enter university they will continue to study English for two more years and they have to pass CET4 because a pass at CET4 or CET6 levels is an exit requirement for most of Chinese tertiary education institutions (Jin and Cortazzi 2002, Chang 2005, Ruan and Jacob 2009). When they finish their undergraduate studies, if students wish to complete a master degree they will have to take the entrance exams for masters among which English is the most important criteria for the supervisors to decide whether they will take a student or not. If a student cannot pass the English exam he or she will lose the chance to do his or her master degree no matter how well they did for the other subjects. Those students who are doing their master degree must pass the CET6 (Ruan and Jacob 2009). During their masters studies the students have to learn English for another two years during which they will have to pass several English exams (Wette and Barkhuizen 2009). If students want to do a PhD they will have to take entrance exams no matter what major they do. English is one of the major subjects to be assessed. If they have a very good grade for English they are more than half way in their success even if they do not do a very good job in other subjects. The supervisors would prefer to have students with good English skills (Cheng 2002, Jin and Cortazzi 2006). Sometimes English is the only yardstick for supervisors to choose their prospective master students or PhD students. If they fail the English exam they will have no chance to do their PhD (Hu 2002b, Wette and Barkhuizen 2009). When the students are doing their PhD they will have to resume learning English for another year during which they have to take English exams. If they fail in English they cannot get their degree.

Therefore altogether the Chinese students will have to study English for more than 15 years from primary school to PhD not including their weekend English training schooling, if they choose to take this additional study. In each level of their education English is a must no matter whether they like it or not they have no choice. They must learn English and pass it, otherwise they will have no chance to go to good senior high school or good university. They cannot do their master or PhD degree either (Jin and Cortazzi 2002).

A key point for my study is that, for Chinese students, the learning of English is compulsory for many years of their schooling. Moreover, the learning of English is seen as a key government priority for education and trade (Edwards 2007a). In both these respects, the learning of language is a key achievement to open up a gateway for success for Chinese students, not an optional subject. The next section will address the role of speaking and listening (in English) within the National Curriculum in China.

### **2.1.1.3 The role of English, speaking and listening in the Chinese curriculum for foreign language (age 13-16)**

An issue which is very relevant to my study is the status of language learning, and speaking and listening within this in the curriculum because this will affect the teaching and learning conducted. I will discuss English in the Chinese curriculum first, then contrast this with the situation in England. In China from primary school onwards until postgraduate education English is one of the major compulsory subjects.

The term curriculum may denote much more than just what is to be taught (Kelly 1989). However, the English National Curriculum (DfEE/QCA 1999) and the English Language Curriculum Standards (Chinese National Curriculum for English language) (MOE 2011) both set out *what is to be taught* and it is this aspect of curriculum which will be referred to as the National Curriculum (in the English setting) and English Language Curriculum Standards (In the Chinese setting).

English in Chinese junior high schools is a core subject among 10 subjects. This means that language study occupies around 10% of curriculum time per week for all the students in junior high schools. The People's Republic of China has a national programme for study called English Language Curriculum Standards (MOE 2001a, MOE 2011). The most updated version was published in 2011, which does not stipulate the curriculum time of English lessons. This might reflect the government's intention of giving more freedom to local authorities to make decisions according to their needs. The 2001 version curriculum suggests that students should have at least 4 lessons for English language of 45-50 minutes per week (MOE 2001a). However a lot of schools have at least 5 English lessons of 45-50 minutes each week. Although the percentage of time English language occupies in the curriculum time is similar to that of MFL in England, the time that Chinese children spend on learning English each week may actually be twice as much as or even more, than the time that English children spend on MFL. This is because Chinese children have early morning classes before normal lessons and one lesson of 45-50 minutes self study time every day in the afternoon (which are not counted as curriculum time). The teacher usually comes

to teach at the students' self study time. In addition, most Chinese children go to weekend school to learn English out of curriculum time. This means that the children in China spend more time learning English in school and outside school than the required curriculum time for English language.

Since 1978 the Chinese National Curriculum for English language has been undergoing reforms. Several versions have come into being. The most recent one is the English Language Curriculum Standards (MOE 2001a, MOE 2011). In 2011 the Ministry of Education in China published the most updated version of the English Language Curriculum Standards. Since the mid-1980s the Chinese government has realized that it was necessary to address diversity of regional differences and needs, therefore important measures were taken to decentralize decision making and allow considerable regional autonomy in exploring and implementing new approaches to education (Hu 2002b). As the result of this innovation it brought about some regions in China develop their own curriculum and the School-based Curriculum development and advocacy of innovation in pedagogy in English language teaching, such as content-based English instruction, task-based English instruction, inquiry-based learning (Hu 2002b, Dai, Gerbino et al. 2011, Xu and Wong 2011).

The English Language Curriculum Standards (MOE 2001a, MOE 2011) sets out the aims and content for English teaching for all children in Chinese state schools, but different regions can adjust implementation plans according to regional needs and conditions (MOE 2011). In the preface of the national curriculum it states the importance of English as:

At compulsory education stage English language education can help lay a foundation for improving the whole nations accomplishment, educating students with creative and cross-cultural ability and enhancing the nation's international compatibility and people's international communication ability (MOE 2011; p. 1).

In the Interpretations of English Language Curriculum Standards (MOE 2003; p. 35) the importance of English language is further stated as "Learning and mastering a modern foreign language, especially English is one of the basic requirements for citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century." From this we can see English has a very high status in China. The Chinese government attaches great importance to FL learning for Chinese citizens (Hu 2002b).

English Language Curriculum Standards states:

The overall objective of English language education at compulsory education is to through learning English to develop students' comprehensive English language ability, facilitate intelligence development and enhance students' comprehensive humanistic accomplishment. And the development of students' comprehensive English language ability should include holistic development in Language Skills, Language Knowledge, Awareness of Culture, Affective Attitudes and Learning Strategy (MOE 2011; p.8)

The English Language Curriculum Standards (MOE 2011) stipulates the requirements of English language education from five levels (from Year 1 to

Year 9). At the end of Year 9 students should be at Level 5. Year 7-9 (age 13-15) is equivalent to English Key Stage 3. At each level the curriculum includes very detailed requirements about what speaking, listening, reading and writing skills the pupils must achieve. This curriculum, therefore shows a balance between reading and writing (literacy) and speaking and listening (oracy) and the curriculum even includes very detailed “List of Classroom Expressions”, “List of Pronunciation”, “List of Discussion Topics” and “List of Social Communication Topics” in the Appendix. The latter category includes more “everyday” language such as greetings and directions. However the translation of this into what teachers must do in speaking and listening is very limited because not all of the content of the curriculum must be addressed. In this sense, the curriculum is only partly mandatory (MOE 2011).

The use of TL in teaching, especially verbally, is an important issue in both England and China. This will be discussed in more details in Section 2.3.1. The 2001 Chinese English Language Curriculum Standards recommends but does not require teachers to use TL to teach. The 2011 curriculum does not even mention teachers’ use of TL. In practice, most of the EFL teachers in China teach in Chinese in most of the class time with occasional inclusion of “Good morning”, “Turn to page”, “Read after me”, etc. such very simple sentences in English. This limits children’s daily exposure to speaking and listening in English (Liu 2007b).

Most significantly, the assessment practices in China do not encourage the teaching and learning of speaking and listening because they are not a compulsory part of the routine assessment or final examination assessment.

According to Cimbricz (2002) this is likely to affect both teachers' beliefs and practices. The English Language Curriculum Standards (2001 version) stipulates that all Chinese children should be assessed in English at four points in the year. In each of two terms, children undertake examinations in English in the middle of the term and at the end of the term. The 2001 version curriculum stresses the importance of including listening in the mid-term and end of the term assessment but does not make this a requirement of the exams and it suggests that the amount of listening should not be less than 20% of the total assessment (MOE 2001a). The 2011 version curriculum changed the wording into "The objective of teaching at the end of certain unit determines the content and form of summative assessment and summative assessment can include speaking, listening and writing and language knowledge application (MOE 2011; p.36)." It is not clear about the change of the requirement about speaking and listening assessment in the new curriculum but the tone is optional- not directive in including speaking and listening. I speculate that this flexibility may even contribute to the deterioration of the teaching of speaking and listening in schools in China, as teachers choose to focus on the writing and reading which has, traditionally, been valued (Boyle 2000, Hu 2005). The 2011 version Curriculum does mention that the big exam at the end of Year 9 should stress assessing students' comprehensive language using ability and avoid just testing students' language knowledge. However it does not make speaking and listening an integral part of the assessment. Therefore, schools are free to choose whether oracy is included in the mid and end of term examinations. Teachers and students may not bother to teach and learn speaking and listening because they are not assessed (MOE 2011). Therefore some of the schools include listening test in the assessment whilst a lot

of schools do not and very few schools include speaking as part of the exams (Zheng and Adamson 2003). This indicates that although CLT has been advocated in China for many years English language teaching has not changed much. Listening and speaking have not been taken as the most important components of language teaching and the focus of language teaching is still on language structure not real life communication (Jin and Cortazzi 2002, Hu 2002b, Peng 2007). This is consistent with the resistance to CLT when it was first introduced into China (Peng 2007). It partly explains the fact that although the Chinese students spend a lot of time studying English, the time length does not guarantee success in language learning. It is interesting to compare with the situation of MFL in England.

## **2.1.2 The status of modern foreign language in England**

### **2.1.2.1 Number of students learning modern foreign language in England**

Having discussed the Chinese language learning background, I would like to contrast this with the situation of language teaching and learning in England to consider how speaking and listening is taught and its status in England.

Historically (Hawkins 1996), the study of a FL in England is considerably less popular than in China and seems to be in decline in English schools (CILT 2010, CILT 2011). English pupils may not study a language for most of their schooling and the inclusion of languages to the curriculum in England has been a rollercoaster ride. The inclusion of a language in the National Curriculum (DfEE/QCA 1999) at Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Key Stage 4 (KS4) ( five years of schooling), resulted in many more children being introduced to a FL and hugely

increased the numbers of children entering for a FL at GCSE. The number of students who gained a certificate in a FL at age 16 rose from 10% in 1977 to 40% in 2001 (Mitchell 2003; cited in Coleman, et al., 2007). However, widespread concern remained, particularly about the attitude promoted by the British media that ‘English is enough’ which has contributed to a negative impact on the children’s motivation to learn a FL (Coleman 2009). In 2002, the National Languages Strategy (DfES 2002) recommended making languages at GCSE level and KS4 optional, to improve student motivation, but to begin languages teaching in primary school (KS2). This decision carried an ambiguous message in the simultaneous removal of a MFL from the compulsory core curriculum at Key Stage 4 and the recognition that MFL study should be introduced at Key Stage 2 (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007). The position today is that children in England study languages compulsorily only between the ages of 11-14 (three years) but, from 2010 are entitled to some languages teaching between the ages of 7-11, although this is not part of the national curriculum (DfES 2002). However, success in languages is not as simple as starting earlier. Findings in both England (Burstall, Jamieson et al. 1974) and China (Liu 2007b) suggest that children do not produce better outcomes simply by starting earlier, especially in speaking and listening.

A QCA report into languages in 2005–2006 (QCA 2007) found that languages are still pupils’ least favourite subject and the one perceived as most difficult (Stables and Wikeley 1999). Therefore, fewer and fewer students continued to study a FL when it ceased to be compulsory (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007). The annual analysis by CILT (2010) shows a dramatic decrease in the number of KS4

pupils taking a language GCSE took place from 2004 to 2006. The decrease seemed to slow down from 2007 but the proportion of KS4 pupils taking a language GCSE remained at 44% in 2008 and 2009, and was further down to 43% in 2010 and 40% in 2011 (CILT 2010, CILT 2011). This concern is also reflected in the professional literature (Carter and McCarthy 1997, Alexander 2003, Carter 2003, Alexander 2005, Bryan 2007). Motivation is not seen as such a pressing issue in China, where English is compulsory and the satisfactory achievement of exams is a condition of continued study (Gao and Watkins 2001).

The number of years English children study languages is considerably less than that of Chinese children (above), but they also do languages for less curriculum time per week. At KS3, the secondary school curriculum in England includes a FL as one of at least 10 subjects (DfEE/QCA 1999) (the status of Citizenship and Personal and Social Education as subject varies between schools). This means that language study occupies around 10% of curriculum time per week for most KS3 students, between ages 11 and 14, usually 2 lessons of 30—50 minutes per week. This is considerably less than the Chinese equivalent, offering fewer opportunities for speaking and listening in FL.

There is considerable evidence that the British government continued to express concern about children's achievements in language (Ofsted 2008). Recently a House of Lords committee said that all children should learn a FL at primary and secondary school (Harrison 2012) and the most recent proposal for the new examination to replace GCSE in 2015 includes the requirement for every child to take a language examination (Hansard 17 Sept, 2012), despite the fact that there

is, as yet, no proposed new curriculum. This is an interesting further example of assessment driving the curriculum.

### **2.1.2.2 Length of time learners study modern foreign language in England**

Despite the efforts of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry (Moys 1988; cited in Coleman et al., 2007), National Languages Strategy (DfES 2002) and the appointment of a Director for Languages, the decision of the National Languages Strategy (NLS) caused a change of direction in the curriculum with the removal of MFL from the compulsory core curriculum at KS4 (QCA 2004). The compulsory schooling of MFL for children in England is only three years, ie. KS3, years 7, 8 and 9. And even for these three years compulsory schooling of MFL “nearly one third of schools have reduced lesson time for languages in KS3 and 6% are compressing KS3 into two years instead of three.” according to Language Trends 2007 (CILT 2007; p.1). As the result, “Shortening of Key Stage 3 to two years means that our Year 8 pupils have to make informed decisions about their future career by making options in Year 8 - when they are 12 years of age! Only 15 out of a cohort of 200 opted for MFL last year (2007).” reported by Language trends 2008 (CILT 2008; p.3). Research Brief from DCSF about Language Learning at Key Stage 3 (Evans, Fisher et al. 2008; p.3) indicates that “Two thirds of schools surveyed do not require all pupils to study a language beyond KS3. Only 16% require all pupils to learn a language in KS4. Most other schools operate a selective policy for compulsory language learning, applying it exclusively to pupils in top sets.” As a result 2010 GCSE results do not see languages in the top 10 for the first time (Jardine 2010). Both Ofsted’s report (2011) and Language Trends 2011 (CILT 2011) report that the decline of

students taking GCSE in a language still continued in 2011. The last decade has seen the decline from 78% in 2001 to 40% in summer 2011. At the time of writing, the situation is poised to change. On 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012 the Education Secretary announced a new examination to replace GCSE for all English students in 2015, which will include language. We may suppose this will increase language study considerably.

This section emphasizes that in China language learning is compulsory for all children and a significant part of the curriculum at all ages, but in England it is optional for most of a child's education. However, this cannot be the only determinant of language success. Moreover, even in the three years when language learning is compulsory, English children may do less than Chinese learners of a similar age, offering less opportunity for speaking and listening as the recommended proportion of curriculum time for languages is 10% (around two lessons).

The picture of language learning in England is very variable for school aged children. Some may have the opportunity to study language from age 7-18, whilst as many as 60% may only study for 3 years (CILT 2009). This is in sharp contrast to Chinese children, all of whom study language for longer. However time spent studying cannot be the only determinant of success, as success at language learning varies in both China and England.

### **2.1.2.3 The role of modern foreign language, speaking and listening, in the National Curriculum for modern foreign language in England (age 13-16)**

In England, the National Curriculum is set out for children from 5-18. This curriculum is mandatory for children of compulsory schools age (5-16) in state schools. In addition to the curriculum there are frameworks for teaching languages which are not compulsory but are almost universally used in schools. This section will review this provision as it has a significant influence on the speaking and listening undertaken by teachers and experienced by children. The national Curriculum for MFL at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in England sees the importance of MFL as issues of cultural richness, mutual understanding, global citizenship and personal fulfilment. The introduction of the National Curriculum for MFL at Key Stage 3 and 4 emphasizes intercultural understanding and skills for life. This document explicitly emphasizes the importance of communication:

Learning languages gives pupils opportunities to develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and to express themselves with increasing confidence, independence and creativity. They explore the similarities and differences between other languages and English and learn how language can be manipulated and applied in different ways. The development of communication skills, together with understanding of the structure of language, lay the foundations for future study of other languages and support the development of literacy skills in a pupil's own language (DfES 2007; p.165).

The curriculum (DfES 2007; p.169) stipulates that it should provide opportunities for pupils to:

- hear, speak, read and write in the target language regularly and frequently within the classroom and beyond
- communicate in the target language individually, in pairs, in groups and with speakers of the target language, including native speakers where possible, for a variety of purposes
- use an increasing range of more complex language

The curriculum specifically mentions the use of TL by students in the classroom (discussed above). This like other aspects of the curriculum is inspected and is also closely related to assessment (below). The National Curriculum for MFL in England does include listening and speaking as the integrate part of the students' language skills, it does not seem to put emphasis on the importance of listening and speaking. It does mention that the main aim when teaching pupils a new language is to ensure that they are able to communicate effectively in that language in a variety of contexts. But it states that teaching should focus on developing pupils' linguistic ability and confidence which does not conform to the main principles of CLT approach which emphasizes on developing learner's communicative competence.

The situation in England is in sharp contrast to that of China in respect of curriculum content. The English curriculum is much more balanced between oracy and literacy so that speaking and listening are given equal status and might be expected to be taught equally. Moreover, the curriculum is both statutory and

enforced through Ofsted inspections. Teachers cannot choose not to do speaking and listening. English children studying FL are likely to experience learning balanced between oracy and literacy. Despite this, the 2008 and 2011 report emphasize concerns about the quality, teaching and outcomes of speaking and listening (Ofsted 2008, Ofsted 2011).

The National Curriculum for England specified the outcomes for children's FL at a number of levels (1-10). The assessment against these levels is undertaken by teachers as part of teaching and through examinations and tests as selected by the school. Teachers must report a level at the end of Key Stage 3 (age 14) and this must be sent to parents and government. However, at age 16 many children go on to be assessed for a GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) in language. This is a public examination and the results are graded A-E. These are significant examinations and, in the last few years, uptake has dropped to around 40% children (CILT 2009). The nature of GCSE FL assessment is worthy of comment because it does include assessment of both oracy and literacy. The examinations are set by examination boards, who meet a national specification. The assessment of language in England is balanced between the four modes of language in a way which is different from the situation in China. There are fewer examinations but teachers must assess and report speaking and listening at the end of Key Stage 3 (and 4). This, too, is statutory and enforced through Ofsted inspection. Therefore, teachers in England cannot choose not to assess oracy equally with literacy. This is likely to have an impact on the teaching and learning children experience.

The policy, curricula and assessment arrangements reviewed above are the background to this study of the teaching and learning of oracy in MFL classes in England and China. However, the situation discussed may also shape that teaching and learning in both direct and indirect ways. These policies must have a direct effect because, as discussed above, language assessment is very important to pupils in China and England. However, in China, the inclusion of oracy is not mandatory, whilst in England it is. The policies discussed may also have an indirect effect in shaping teacher and pupil motivation and attitudes towards their teaching and learning of language, and especially oracy, and it is this that will be discussed below. Having discussed the policy context of the English National Curriculum and the Chinese Curriculum and what this tells teachers they should teach, it is important to consider how this actually translates into practice and how effectively students get what they should do.

## **2.2 Theoretical approaches to teaching modern foreign language in China and England**

The participation and outcomes of language learning in China and England are very different (above). However, the results are not predictable and there are many issues which affect the success of language learning apart from numbers participating. As discussed above, the manifestation of theoretical approaches depends on the perceptions and beliefs of teachers and may also shape their beliefs (Kagan 1992, Pajares 1992, Zheng and Davison 2008). This has been researched in both England and China. This section will examine the theoretical approaches taken to learning languages in both countries and explore how these

may be different and shape different experiences of learning and teaching of languages.

### **2.2.1 Communicative Language Teaching Approach in England**

CLT is a combination of methods that “pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspect of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view” (Littlewood 2002;p.1) and as such should give a real priority to speaking and listening. Communicative language teaching uses real-life situation that facilitate communication. Instead of repetition and drills the teacher creates a situation that the students are likely to come across in real life. Communicative pedagogy may enhance the students’ motivation to learn because in the real-life situation exercise they can develop a strong desire to communicate about meaningful topics in meaningful ways. In addition real-life situations are more likely to generate flexible use of language and the communicative competence discussed below.

In the last 50 years language teaching has changed dramatically in ideas of syllabus design and methodology, partly as the influence of a communicative approach has been felt and assimilated into teaching, along with a range of other ideas. Richards (2006; p.6) identified three phases in trends in language teaching:

- Phase 1: traditional approaches (up to the late 1960s)
- Phase 2: classic communicative language teaching (1970s to 1990s)
- Phase 3: current communicative language teaching ( late 1990s to the present)

The traditional method of FL teaching as audio-lingual method focuses on the structure of the language. “It gave priority to grammatical competence as the basis of language proficiency. They were based on the belief that grammar could be learned through direct instruction and through a methodology that made much use of a repetitive practice and drilling (Richards 2006;p.6).” In this method emphasis was placed on accurate pronunciation and accurate mastery of grammar from the very beginning stages of languages learning. But language is a tool for people to communicate. It is not only a tool for the students to do exams. The traditional audio-lingual approach does not prove to be an effective way to help the students obtain “communicative competence” (Allwright 1979). Communicative competence refers to a person’s ability to use grammatically “possible”, “feasible” and “appropriate” (Hymes 1979) language to convey the right meaning. The objective of FL teaching is that “we want the learner to be able to use the language we teach him, and we want him to be able to extend his ability to new cases, to create new utterances that are appropriate to his needs as a language” (Newmark 1979;p.162) .

In the 1970s linguists and educators questioned the idea of putting grammar as the centrality of language teaching and learning. It was argued that there is more to language ability than “grammatical competence” (Richards 2006;p.9).

Grammatical competence was absolutely necessary to produce grammatically accurate sentences but it was suggested that we should also pay attention to knowledge and skills which are needed “to use grammar and other aspects of language appropriately for different communicative purposes. ... What was needed in order to use language communicatively was communicative

competence” (Richards 2006;p.9). A communicative pedagogy for language teaching was developed in the 1970s, based on Hymes (1972) notion of “communicative competence”. From the 1990s, the CLT approach was been widely applied (Richards 2006) and it underpins the content specified in the National Curriculum for languages (DfEE/QCA 1999). It illustrates a set of very general principles on the basis of the notion of communicative competence which is the focus of second and FL teaching. It makes use of communicative syllabus and methodology to achieve the goal of CLT (Richards 2006).

With the development of CLT appeared “the shift toward CLT as marking a paradigm shift in our thinking about teachers, learning, and teaching” (Richards 2006;p.24). These led to the changes in thinking as a result of which emerged a number of different language teaching approaches, ie. process-based CLT approaches, product-based CLT approaches (Richards 2006) “which fall within the general framework of communicative language teaching” (Richards 2006;p.26). Later versions of a pedagogy heavily influenced by CLT might be termed post-communicative, to indicate the strong emphasis on the use of communicative approaches within ways of teaching which have adapted to changing curriculum requirements, including some specific grammar teaching within a communicative approach. Globalization and the forces of economic and social convergence have led to the emergence of an approach which is called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). This approach is described by Graddol (2006; p.86) as the ‘ultimate communicative methodology’ which will realize the high level of authenticity of purpose (Coyle, Hood et al. 2010). It is necessary to compare CLT approach in China.

### **2.2.2 Communicative Language Teaching Approach in China**

Since the late 1970s, English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) teachers in China have initiated a series of experiments to upgrade English language teaching, the most obvious of which was the Communicative English for Chinese Learners project (CECL) developed by a Chinese teacher named Li Xiaojun and her colleagues in Guangzhou Foreign Languages Institute and two Canadian colleagues (Rao 1996). They wrote and used a set of communicative English textbooks entitled *Communicative English for Chinese Learners* (CECL) (Li 1984). CECL asserts that "language is communication, and learning a language is learning to communicate (Li 1984;p.2)." CLT was introduced in China and widely advocated ever since. Before the appearance of the CECL text book, text books in China focused on language structure itself and the pedagogy was based on linguistic competence (Li 1984). With the reform of English language teaching in China the content of text books changed. In the late 1980s some of the English textbooks for English majors in Chinese colleges and universities were compiled on the basis of the audio-lingual method, focusing on dialogue, sentence patterns, language structures, pair drills, and group discussions. Hu (2002a; p.93) argues "that the traditional approach to ELT in China has been a curious combination of the grammar-translation method and audiolingualism, which is characterized by systematic and detailed study of grammar, extensive use of cross-linguistic comparison and translation, memorization of structural patterns and vocabulary, painstaking effort to form good verbal habits, an emphasis on written language, and a preference for literary classics. As will become clear, this approach has taken root in, and has drawn strong support from the Chinese culture of learning, hence its popularity among Chinese teachers and

learners". Li Xiaojun and her colleagues and others' endeavours were aimed at cultivating the EFL students' English communicative competence by providing them with opportunities to interact with each other and with the teacher in class. Nevertheless, the outcome of teaching English exclusively using the communicative approach did not prove to be successful (Leng 1997, Hu 2002a). The students considered the methods ridiculous and inappropriate for them to learn English. They refused to sit in a circle and speak English to each other. They did not like inventing conversations or playing communication games. They insisted on attending lectures on intensive reading and grammar and on taking conventional exams. They did not want to be involved in the CLT teaching and learning process because they were not used to it that way (Rao 1996).

In the new century, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in China published a whole range of educational policies which specified the curriculum, goals, textbooks and methods of English teaching nationally and reflect a CLT approach (Liao 2000). These centralized projects really represent top-down control of language teaching (Yu 2001) but there have been concerns that this sort of centrally controlled curriculum implementation does not produce real, longstanding change (Markee 1997) and it may be that the very way CLT has been implemented centrally threatens the success of the approach.

China became deeply involved in CLT and this produced a vigorous debate (Xiao 2009). The evidence above shows that it did affect the curriculum, but research suggests that the effects on pedagogy have not been as widespread in

China (Rao 1996). Researchers evaluating recent teaching of English in China note that the vast majority of the English teachers in China were still teaching in the old translation method with the teaching focus on the language structure itself (Zhang and Head 2010). As Leng (1997; p.6) put it, the traditional teaching with new textbooks was simply “filling the new bottles of CLT with old wine”. In its original form, CLT in English language teaching was rejected by both the teachers and the students (Xiao 2009). The next section will consider a number of issues which particularly affect the teaching of language in China and affect the way CLT is implemented there. The implementation of these approaches has been examined by numerous authors. Hu (2002a), Rao (1996), Xiao (2009) and Xu (2010) all discuss the following factors which shape the implementing of CLT and, therefore, of speaking and listening in Chinese classes.

The nature of assessment of FL in China affects what is taught and learnt. English Language Curriculum Standards (MOE 2001a, MOE 2011) in China stipulates that all Chinese children should be assessed in English at four points in the year. In each of two terms, children undertake examinations in English in the middle of the term and at the end of the term. However assessment of speaking and listening are not compulsory. Schools, therefore, are free to choose whether oracy is included in the mid and end of term examinations. However, these examinations are high-stakes for the children as they contribute to their progression through school and leaving certificate grades. Some of the schools include a listening test in the assessment whilst a lot of schools do not and very few schools include speaking as part of the exams (Zheng and Adamson 2003). This indicates that although CLT has been advocated in China for many years,

assessment pressures still focus on literacy. Listening and speaking have not been taken as the most important components of language teaching and the focus of language teaching is still on language structure, not real life communication. The written-examination-only approach is certainly not the context-specific assessment suggested as crucial to CLT by Stoyhoff (2007) and the washback effect of the high stakes Matriculation English Test (MET) exerts a real pressure on teachers and pupils to practice for the exam, rather than emphasize speaking and listening (Zheng and Adamson 2003, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). It would seem that the Chinese curriculum, which ensures children study FL for so long (above) and stipulates regular assessment, allows much more variability in that assessment.

Another key factor affecting the implementation of CLT in China is the academic ability of the teachers. Many of the EFL teachers in China do not fully understand CLT and communicative competence. Therefore many teachers do not distinguish real communicative activities from artificial ones, mistaking linguistic activities with some artificial classroom situations for communicative activities (Leng 1997). In primary school English teaching in 2007, less than a third of the teachers were graduates from local educational institutions, half were from the two year training in local institutes and the rest had no formal training (Liu 2007b). The language ability of teachers is also a matter affecting the use of a CLT pedagogy, particularly in relation to their ability to use TL and teach speaking and listening. Of the estimated 500,000 secondary teachers in China (Bolton 2002), most are not native English speakers (Braine 1999) and may not have achieved advanced mastery or be able to continue their own studies (Snow

2007). Many of the primary schools have teachers who, crucially, may not be able to speak English at all (Liu 2007b).

A further issue which certainly affects the implementation of CLT in the curriculum is the expectations of the role of the teacher and pupil in class, which are very different in England and China (Peng 2007). Hu (2002a;p.99) argues that “it is against Chinese expectations to adopt a pedagogy that may put teachers at risk of losing face. In this connection, many Chinese teachers of English find CLT highly threatening because it requires a high level of proficiency in the target language and strong sociolinguistic competence in the TL culture which they lack”. Peng (2007) indicates that the very specific culture of learning in Chinese settings is another factor which affects the use of CLT in China.

Confucianism has been the core in Chinese education and Cai (2006) discusses the way the authority of the teacher in education is very important and order (and mutual acceptance of that order) dominates classes and teaching practices. This tradition is deeply embedded in Chinese culture. Pupils do not expect teachers to be wrong or even ambivalent about material they are teaching and teachers expect to be knowledgeable in their field, and regarded as such. Hence the traditional Chinese model of teaching where the student is viewed as an ‘empty-vessel’ or a ‘pint pot’ (Maley 1982), and the teacher should have what Hu (2002a) refers to as a full bucket of water to dispense, in order to give the students a bowl of water. Given the reservations expressed below about teachers’ subject knowledge in FL teaching in China and the issue of use of TL, the whole issue of teaching from a CLT perspective may be a problem for many Chinese teachers, whose bucket may not be as full as they would wish. Traditionally, the

focus of teaching is not on how teachers and students can create and construct language knowledge in an experiential approach, as discussed above, but on how extant authoritative knowledge can be transmitted and internalized in a most effective and efficient way (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a). “The ‘learn by using’ approach promoted by CLT does not fit in with the Chinese traditional ‘learn to use’ philosophy” (Hu 2002a;p.99). Moreover, Paine (1997) argues that traditional recitation and memorization were actually re-introduced in the 1960s to teach speaking and listening, as a part of an “audio-lingual” method, which is rather far removed from CLT pedagogy.

Economic factors also affect the type of pedagogy used in language teaching and the possibilities for speaking and listening in class. Although China has developed very fast in the last 30 years, many schools do not have the same facilities as the western countries which are necessary for promoting CLT and the class size in Chinese Junior High schools are usually very much larger than English classes (Ross 1993, Schoenhals 1993, Pepper 1996, Biggs 1998, Jin and Cortazzi 1998a, Peng 2007). Such a fully packed class makes learner-centred teaching very hard, especially for those free communicative activities such as group work, discussion, information gap, problem-solving, etc. which require students to move around or pass information to others which are highly advocated by CLT approach (Leng 1997).

Perhaps the most interesting issues which affects the way CLT is used in language teaching is teacher beliefs about language pedagogy and their own teaching. There is a wealth of evidence that teacher belief has a strong but

complex relationship with practices. These beliefs have cognitive, affective, value laden and political aspects (Kagan 1992, Rust 1994). Existing research suggests that these beliefs act to mediate experience in a particular environment. Tsui (2003), Zheng and Davison (2008) explored the beliefs of three teachers of English in China and found significant differences but also similarities, such as the primacy of grammar, translation, and reading and writing, which are bound to constrain their speaking and listening teaching. These beliefs certainly deserve further attention, as they may be the key to pedagogy.

### **2.2.3 Theoretical approaches to speaking and listening**

Speaking and listening are integral component of language as indicated by Richards (2006; p.13) the principles of CLT are “Make real communication the focus of language learning, provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know, provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency and link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they usually occur so in the real world.” From the above principles of CLT we see the importance of speaking and listening in language learning as “the primary function of language is for interaction and communication” (Richards and Rodgers 1986; p.71). As the aim and means of CLT are communication, and thus language is learned through meaningful use of language in the classroom (Klapper 2003) because “you learn to talk to people by actually talking to them (Cook 2001a; p. 215).” In order to apply the above mentioned principles of CLT we need to use new classroom techniques and activities as the result of changing of the roles for teachers and learners (Richards 2006). One of the objectives of CLT is to develop fluency in language use

(Richards 2006). Richards (2006; p. 14) states: “Fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which students must negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings, and work to avoid communication breakdowns.” Richards (2006; p.14) illustrates the difference between activities focusing on fluency and those on accuracy:

#### Activities focusing on fluency

- Reflect natural use of language
- Focus on achieving communication
- Require meaningful use of language
- Require the use of communication strategies
- Produce language that may not be predictable
- Seek to link language use to context

#### Activities focusing on accuracy

- Reflect classroom use of language
- Focus on the formation of correct examples of language
- Practise language out of context
- Practise small samples of language
- Do not require meaningful communication
- Control choice of language

Richards (2006) recommends that teachers should use a balance of accuracy and fluency activities to help students develop both accuracy and fluency ability. The following activities are usually used in CLT language classroom:

- Information-gap activities

- Jigsaw activities
- Task-completion activities
- Information-gathering activities
- Opinion-sharing activities
- Information transfer activities
- Reasoning- gap activities
- Role plays (Richards 2006; p. 19)

Most of the above activities reflect the important notions of classroom tasks in CLT and they are designed to be carried out in pairs or small groups (Richards 2006). Richards (2006; p.20) argues that through accomplishing these activities in this way learners will get the following benefits:

- They can learn from hearing the language used by other members of the group.
- They will produce a greater amount of language than they would use in teacher-fronted activities.
- Their motivation level is likely to increase.
- They will have the chance to develop fluency.

The development of CLT has led to worldwide innovation in methodology, text-books and curriculum (Allwright 1979, Littlewood 2002, Richards 2006) and “the shift toward CLT as marking a paradigm shift in our thinking about teachers, learning, and teaching” (Richards 2006; p.24). These led to the changes in thinking as a result of which emerged a number of different language teaching approaches (Richards 2006) “which fall within the general framework of

communicative language teaching” (Richards 2006;p.26) and task-based instruction (TBI) is one of them. TBI is a process-based methodology which claims that “language learning will result from creating the right kinds of interactional process in the classroom, and the best way to create these is to use specially designed instructional tasks (Richards 2006; p.30).” TBI makes the claims of using different kinds of tasks to facilitate learning and see tasks as the primary unit to be used in planning teaching and in classroom teaching (Richards 2006) and communicative effectiveness is the focus of TBI (Ellis 2003, Nunan 2004). Richards (2006; p. 31) defines some of the key features of a task as follows:

- It is something that learners do or carry out using their existing language resources.
- It has an outcome which is not simply linked to learning language, though language acquisition may occur as the learners carries out the task.
- It involves a focus on meaning.
- In the case of tasks involving two or more learners, it calls upon the learners’ use of communication strategies and interactional skills.

These features are in line with what Ellis comments about TBI: “The overall purpose of task-based methodology is to create opportunities for language learning and skill development through collaborative knowledge building (Ellis 2003; p. 276).” Teachers must make decision about what methodology according to their understandings of what works best for their students (Ellis 2003) and follow ‘fitness for purpose’ principle (Cohen, Manion et al. 2007).

#### **2.2.4 Different cultures of learning and its influence on teaching and learning of speaking and listening in modern foreign language classes in China and England**

Cortazzi & Jin developed a definition for cultures of learning which is widely used by researchers into the area of cultures of learning (Kato 2001, Kennedy 2002, Parris-Kidd and Barnett 2011).

By the term ‘culture of learning’ we mean that much behaviour in language classroom is set within taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach and learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education. In many classrooms both teachers and learner are unaware that such a culture of learning may be influencing the process of teaching and learning. A culture of learning is thus part of the hidden curriculum (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b; p. 169).

This definition acknowledges that learners and teachers bring with them a certain culture to language classroom, which might shape how teachers and learners perceive language learning and how they evaluate each other’s roles and classroom performance (Jin and Cortazzi 1998a, Parris-Kidd and Barnett 2011). Cultures of learning are shaped by the broader cultures within which they exist (Parris-Kidd and Barnett 2011). Chinese culture of learning is different from English culture of learning. Cortazzi & Jin (1996a; p.74) developed a table to illustrate the different emphasis in cultures of learning in China and UK as shown in Table 2.1. Flowerdew and Miller (1995) demonstrates similar

explanations about the difference between Confucian and western culture. This is a very relevant issue to my research because a culture of learning is likely to influence teachers' and learners' goals and strategy (Cortazzi and Jin 1996).

**Table 2.1 Different emphasis in cultures of learning: China and UK**

(Cortazzi and Jin 1996a; p.74)

<b>CHINA</b>	<b>UK</b>
Knowledge from teachers & textbooks	Skills in communicating & learning
Collective consciousness co-ordination, group support, social & moral learning	Individual orientation personal needs, attention, talent, uniqueness
Teaching & learning as performance pace, variety, presentation, virtuosity	Teaching & learning as organization pairs, groups, activities, tasks
Learning through practice & memorization towards mastery, preparation, repetition, confidence building	Learning through interaction & construction experience, activities, tasks, initial creativity
Contextualized communication, listener/reader responsibility	Verbal explicitness speaker/ writer responsibility for communication
Hierarchical relations, agreement, harmony, face, respect	Horizontal relations discussion, argument, informality
Teacher as model expert, authority, parent, friend, teacher-centred	Teachers as organizer mentor, guide, helper, learner-centred

Confucian education philosophy has exerted significant influence on Chinese conceptions of education (Hu 2002a). It is well recognized that Confucian values are significant for modern socio-cultural attitudes which affect learning and communication practices (Bond 1991, Watkins and Biggs 1996, Gao and Ting-Toomey 1998, Yao 2000). Chinese significant traditional respect for education and learning is deep-rooted in Chinese people (Jin and Cortazzi 2011a). Education is perceived as both cultivating people and strengthening the nation. Therefore it has become a goal in itself accepted by all members of Chinese society, even by those people who themselves have not received any education

(Cheng 2000, Hu 2002a). Hence in China there is saying ‘everything is low, but education is high’ (*wanban jie xiapin weiyou dushu gao*) (Hu 2002a). Confucius saw education not only as a means to the satisfaction of full personal development, but also as social recognition and material reward, offering the possibility of upwards social mobility for everybody, even those from obscure origin (Llasera 1987, Zhu 1992, Lee 1996). Chinese children have been educated when they are very little about the importance of education in their life and this deep-rooted belief that education can change their life has motivated many Chinese children to work hard (Jin and Cortazzi 2011a). That is why the Chinese parents are willing to invest a great deal of time and money to support their children’s studies in secondary and higher education (Jin and Cortazzi 2011a). Hence the importance of English in China has become a key drive for the Chinese parents to send their children to weekend schools to learn English (Gao 2006).

Learning is seen in Chinese culture as a process of knowledge accumulation than as a practical process of constructing and using knowledge for immediate purposes (Hu 2002a). True knowledge is believed to reside in written texts , especially classics and authoritative works (Scollon 1999, Wang 2001). The learning process in Chinese culture is the unquestioning acceptance of the knowledge transmitted from the teacher and books (Hu 2002a, Jin and Cortazzi 2006). Hence it explains the centrality of textbooks in Chinese education and textbook- based pedagogy in ELT in China which is focused on achieving knowledge of grammar and vocabulary (Jin and Cortazzi 1998a). Another factor related to this is in more collective cultures of learning like China the teacher and

other sources of information, such as textbook are the medium to transmit knowledge to students (Jin and Cortazzi 1998a, 2006). The environment in which teachers operate has been defined by some researchers (Johnson 1989, Nunan and Lamb 1996, Davidson and Tesh 1997) as two contrasting extremes, i.e. “high structure” environments and “low structure” environments. Chinese teaching environments belongs to the former in which teachers are supposed to follow a comprehensive, pre-specified curriculum, a textbook and examination prescription. Teachers and learners do not have, or very few, curriculum obligations (Wette and Barkhuizen 2009). This working environment does not encourage communicative competence in language learning. This is a factor which might contribute to the lack of communicative competence of the Chinese English learners. In FL learning the deep-rooted perception of education will not lose its impact on the Chinese learners which may help to explain partly why the Chinese learners are reluctant to speak and air their views in class (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Wette and Barkhuizen 2009). This hinders the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in English language classes.

In Chinese culture, face saving and maintaining harmony play a very important role in the interactions of Chinese people. People would avoid challenging other people’s statements or public disagreement in order to save face for themselves and others (Hall 1976, Hofstede and Bond 1984). Therefore Chinese students are “tolerant and avoid situations where they may cause anybody (both themselves and others) to lose face” (Jin and Cortazzi 2006; p.112). Chinese culture values modesty and standing out will be seen as showing off (Hu 2002a). This might help to explain Chinese students’ reticence in language classes for fear of losing

face in public (Liu and Jackson 2011). The face saving norm prevents Chinese students from being actively involved in discussion and challenging teacher's opinions which is not helpful in developing communicative competence in MFL learning (Edwards 2007a).

The core theme of Confucius' idea of benevolence is "Order" which Confucius took it as the basis of a society and the existence and prosperity of a nation. Such ideas of "Order" have exerted influence on the relationship between teachers and students (Cai 2006). Another important feature of traditional Chinese culture on education is its emphasis on maintaining a hierarchical but harmonious relation between teacher and student. Students are expected to respect and not to challenge their teachers. The reverent status of teacher is reflected in the saying 'being a teacher for only one day entitles one to lifelong respect from the student that befits his father' (*yiri weishi zhongshen weifu*) (Hu 2002a;p.98)." Because of the perceived roles of teachers as authority, model and expert it is difficult for Chinese teachers and students to accept any imported pedagogy that tends to put teachers on an equal position with their students and detracts teacher from authority (Hu 2002a). Hence the teacher-centred approach in English language teaching will not create an environment in which students will discuss, argue with teacher and thus develop a critical thinking and speaking and listening ability in language learning (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b, Hu 2002a).

In the Chinese perception these elements are assumed to be of value in students:

- A positive attitude towards learning (Salili 1996) and persistence in acquiring knowledge (Paine 1990)

- Unquestioning and respectful acceptance of knowledge received from teachers and books (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b) no judgement should be made from insufficient knowledge (Brick 1991)
- Aspiration to the highest possible academic achievement for the glory of their family and usefulness to the society (*guangzong yaozu*) (Lee 1996, Salili 1996)

Therefore to achieve all these goals students should treat learning seriously and sacrificially, even when learning seems boring to them. A strong belief in Chinese culture is that a person's ability is a controllable factor in education and can be achieved through hard work (Salili 1996). Confucius said: "I was not born with knowledge, but being fond of antiquity, I am quick to seek it." (Lau 1983; p. 153). Confucius believed that it is not innate ability that accounts for success or failure in education. What does matters is effort, determination, steadfastness of purpose, perseverance, and patience (Lee 1996, Biggs 1996a, Biggs 1996b). Thus hardworking is very much valued in Chinese culture. There is a traditional saying which emphasizes that if you put enough effort, you can grind a piece of iron into a needle (Jin and Cortazzi 2011c). The norm of hard working characterizes many Chinese students with a sense of optimism and confidence in the future combined with a belief in success through hard work (Jin and Cortazzi 2011a). All the above mentioned factors of Chinese cultures of learning and exam-oriented educational system and the washback effect of the National Matriculation English Test (Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011) have exercised a broad impact on the current ELT pedagogy in China which is still "teacher-dominated, text-book-based and transmission-oriented" (Hu 2005; p. 19). This pedagogy

does not provide a favourable environment for developing learner's speaking and listening ability in MFL learning.

English cultures of learning, as part of Western culture, have different set of norms, perceptions and ideals (Jin and Cortazzi 1998a). As the classification mentioned above English cultures of learning belong to "low structure" environment which provides flexible and minimal curriculum pre-specification, allowing teachers and learners freedom to negotiate the curriculum (Wette and Barkhuizen 2009). In such a working environment (Wette and Barkhuizen 2009) and individualized society (Parris-Kidd and Barnett 2011) teachers share horizontal relations with students (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a) which will foster a learner-centred pedagogy which encourages students to develop their own meaning from the information and experience they come across rather than reproduce the knowledge they have learned (Ngwainmbi 2000, Parris-Kidd and Barnett 2011). Such a culture inspires and encourages originality and creativity and pays attention to learning context and task-based problem solving ability. Many classrooms focus strongly on interaction and student participation (Parris-Kidd and Barnett 2011) because verbal activity is favoured (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b). In Western culture of learning people believe that ability is fixed, therefore teachers should meet individual needs and students are expected to work at their own level (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b). Teaching and learning as organization will encourage the use of pair work, group work, activities and tasks. Hence teacher as organizer will serve the role as mentor, guide, helper or facilitator which is different from Chinese cultures of learning (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a). This underpins the prevailing post-communicative language teaching

approach in England and is enshrined in the policies for language teaching.

## **2.3 Theory into practice**

The first way that these theories are manifested in language teaching is through policy in language learning. The incidence of language teaching discussed above is one part of policy but the official instructions and requirements for language teaching in both China and England strongly underpin and constrain language teaching in state schools. It is through the curriculum for England and the curriculum for China (for language study) that the effects of theory can be seen and, therefore, the emphasis on speaking and listening in language teaching.

### **2.3.1 Target language use in modern foreign language classes in China and England**

The importance of TL in second and FL learning is evidenced in the principles of CLT. The core objective of CLT is to develop learner's communicative competence (Hymes 1972, Richards 2006). TL use has gained renewed prominence in CLT. It is advocated that learners' exposure to TL will benefit them with communicative competence because learning environment has profound effects on learning (Entwistle and Waterston 1988) and the students need to have as much as possible input of the FL. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis input is the most crucial factor in determining whether an FL will be learned or not (Krashen 1983). However Swain argues that input alone is not enough because you might "cheat" on input, by not fully understanding the entire utterance, but you cannot fake output. Swain suggests in the Output Hypothesis

that output is important because it pushes learners to process language more deeply (with more mental effort) than does input. And output is valuable in helping learners to be aware and have a conscious reflection on how language works (Swain 1995). What we need is not only to understand the language but also to acquire communicative competence as Meiring and Norman (2002; p. 31) assert: "...communicative language teaching's prime purpose is to convey and understand messages in the target language with less emphasis on applying systems and understanding and transferring concepts." They also state: "In theory, communicative language teaching advocated a more spontaneous, improvised oral/aural register (Meiring and Norman 2002; p. 27)."

Halliwell and Jones (1991; cited in Meiring and Norman 2002, p.32) illustrate three reasons for using TL in setting out a rationale of the benefits of teaching learners in TL:

- they need to experience the target language as a real means of communication
- if we teach them in the language they are learning we give them a chance to develop their own in-built language learning system
- by teaching through the target language we are bridging that otherwise wide gap between carefully controlled secure classroom practice and the unpredictability of real language encounters

Ellis (1984; p. 133) argues for the importance of TL for both language related and classroom management functions:

In the ESL classroom... the L2 [is] inevitably used for these functions. In

the EFL classroom, however, teachers sometimes prefer to use the pupils' L1 to explain and organize a task and to manage behaviour in the belief that this will facilitate the medium-centred [language-related] goals of the lesson. In so doing, however, they deprive the learners of valuable input in the L2.

The importance of TL use in MFL teaching and learning, especially in developing students' speaking and listening ability is undeniable (Garcia-Mayo and Pica 2000, Swain 2000, Swain, Brooks et al. 2002). However it has been a controversial issue about the balance between the use of TL and the learners' first language (L1) in second language and MFL classes (Littlewood and Yu 2011). The 1990s witnessed the statutory position of the use of TL as speculated in National Curriculum for MFL in UK. Halliwell and Jones (1991; cited in Meiring and Norman, 2002) refer to the seminal statement in the National Curriculum proposals: (1990; p. 6)

Communication in a foreign language must involve both teachers and pupils using the target language as the *normal means of communication*.  
Indeed this is essential if the objectives...are to be achieved.

In the section about good practice in the National Curriculum and the requirements of GCSE, it says: "The natural use of the target language for virtually all communication is a sure sign of good modern language course (DES/WO 1990)."

Despite of the compulsory position promoted TL use as a natural component of

CLT the findings from research at this phrase were not very conclusive. Macaro (2000; p.174) summarizes the research of teacher use of TL into three categories:

- Total Exclusion or ‘Virtual’, which advocates exclusive use of target language (Frey 1988, Krashen and Terrell 1988, Chambers 1991)
- Maximalist -- extensive use of target language, but overlooking any negative impact of mother tongue (Seliger 1983, Halliwell and Jones 1991, Macdonald 1993)
- Optimal Use – appropriate use of target language with acknowledgement of pitfalls (Pattison 1987, Cook 1991, Dickson 1992, Hagen 1992, Harbord 1992, Phillipson 1992, Macaro 1997, Cohen 1998)

Compared with the 1995 version of the National Curriculum the current National Curriculum (DfEE/QCA 1999) for England has further diminished the emphasis on learning and using the TL because there is no explicit sub-headings about the using of TL in the 1995 version (DfE/WO 1995). And in the latter part of the 1990s the issue of the teacher use of TL has shifted to a consideration of pupil use of TL (James, Clarke et al. 1999). As Macaro (2000; cited in Meiring and Norman 2002, p.29) states: “Only through the learner using L2 can s/he achieve strategic communicative competence” and he reaffirms “a basic belief that learners’ use of the L2 is conducive to successful learning.”

However it is hard to decide the desirable balance between L1 and TL use the language classroom and the debate has been going on (Meiring and Norman 2002). Meiring and Norman (2002) assert that it is crucial that teachers take appropriate strategies for the development of principled TL use by teachers and

learners and they recommend the following useful guidelines:

- systematic use of TL for simple classroom instructions, commands and routines;
- measured use of L1 for clarification and comparison with L2 to develop language awareness (see NC (2000) key stage 3 Programme of Study Focus Statement, p. 6 and NC (England 1999), Key Stage 3 and 4, Programme of Study, p.16);
- maximum use of teacher TL to improve learners' pronunciation, develop problem-solving and enable learners to deal with the unpredictable;
- visual support to accompany use of the TL to motivate learners, increase cultural awareness and define meaning where direct translation is unclear or ambiguous;
- optimal use of TL to convey to learners that the foreign language is a genuine vehicle of communication, rather than merely a tool for intellectual activity;
- increase exposure to TL to improve confidence and facility with listening (widely perceived by learners as the most difficult language skill);
- greater contact with the TL to facilitate experimentation with language, and attendant learners autonomy (Meiring and Norman 2002; p.34).

Whatever dispute about the use of TL the above recommendations have provided us with useful guidelines to make the best use of TL to maximize effective language learning.

### **2.3.2 Students' language learning outcomes, especially speaking and listening, in China**

Large scale, quantitative evidence about the outcomes of speaking and listening learning and teaching is harder to find in a Chinese context than in the English context. The final school examination at 16 tests written English, but not speaking and listening so it is impossible to make confident statements about outcomes. In China the prevailing form of assessment is summative assessment which takes a written form and focus on structuralism (Wu 2001). This kind of assessment may undervalue the importance of speaking and listening skills and the significance of the development of communicative competence (Peng 2007). The test mostly consists of grammar, reading comprehension and short writing. Some places assess listening whilst a lot of places do not and very few schools assess speaking (Zheng and Adamson 2003). However, despite the large proportion of time the students spent on English learning, professional publications for teachers and studies of EFL consistently express concern about the speaking and listening of pupils and say that pupils find it difficult to communicate with people in appropriate English (Anderson 1993, Rao 1996, Hu 2002a, Xie 2010, Xu 2010). These studies are mostly small in scale but the expressions of concern about speaking and listening are consistent across all available studies. This is a major problem that is worrying both the government and the teachers in China (Wu 2004). In order to meet the challenging situation of economic globalization (Shu 2004) "the Chinese government and Ministry of Education(MOE) appeal to English language teaching at different levels, i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary schools to reform their curricula, teaching methods, teacher education and teacher professional development, and

assessment system, in order to nurture more people who can command better English in listening, speaking, reading and writing (Zheng and Davison 2008; p.4)” “In 1992 the State Education Development Commission (SEDC) introduced a functional syllabus in which the communicative teaching aim was set, and the communicative functions to be taught were listed. In the same year in cooperation with British Longman SEDC published a new textbooks series (Xu 2010; p. 160).” Beside the concerns of the scholars and ELT teachers in China the government shows great concerns to the students’ ability to build up “communicative competence” (Hymes 1972) as well. Since the mid-2000s Chinese educational reforms have emphasized collaboration in learning tasks and active participation from learners, together with development of a wider range of learning strategies, independent learning and learner autonomy (Zheng and Davison 2008;p.42, Jin and Cortazzi 2011c). In Chinese tertiary education students’ all-round ability to use English has been documented as the curriculum goal (MOE 2004). These indicated that the Chinese government realized the problem in Chinese students’ English language learning and the importance of teaching English in a communicative way (MOE 2001a, MOE 2011).

Although China has a favourable climate for learning English the outcome of English learning is not as successful as it might be, given the large proportion of curriculum and learning time devoted to it (MOE 2001). As Burstall et al. (1974) argue, school pupils’ attitudes towards language learning, are affected by the views of parents and significant others such as relatives, neighbours, family and friends. The Chinese people’s views about English language learning definitely exert a positive effect on school children’s attitudes towards English learning.

However the outcome is not encouraging. Most updated empirical studies about secondary students' English language proficiency are hard to find, however Wei's (2001; cited in Hu, 2002b) survey of 139 secondary schools in 15 provinces in China shed some light on this. The survey result shows that a great majority of the secondary school students only had some fragmentary knowledge of English grammar with a vocabulary of 1800 words and were very weak in four language skills. Some researchers acknowledge that overall Chinese students have poor speaking and listening ability (Hu 2002b, Hu 2005, Edwards, Ran et al. 2007b, Li and Moreira 2009, Fang 2011, Pan and Block 2011, Stanley 2011). They can make flawless sentences with exact grammar, remember complicated words and recite most of the texts since high school. However, their good knowledge of grammar and large amount of vocabulary do not save them from an awkward situation: they are good at dealing with different kinds of examinations, but cannot figure out the implicit meaning of an English article or write an essay expressing their feeling appropriately (Gao 2006, Li and Moreira 2009). When it comes to interacting with each other in English in their daily life, it turns to be a trickier task. It is said that the English Chinese students learn is "Numb English" (Yaba Yingyu) or "Deaf English" (Longzi yingyu) (Fang 2011; p.15). It has already been recognized by the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and the head of the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education stated that the language teaching method in China and the "test-oriented" context are the main causes of this situation (Fang 2011).

### **2.3.3 Students' language learning outcomes, especially speaking and listening, in England**

In England, as speaking and listening is statutorily a part of GCSE, so pass rates are indicative of achievement at speaking and listening. However, this is a non-compulsory examination taken by only 43% of 16 year olds (CILT 2010b). Of these, around three quarters of all pupils taking French (71%), German (75%), Spanish (74%) and 87% of pupils taking other languages achieved an A\*-C grade in 2010 (CILT 2010b). This suggests at least these pupils are achieving specified level of both speaking and listening as these skills form 50% of the assessment (25% speaking, 25% listening). Despite this, there is longstanding evidence of a concern about speaking and listening outcomes relative to reading and writing. An Ofsted report on MFL (2008; p. 4) expressed concern about the assessment of speaking and listening in England, noting "Across all phases speaking is the least well-developed of all the skills. Students' inability to be able to say what they want to say in a new language has a negative impact on their confidence and enthusiasm." An Ofsted report (2011; p.23) about the teaching of MFL states: "Although students' listening skills were generally satisfactory, they were not always strong because their development in some of the schools visited relied too heavily on exercises from text books. Opportunities for students to listen to teachers' requests and instructions in the target languages and to listen to and respond to other students were limited." and "Overall, speaking was the weakest skill in four out of five of the schools visited where inspectors rarely heard the target languages, despite there being good opportunities for the target language to be used. Even in the strongest departments, students had too few opportunities to use their languages to communicate in a realistic manner (Ofsted

2011; p.23).” This report draws on evidence from survey visits conducted between 2007 and 2010 in 92 primary schools, 90 secondary schools and one special school therefore it is broadly based, although the method of drawing conclusions is not entirely clear. This concern is also reflected in the professional literature (Carter and McCarthy 1997, Alexander 2003, Carter 2003, Alexander 2005, Bryan 2007) . This suggests that, despite the balanced nature of the English National Curriculum in terms of speaking, listening, reading and writing (below) and the strong theoretical emphasis on speaking and listening in the last 50 years (above) the situation of speaking and listening language learning is not unproblematic in England.

Having discussed the dominant theoretical perspectives about speaking and listening in England and China, and the way these are reflected in policy and practice, it is important to summarize the key features of “good” speaking and listening in language classes, based on these perspectives. What makes a good language learner? It is important to recognise that what makes a good language learner may be dependent upon the context and culture in which the learning is taking place (Gao 2006) so that Chinese and English students may have different expectations placed upon them. However, taking this into account, Johnson (2008) notes that there are a number of variables which contribute to individual difference. These variables are usually divided into three categories, i.e. cognitive variables, affective variables and personality variables. Under cognitive variables, intelligence and aptitude are important factors. For affective variables the most commonly studied factors are motivation and attitudes. The most obvious factor for personality is “extroversion and introversion”.

Naiman et al. (1978;cited in Johnson, 2008; p.143) adapted Rubin's (1975) good language learning strategies and put forwarded the following seven hypotheses about good language learners:

- The good language learner is a willing and accurate guesser.
- The good language learner has a strong drive to communicate, or to learn from communication. He is willing to do many things to get his message across.
- The good language learner is often not inhibited. He is willing to appear foolish if reasonable communication results. He is willing to make mistakes in order to learn and to communicate. He is willing to live with a certain amount of vagueness.
- In addition to focusing on communication the good language learner is prepared to attend to form. The good language learner is constantly looking for patterns in the language.
- The good language learner practices.
- The good language learner monitors his own and the speech of others. That is, he is constantly attending to how well his speech is being received and whether his performance meets the standards he has learned.
- The good language learner attends to meaning. He knows that in order to understand the message it is not sufficient to pay attention to the language or to the surface form of speech.

In investigating this issue, it will be important for my research tools to be open enough to encompass different cultural interpretations of what makes a good

pupil (Gao 2006).

## **2.4 The relationships between participant perceptions and practice in England and China**

### **2.4.1 Teacher beliefs and practice**

The policies and practices of teaching and learning speaking and listening may affect pupil outcomes in both direct and indirect ways. For example, the policies discussed may also have a direct and indirect effect in shaping teacher and pupil beliefs and actions in teaching and learning of speaking and listening. However, it is clear that this is not a simple relationship and that the role of teacher and pupil beliefs in language learning is an important consideration for how speaking and listening is taught and learnt.

Kagan (1992;p.85), in a seminal article, noted that “The more one reads studies of teacher belief, the more strongly one suspects that this piebald form of personal knowledge lies at the very heart of teaching”. This quotation neatly encompasses the two aspects of teacher belief which are important to my study: the nature of teacher beliefs and how teacher beliefs affect classroom practices. Both issues have been the topics of extensive and substantial academic consideration in the literature in education and MFL studies (Poulson, Avramidis et al. 2001, Bernat and Gvozdenko 2005), psychology (Nespor 1987, Pajares 1992) and ELT (Freeman 1989, Richards and Nunan 1990, Johnson 1992, Tsui 2003).

Pajares (1992) considered the “messy construct” of teacher beliefs in a substantial review of the literature and discussed the way that poor definition of what is meant by beliefs has caused difficulties in this area of study. Alexander, Schallert & Hare (1991; p.371) define knowledge as “all that a person knows or believes to be true” which suggests that there are some difficulties involved in attempting to disentangle teachers’ knowledge from their beliefs. Pajares (1992) argues that knowledge is based on objective fact, whereas belief is based on evaluation and judgment. Most authors agree that beliefs are created through a process of enculturation and social construction (Fleet 1979, Lasley 1980, Pajares 1992, Poulson, Avramidis et al. 2001) but while a number of studies describe how teacher beliefs appear resistant to change (Brousseau and Freeman 1988, Golombek 1998), more recent research, most usually in the teaching of languages to adults using a particular survey instrument devised by Horwitz (1988) (Beliefs about Language learning Inventory- BALLI) suggest beliefs about language may be susceptible to change over time. Other research in EAL (Bailey 1992) argues that changes in belief precede changes in instructional practices.

This evidence certainly emphasizes that relationship between teacher beliefs and teacher knowledge is complex. Studies of teacher beliefs (Munby 1984, Nespor 1987, Richardson 1994) suggest that the extent to which teachers adopt new instructional practices in their classrooms relates closely to the degree of alignment between their personal beliefs and the assumptions underlying particular innovatory teaching programmes or methods. However, two very substantial studies (although not specifically in languages teaching) have

observed inconsistencies in teachers' beliefs and their observed practices where teachers do less than they claim, particularly in terms of alternatives to didactic teaching practices (Galton, Simon et al. 1980, Desforges and Cockburn 1987). In a pilot study of the Chinese English teachers theoretical orientations in language teaching by Zhan (2006) the author asserts that their findings showed that overall, the teachers' beliefs, assumptions and knowledge (BAK) had no effect on either their focus on language skills or on the type of classroom activities they employ. This suggests that there may be other factors determining the teachers' behaviour, but also that inconsistency may be attributed to the discrepancy between beliefs and the complex teaching reality (Fang 1996). But the data in my research indicated that teachers' beliefs do affect pupils' beliefs and their perception of FL. Such studies have led to a strong feeling that an understanding of teachers' beliefs is important in understanding teachers' current classroom practices, such as their use of speaking and listening in classes, and in designing professional development programmes which seek to change those practices. Poulson et al. (2001), as a result of a substantial study of effective teachers of literacy, emphasize the complex nature of the relationship between teacher's beliefs and practices and explain that practices do not always come after beliefs because the relationship between the two is dialectical rather than unilateral.

A number of studies suggest that teacher beliefs have an important, pervasive role in the nature of the instruction which takes place in classrooms and in the professional lives of teachers (Kagan 1992, Freeman and Richards 1993, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). A study about teachers' beliefs by Rennie (1989; cited in Kagan, 1992, p.71) suggests that "teacher belief determined patterns of student

participation and the nature of instruction". In one of the initial studies of language teacher's beliefs, Horwitz (1988) argues that teacher's views could have a strong influence on the students' beliefs. Since the 1990s researchers have shown interest in the influences of teacher's thoughts, decisions and judgments on ELT practices (Johnson 1992, Tsui 2003). In a study of pre-service ELT teachers, Johnson (1994) found teachers' beliefs were largely based on their own learning experiences and may well have been responsible for ineffective instructional practices. Freeman (2002) studied four ELT teachers, following the evolution of their beliefs, and found that it was issues of classroom management which led to tensions in the teachers' thinking which clarified the need for genuine classroom interaction to promote language learning. Williams and Burden (1997) point out that although a syllabus or curriculum may be set down for teachers, it is personally shaped by the teacher's own belief systems. Woods (1996) examining teachers' EAL BAK about what language is and how it is learned and should be taught, found that two teachers, given a new curriculum, came up with two very different interpretations of what was to be taught and how. They interpreted curriculum innovation in terms of their BAK and also interpreted theoretical and pedagogical concepts related to language learning in terms of their BAK. Zheng and Davison (2008), in an in-depth case study of three teachers in the PRC found that these teachers held a strong common core of shared beliefs about language and language learning but also showed significant differences. These beliefs significantly influenced their design and practices of ELT teaching. However, it was not clear how far these beliefs were constrained by the policy context, or their relationship to the beliefs of pupils.

This reviews the importance of teacher's beliefs about language teaching. It emphasizes how beliefs may underpin what teachers do, the degree to which they can be changed and that these beliefs about language are, therefore, an important subject for study in themselves.

#### **2.4.2 Pupil beliefs and motivation**

The research in other countries suggests that teacher beliefs about language learning and instruction may be related not only to what teachers do in classes but also to pupil beliefs about language learning. It has long been accepted that learners bring to language learning a complex set of beliefs about language learning (Oxford 1992, Nyikos and Oxford 1993, Benson and Lor 1999). Failure to address unrealistic language learning expectations can lead to feelings of reluctance and loss of motivation in pupils (Richards and Lockhart 1994) and even a breakdown in learning (Ellis 1996) and are a key source of language learning anxiety for students (Young 1991). Echoing the arguments about beliefs outside the ELT world (Poulson, Avramidis et al. 2001) it can be argued that if learner beliefs are consistent with good learning practices, or even the practices of their setting, the effect of beliefs is likely to be positive, but that inconsistent beliefs may have negative learning consequences. Studies such as Kern (1995), using the BALLI discussed above, investigated the stability of pupil beliefs in relation to teacher beliefs and challenged the accepted wisdom the language learners beliefs remained stable, whilst suggesting that the beliefs of individual pupils were influenced by those of their teachers. If this is possible, then the teachers' beliefs about language, language learning and teaching become doubly

implicated in learner outcomes and this is a further reason for studying such beliefs in relation to the teaching of speaking and listening.

Although motivation is not a topic of immense interest in the PRC, where language learning is not optional, it has attracted research attention in England. Authors and researchers have both predicted and documented the decline in MFL education in England over the past decade. (Pachler 2002, Broady 2006a, Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007) and at the same time pupil de-motivation towards MFL learning in England has been researched and commented upon. A large-scale survey at Key Stage 3 about the UK secondary students' motivation towards MFL conducted by Coleman et al. (2007) reported that the students in English secondary education showed declined tendency in their motivation towards FL learning in recent years. Possible causes of the decline in motivation have been debated at length in a number of substantial articles (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007, Macaro 2008, Coleman 2009) including the direct influences of policy. It has also been a great concern in the press (Jardine 2010).

Against this background, my study seeks to examine not only the beliefs about languages and language teaching and learning of teachers, which are clearly a key issue in the teaching of speaking and listening, but also the beliefs and motivations of pupils, which may be related to those of teachers and also to the teaching and learning practices of the setting and, thereby, the decisions and beliefs of the teachers. This is a very important issue in shaping the approach taken to this study.

### **2.4.3 Chinese pupils' motivation to learn English**

Motivation is not a topic of immense interest in China because FL learning is not optional and all school children and university students must study English from age 9 to the end of their university studies (a minimum of 11 years) (Liu 2007b). In addition, any student studying at undergraduate, masters or postgraduate level in China must study a language and pass examinations in this language (Hu 2002b, Cheng 2008). MFL enjoys very high status in China (Zhang 2005) because it is a focus of government policy (Lam 2002, Edwards 2007a) and a precondition to a range of socioeconomic and educational opportunities (Ng and Tang 1997a, Hu 2002b). Besides China has a favourable climate for English language learning and a great deal about motivation for FL learning can be inferred from the policies and culture in China (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Hu 2002a) as mentioned above in Section 2.1.1.3. China is a country which values very much Confucius education philosophy and it has a long history to attach high importance to education. Confucian philosophy has exerted great influence on Chinese conceptions of education (Hu 2002a). Education is perceived as both cultivating people and strengthening the nation. Therefore it has become a goal in itself accepted by all members of Chinese society, even by those people who themselves have not received any schooling (Cheng 2000). Therefore Chinese parents attach great importance to their child's education, especially learning English language as English is seen as one of the basic requirements and necessary skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens (MOE 2000, MOE 2003).

Another factor which might have contribution to students' motivation in learning English language in China "could be attributed to the fact that the rapid

development of economy in China in recent years has yielded an increasingly high demand for university graduates with high English competence in various fields such as education, market, business, science and technology” (Boyle 2000).

All the above mentioned factors contribute to building up a favourable climate for English language learning in China and help the students to have high motivation in learning English. Most students in China at all levels are motivated to learn English well (Jin and Cortazzi 1998b). However although most of the Chinese students at all levels are highly motivated in learning English and they work hard the level of their oracy is not good. They can get good marks in vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing, but when they meet native English speakers they can neither understand what they say nor express themselves successfully in good English. This is a big issue in English language teaching in China (Stanley 2011).

#### **2.4.4 English pupils’ motivation to learn modern foreign language**

Motivation is one of the most significant predictors and determinants of success in second and FL learning (Oxford and Shearin 1994, Dörnyei 1994a, Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007). According to Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model, attitudes such as the attitude towards the language and culture, are in the central position of the learning process, since if students’ attitudes are favourable, it is reasonable to predict that the students will have pleasant experience to learn language and will be encouraged to continue. Conversely, if the students’ attitude is negative from the start, the learning experience will tend to be considered as

unfavourable (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007). Therefore it is likely to lead to students' low motivation in language learning (Schmidt and Watanabe 2001).

In the large-scale survey at Key Stage 3 about the UK secondary students' motivation towards MFL Coleman et al. (2007) reported that the students in English secondary education showed declined tendency in their motivation towards FL learning in recent years. Some authors and researchers have predicted or documented the decline in MFL education in England over the past five or six years (Pachler 2002, Broady 2005, Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007, Evans 2007, Pachler 2007, Macaro 2008). Not only in secondary education, language learning at degree level has dropped dramatically as well (Footitt 2005, Pachler 2007). The last decade has witnessed declining numbers of students studying MFL at degree level, and university language departments are experiencing serious falls in recruitment (CILT 2000, CILT 2003, Watts 2004).

What has caused this de-motivation towards MFL in England? Different researchers and educators have different views about this issue.

Johnson (2008;p. 129) asserts "Attitudes are really extremely relevant to motivation." There are several types of attitude might contribute to motivation which include attitude towards success, attitude toward teacher and attitude towards your own country. Johnson (2008; p.131) argues that "perhaps what you think of your own country, and not just of the country of the target language speakers, will influence how well you succeed in the foreign language. One relevant type of attitude is associated with a feeling of 'ethnocentrism', a belief in the superiority of your own country. This belief will hinder the learning of a

foreign language---after all if you believe your own country to be that important, then it is up to the rest of the world to learn your language, not you theirs. This unhelpful attitude is often said to be held by some countries where English is the main L1.”

Some researchers attribute the decline in language entries to the removal of compulsory MFL learning from the curriculum at Key Stage 4. Coleman et al. (2007; p.249) states that ‘making the subject optional damaged the perceived status of languages, and the introduction of choice has led to a dramatic decline in the take-up of languages post-14’.

Pachler (2007; cited in Coleman et al., 2007, p.250) in his editorial article indicates that the students’ opting out for MFL is mainly extrinsic determined by culturally related attitudes as:

- perceived difficulty and consequent likely negative impact on grades and progression;
- narrowly transactional curricula;
- unfavourable sociocultural conditions and the low status of foreign language proficiency.

Coleman (2009) argues that substantial anecdotal evidence suggests that the de-motivation of students’ taking up of languages is because pupils found that FL difficult and boring for them and schools saw them as a threatening factor to their position in rankings. This led schools to choose both to stop teaching all their pupils and entering them for GCSE right before the change in regulation

becoming statutory.

Except for the policy effect on the situation of MFL teaching and learning in England, Coleman (2009; p.111) argues that there might be other factors which contributed to the low motivation towards MFL in secondary education in England. He asked the following questions:

- Is there a coincidence between trends in British attitudes to Europe and the growing or waning enthusiasm for language learning across all sectors?
- What role is played – and what attitudes revealed – by the pronouncements and actions of British politicians when they are not specifically addressing language issues?
- Is public xenophobia echoed or shaped by the printed and broadcast media?
- And when so many initiatives are seeking to address British insularity and monolingualism, is there more that can be done?

“The UK is arguably a hostile climate for language learning and a climate in which a frequently jingoistic press dignifies ethnocentrism or xenophobia as Britishness or Euroscepticism” (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007; p. 251). The unfavourable influence of the UK’s social climate and the failure of opinion formers including employers and national organizations to promote FL competence have had a negative effect on school pupils. Burstall et al. (1974; cited in Coleman et al. 2007) argues that indeed, school pupils’ attitudes towards language learning are affected by the views of parents and significant others such

as relatives, neighbours and family friends. Coleman (2009; p.115) argues that “language issues appear invisible to policy-makers at the highest level” and he asserts that the media plays an important role in shaping British people’s xenophobia as “... good news stories about languages, such as the fact that most of Britain’s wealthiest under-30s in the Sunday Times Rich List speak at least two languages, and only 14% are monolinguals, compared to 58% of British 11- to 18-year-olds, find it hard to penetrate the mainstream press (Moore 2008; cited in Coleman, 2009, p.119).”

Another implication that hinders popularity of MFL in the UK is the impact on the country’s economic output and ability to do business as Milton and Meara (1998; p. 68) suggest:

The worlds of education and work are becoming increasingly internationalised and the importance of ability in foreign languages is growing as a result. ... If the rest of Europe becomes functionally multilingual and Britain does not, then Britain will become politically, socially and economically excluded from the benefits of the changing world.

Coleman (2009) argues that educational policy alone cannot determine the status of MFL. The social climate, economic factors and media all play a part in exerting an influence on students’ motivation towards FL learning.

In a world of globalization, language plays an important role in a country’s social and economic life. However the situation of language learning in England is not

encouraging although across the whole of Europe FL teaching in secondary education is increasing with 86% of pupils were learning English in 2006 (EuropeanCommission 2008a; cited in Coleman 2009). However, the UK has a lower proportion of its secondary pupils learning a FL than any other country in Europe, even English-speaking Ireland (EuropeanCommission 2008a; cited in Coleman 2009). According to a 2007 BBC survey of 3000 people only 2% among British adults can ask how to find the toilet in the main language they learnt at school, and only 3% can say sorry. On average, each remembers just seven words (Coleman 2009).

The achievement and motivation for speaking and listening in a FL is a key issue for my research, as I aim to explore how this is developed in both English and Chinese FL classes. Chapter Four will address the evidence about how students in both England and China are involved in speaking and listening in FL learning.

## **Conclusion**

In this review I have considered the status of FL teaching in both China and England and I argued that there is a much stronger policy drive for language learning in China. This, in turn leads to language learning and teaching throughout the years of schooling and university for most Chinese language learners. However, in England, the situation is different. The learners have opted to learn language voluntarily. This might make a difference to how teachers and students see language learning and how they do it. It certainly makes a difference to the amount of time in class children have to do speaking and listening.

This review discusses one of the biggest theoretical movements underpinning language teaching-CLT, which puts speaking and listening right at the heart of language learning. This theoretical approach has influenced the policies of both countries, although it has faced much bigger challenges in China. However, it is reflected in the content of the English curriculum and, at a lesser degree, the PRC curriculum. However, English inspection reports show that speaking and listening do not actually have equal status, time and attention to reading and writing. In China I have argued on the basis of limited empirical data, for a similar situation, but for different reasons. However, this is a partial view, based on evidence which tends to consider language teaching in general and not focus upon speaking and listening.

I have also argued that the beliefs of pupils and teachers affect how and what they do and that it is in these beliefs that the best evidence about teaching speaking and listening can be found.

Against this background my research, therefore, aims to explore speaking and listening in classes in China and England to gain a fuller understanding of what happens and the beliefs of those involved. My research question is: ***What are participant perceptions about speaking and listening in modern foreign language classes in China and England and their relationship to classroom practices?***

The next section will discuss my method and methodology.

## Chapter Three Method and Methodology

### Introduction

The review of literature in the previous chapter introduces the background of FL teaching and learning in China and England, concerns about speaking and listening, the theories which underpin the curriculum and the importance of teacher and pupil perceptions in both countries for the speaking and listening experience of pupils. On the basis of this, a number of questions about the teaching of speaking and listening in MFL classes in China and England emerged. Based on the review of literature the overall research question for my study is:

*What are participant perceptions about speaking and listening in modern foreign language classes in China and England and their relationship to classroom practices?*

I have a number of sub-questions, based on the review above. These will help me to address and explore my research question.

1. What are the perceptions of teachers and students about the role of the speaking and listening component of MFL teaching in schools in China and England?
2. How do these perceptions relate to the theoretical principles nominally underpinning this element of the MFL curriculum in both countries?
3. How do these perceptions inform the delivery of the teaching of speaking and listening in schools in both countries?
4. What are pupils' motivations for language study and how might this be

related to their perceptions of speaking and listening?

This section of the thesis aims to propose, and justify, a method for investigating the perceptions of teachers and learners in China and England about speaking and listening and to identify reasons why a number of contrasting cases are likely to provide new theoretical knowledge. My study seeks to examine not only the beliefs of teachers, which are clearly a key issue in the teaching of speaking and listening, but also the beliefs and motivations of pupils, which may be related to those of teachers and also to the teaching and learning practices of the setting and, thereby, the decisions and beliefs of the teachers (Johnson 1992, Barcelos 2000;cited in Riley 2009).

### **3.1 Research strategy**

My chosen research approach is case study because this research seeks to illuminate the issues and relationships between issues within the topic. It would be difficult to separate issues of teacher belief from the practices they choose, although the relationship is not simple (Pajares 1992). I suggest it would also be unhelpful as it is precisely the relationships between beliefs, policies and practices which are of interest. I believe case study is a method which allows me to examine these issues without artificially changing the situation. The literature about case study offers useful discussions of the theoretical assumptions and reasons for choosing this approach.

Yin (1994; p.3) states that “case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as individual life

cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries.” This is the case for my study, which aims to look at the holistic activity in classrooms—the teaching and learning of speaking and listening. In this study, I am interested in the daily policy and practice decisions of teachers’ and pupils’ speaking and listening in classes.

Merriam (1988) discussed several researcher definitions of case study, which apply to my study. Wilson (1979; cited in Merriam 1988, p.11) conceptualizes the case study as a process ‘which tries to describe and analyze some entity in qualitative, complex and comprehensive terms not infrequently as it unfolds over a period of time’.” This is the situation for the exploration of speaking and listening in MFL classes. As I have tried to establish in my review of literature, the practices used may result not only from the cultural expectations and pedagogical practices of each country but also be affected by the developing relationship between the teacher and pupils, and their perceptions of the importance and role of speaking and listening.

In my study, I wish to address both the purposes of case study defined by Becker (1968; p.233): “‘to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study’ and ‘to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process.’”

Case study has been widely used in social science research—including the traditional disciplines such as psychology, sociology, political science,

anthropology, history, and economics as well as practical-oriented fields ( urban planning, public administration, public policy, management science, social work) (Yin 1994;p.xiii) as well as in education, recognizing that classes and schools are themselves complex social organizations.

Case study is the most appropriate strategy to investigate the issue of talk in language classes because Yin (1994; p.1) illustrates that “ In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.” These are precisely the questions I aim to talk about behaviour, choices and beliefs.

Merriam (1988; p.9) gives similar illustration over this issue. The following elements should be considered when the investigator is trying to choose a research design:

- The nature of the research questions
- The amount of control
- The desired end product
- A bounded system

According to these principles my research is to answer some “how” and “why” questions as:

- How do Chinese/English teachers view speaking and listening as part of the curriculum?
- How is oral language included in MFL lessons in England/China?

- What do pupils believe about oral participation in language learning?
- How do pupils participate or not participate verbally in MFL lessons?

I as an investigator have no control over the classroom events, but will be an observer. My research is about “contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (Yin 1994; p.1), i.e. the conduction of speaking and listening in MFL teaching and learning. Therefore case study is chosen as my research strategy to allow me to understand and illuminate the complex web of beliefs, attitudes, actions and decisions in language classes. However, it is very important to be clear about what constitutes a case and how I will collect data for each case. As with other types of research, there are many data collection methods available and I have chosen those most suited to answer my questions.

### **3.2 The cases and the sample**

For this study I have adopted a multiple case approach which included nine cases of a class, including the teacher, pupils and their perceptions about speaking and listening. Six of these cases were classes in China and three in England. Whilst it is possible to use a single case study to illuminate a complex situation, the use of multiple case studies is particularly recommended when “the same study may contain more than a single case” (Yin 1994; p.44) and Herriott and Fireston (1983) note that multiple cases may yield a more compelling study with more robust conclusions than a single case study. I decided to conduct a number of case studies in England and China because the literature suggests a wide range of practices both within each country and across the two. However, in selecting the cases it is important to use a replication logic, rather than simply see it as

sampling (Hersen and Barlow 1976). In my study this involves two types of replication. The first is a literal selection (Yin 1994) of cases within each country which predict certain results. The classes within each country were selected to be similar, on the basis of their school type, pedagogy and pupils (literal selection). However, in selection classes in England and China, I was using a theoretical replication, as the research reviewed above would suggest that the situation of speaking and listening will be very different in classes in England and China. By conducting a number of case studies, selected to reflect the predicted differences between classes in China and to offer multiple cases in each country, I am able to offer a number of insights into the experience of teaching and learning of speaking and listening in language classes.

Because my research is a study of perceptions of the teaching and learning of speaking and listening at key stage 3 in England and the equivalent in China, therefore one junior high school (School A) was chosen in England. This school is a large community and training school with about one quarter of the students from minority ethnic backgrounds, predominantly Indian heritage. The school was one of the earliest schools to opt for Academy status, during the course of this research, and it is a school with successful student outcomes and “outstanding” status as a result of its Ofsted inspection in 2010. This report shows that the school has a slightly lower than average number of children with special educational needs and so it can be considered a high performing setting for the study. Two junior high schools were chosen in China with one school in difficult economic circumstances (School B) in which the majority of the pupils are immigrants with poor family backgrounds and one of the most sought-after schools (School C) in the local area with

successful student outcomes. In choosing these two Chinese schools I aim to make a contrast between them and to make my data more reliable. There is no claim that these are representative of their county's provision, simply that they are secondary schools. The willingness to participate of the teachers is important and, in this respect, this is an opportunistic sample because willingness to participate was an essential selection criterion. However, in a study like this, which seeks perceptions, the participation, co-operation and confidence of the participants are vital to collection of meaningful data. Within each school three classes and their teachers were included in the study.

In School A (English) three classes of Year 8 pupils and four teachers were chosen (because one class had two teachers for MFL), with one class learning Spanish and two classes learning French. In both School B (Chinese) and School C (Chinese) three classes of Year 8 pupils and three teachers were involved in the research. In the Chinese schools the study included six classes and six teachers. In the Chinese schools all the children study English and they do not have another choice of FL (Jin and Cortazzi 2002). When access was negotiated to the sites for research, it was not anticipated that all cases would result in successful data collection but, in fact, they were all completed successfully. The structure of my study is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

### **3.3 Methods to address the research questions**

Within case study a huge range of methods are available to the researcher (Merriam 1988) depending on the focus of the study. Indeed, some authors identify different methods as allied to different research approaches (Yin 1994)

and epistemologies (Miles and Huberman 1994). However, I have adopted what Miles and Huberman (1994) would describe as a pragmatic stance, although one which sees the reality of teachers' and pupils' perspectives as the most important issues, tending to the phenomenological (Tesch 1990, Miles and Huberman 1994, Mertens 1998). On this basis my approach to data collection was to consider what data would best answer the questions I identified on the basis of my review of literature. These questions are about how the perceptions of teachers affect the teaching and learning and pupil motivation and behaviour. Therefore, I aim to collect teacher perceptions, pupil perceptions and sample the teaching and learning in the classes. In order to address the research questions in this study I used observation, questionnaire and interview to collect my data. This approach enables me to consider both my own observations and the views of the participants.

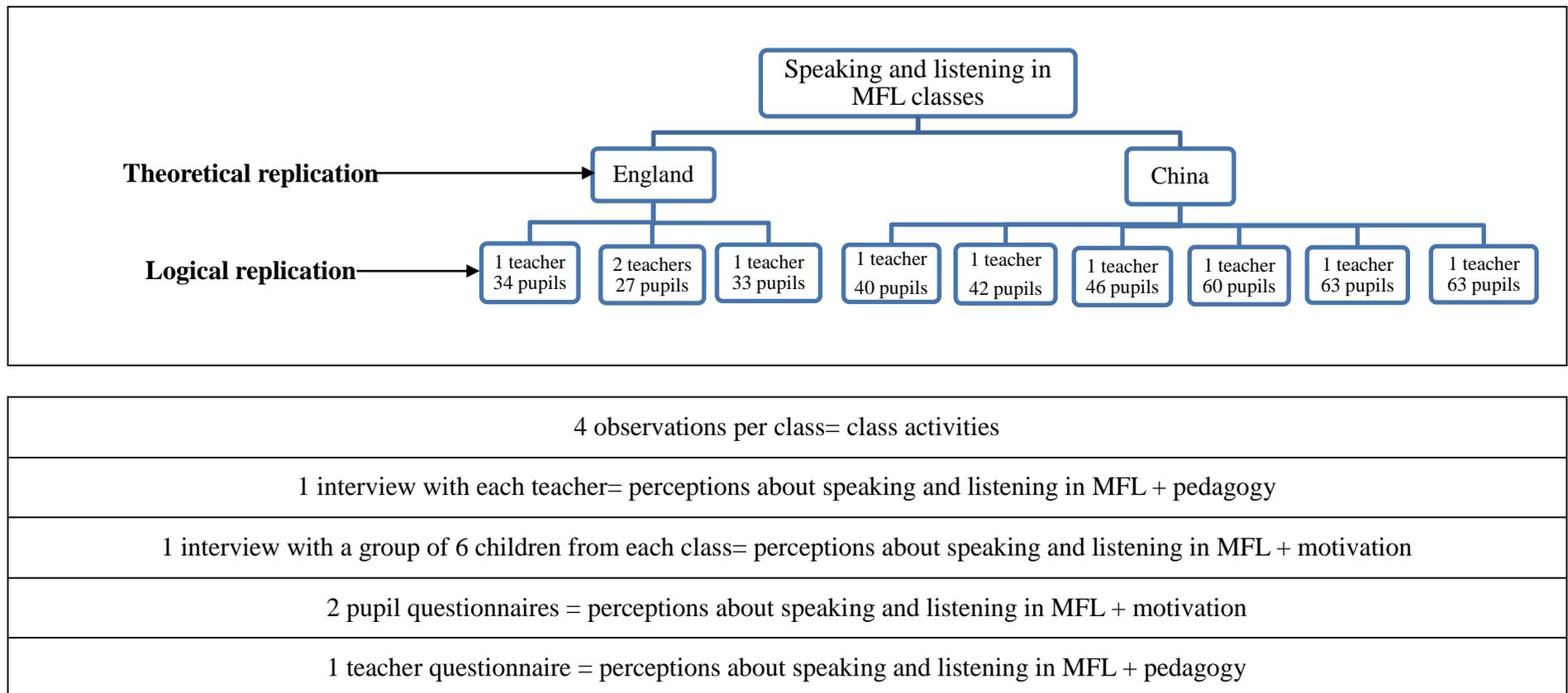
### **3.3.1 Observation**

I used direct observation to answer the questions:

- How is speaking and listening included in MFL lessons in England/China?
- How do pupils participate verbally in MFL lessons?
- What pedagogy do teachers in England and China use in language classes?

Examples of the answers to these questions were discussed with the teachers to develop an understanding of the ways their beliefs relate to teaching and learning practices.

**Figure 3.1 Structure of my study**



Observation was used to collect data about what is happening in MFL teaching and learning both in China and England. The first purpose for this was to provide evidence for this study about what speaking and listening the teachers and pupils in each class did. The second purpose for this data collection was to provide information about speaking and listening to discuss with the pupils and teachers. For these reasons I aimed to observe a sample of the MFL lessons the class did and select from the lesson the types of language used and the pedagogical purposes for this use, as well as the teaching and learning activities undertaken. Lessons may have a pattern of language use by teachers and pupils as well as a pattern of activities related to the beginning, middle and end of lessons, changes of activity etc. (Johnson 2008). Therefore, I chose to observe a small number of whole lessons, rather than sampling a larger number of parts of lessons. In my study I assumed the role of a non-participant observer (King 1978) because I “do not have control” (Yin 1994) over the classroom events and because I wanted to see the use of language in a naturalistic setting- this is precisely the focus of my study. This decision means my presence may well have had an “observer effect” whereby the teachers or pupils may have demonstrated particular behaviours in response to my presence (Allwright 1988, Wajnryb 1992, Cohen, Manion et al. 2007). However, this was unavoidable and consistent across all the classes.

I observed four lessons for each case, focusing on observation of the teacher’s pedagogy for speaking and listening and the student’s participation in speaking and listening activities. The observations were used as discussion points with the teachers after the classes to examine the perceptions of the children and the teachers about speaking and listening in the lessons. In capturing the speaking

and listening and the classroom activity, it would be possible to use video or audio taping, structured observation schedules, free field notes or a combination of all these methods. Foster (1996b) discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each of these methods. Having considered these, I experimented with videoing a lesson and then analyzing the talk, influenced by Brown and McIntyre's (1993) use of stimulated recall. However, a number of problems arose. With a single video camera, it was impossible to capture the whole class or hear much of the language. Moreover, the time necessary for analysis to classify the utterances meant that the lesson could not be discussed with the teacher easily and was excessive. This technique was abandoned at the pilot stage. However, as a result of the piloting experiments, a number of categories of teacher and pupil utterance were used to create a structured schedule and field notes, which were used to capture the patterns of activity for discussion later.

The observation schedule was designed to capture both the type of teacher and pupil utterances (structured schedule) and the teaching and learning behaviours which took place in class (field notes). This meant splitting the observation schedule into two parts. The first part of the schedule was a list of the sort of language uses identified from the research as typical or desirable in MFL classes (See Appendix 1), including questioning, responding, use of TL, praising, keeping order etc. These categories are based on the literature review (Naicker and Balfour 2009) and Flanders' (1970) Interaction Analysis Categories. These were grouped, for ease of use, into teacher utterances and pupil utterances. The schedule aimed to collect the quantity of each type of utterance, so that an analysis could be made of the type of speaking in class but the schedule did not

attempt to collect overall quantity in a specific time, so this was not a timed tick schedule (Like Flanders (1970), for instance) where the observer record a category of utterance every minute. The schedule used asked the observer to classify all utterances and record a tick for each one (Qian, Tian et al. 2009). One limitation of this approach is that the decision about “what constitutes an utterance?” and “what type of utterance is this” were made rapidly. However, this problem was considered during piloting and specific examples generated for each type of utterance. There were all together 65 categories (Appendix 1), this was very difficult to manage but, given a grid pattern and careful reviewing of the lesson was achieved.

This schedule was piloted in England and used successfully in the English schools but, some of the categories never happened in the English classes but was common in Chinese classes. For example, in the Chinese classes, when the teacher asked the whole class a question, all the children might reply at once, speaking in unison. A further difference, and one of major significance, is that the Chinese teachers always translated the TL into English, which was not the practice of English teachers.

The field notes collected some qualitative data, such as what they do in a class, the objective of the class, what activities they do, what issues that I found interesting.

### **3.3.2 Questionnaire**

To investigate into the students’ views and beliefs about oral participation in

MFL learning and teaching two pupil questionnaires were adopted for data collection. This method has been used in the field of motivation for language learning in China by Gao, Zhao, Cheng and Zhou (2007) in a large scale study of 2278 university students studying English. Although the sample was a different age from my study, the motivation types identified by the study and format of questions were useful to me in developing and analysing my questionnaires for pupils and provide some interesting background data. Questionnaires have also been used to examine the motivation of UK school pupils towards FL (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007) in a large scale study of 10,000 pupils of a similar age phase to my study and, again, this is very interesting background data and methodological information. In my final study two questionnaires were administered to the children. These questionnaires used a range of questions from the above studies as well as questions generated from the research about pupil speaking and listening activity discussed in the review of literature.

I was able to use a number of closed questions of yes/no and Likert scale type questions to gain some quantitative data about the range of views and practices. Although this is quantitative data, I make no claims about generalization across the wider students' population. Rather this data will give a clearer picture about the views of pupils within each case. I also asked some open questions because the study is concerned with subjective rather than objective data (the students' views and beliefs) and "rich and personal data are sought" (Cohen, Manion et al. 2007; p.321). In addition, it is likely that there are many possible categories of response that a closed question might contain an extremely long list of options (Cohen, Manion et al. 2007). Therefore open and closed questions are necessary

to explore both qualitative and quantitative facets of the study (Bennet 1976, Brown and McIntyre 1978). Likert scaling is a bipolar scaling method to measure positive or negative attitudes to a statement (Allen and Seaman 2007). I considered whether to use four or five points on a scale. A five point scale could have the middle option of "Neither agree nor disagree". However, a neutral option can be seen as an easy option to take when a respondent is unsure, and so whether it is a true neutral option is questionable (Armstrong 1987) so I chose to use a "forced choice" method, where the neutral option is removed. Armstrong (1987) found negligible differences between the use of "undecided" and "neutral" as the middle option in a 5-point Likert scale. The Likert type questions discussed below were designed to have some positive and negative statements to reduce acquiescence bias (Watson 1992).

### **3.3.2.1 Pupil questionnaire**

The two pupil questionnaires (See Appendix 2.1 and Appendix 3.1) included some questions of fact, such as questions about length of study, time spent on learning language each week. However, the majority of the questions deal with views and opinions. As such, there is no correct answer and may be a wide range of responses.

Pupil questionnaire I addressed the following issues:

- What do pupils believe about oral participation in language learning?
- What do pupils believe about the balance between speaking and listening, reading and writing?
- What motivates or de-motivates them to learn a MFL?

- What do pupils believe they should do to be good language learner?

Based on the questionnaire conducted by Coleman et al (2007) in a large scale and influential study, a questionnaire in a large scale study of 2278 undergraduate students by Gao et al (2007), Tercanlioglu's (2005) research about 118 pre-service EFL teachers and Horwitz's (1987) Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) the content of pupil questionnaire I had three sections:

Section 1 gathered background information about the pupils (age, sex, language learning experience). Section 2 addressed the key points of pupil motivation and attitudes to MFL and use these statements as the basis for a Likert scale type attitude scale to assess the strength of each pupil's agreement or disagreement. Section 3 included a range of open and closed questions, as a cross-checking mechanism, about the following issues of pupil beliefs. It will be interesting to see whether the responses to these questions are consistent with those of section 2.

The items in this questionnaire aimed to collect pupils' perceptions about speaking and listening. However, this is, as I have established in the review, a complex area and so the questionnaire items addressed the following themes about language learning, which are relevant to the study. The issues reviewed in the method, include: the pupils' motivation for language learning which will affect their participation and approach to speaking and listening.

- The pupil's views about their own effort and achievement in language learning ,which will affect their willingness to participate in and value

speaking and listening,

- Pupil perception about speaking and listening and grammar, as these are sometimes seen as opposite ends of a continuum of goals;
- Students' perceptions of the activities they undertook and their oral participation in language classes.

Section 2 of pupil questionnaire I used a Likert scale type statement bank to assess the strength of each participant's agreement or disagreement of statements about motivation and perceptions about language learning. The subjects' response to a four-point Likert-scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. Some of the items are in reversed wording therefore the answers were reversed during analysis for the ease of the reader. The items were mixed up so that the respondents did not spend too much time thinking about each item. However, during analysis the items were regrouped into the following themes: Motivation, Effort, Achievement, Speaking and listening and Grammar. These give a picture of the children's perceptions of language learning and motivation, especially for speaking and listening. In addition, the findings of the group interview with six children have been discussed alongside the questionnaire items they seek to illuminate. Table 3.1 indicates the regrouped items in pupil questionnaire I according to the above mentioned themes.

**Table 3.1 New categories of the items in pupil questionnaire I**

(see appendix 2.1)

New categories	Items
Motivation	2, 3, 7, 9, 13, 15, 19, 21, 23
Effort	4, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 26, 27, 30

Achievement	1, 5, 8, 11, 18, 22, 29, 31
Speaking and listening	24, 25
Grammar	28

The questionnaires were piloted in a class in the English and Chinese schools and both the administration and results reviewed before administering a final questionnaire to all classes. Oppenheim (1992) notes that a pilot of questionnaires is particularly important to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire. A number of changes were made as a result of the piloting process. In terms of administration, I made a significant change by asking the teachers to administer the questionnaires. In the pilot I administered the questionnaire but the teacher suggested she could do it, as she knew the children better. Although the teacher is undoubtedly in a different relationship with the children and there is a possible issue of children answering questionnaires to please the teacher (Cohen, Manion et al. 2007), I decided this was a less important consideration than the confidence and trust inspired by the teachers in their own classes. Therefore, the final questionnaires were administered by the teachers in all classes, following an invitation letter read to them by me (see Appendix 8.1). I also adapted some of the items in the questionnaire following analysis of the results. The information about studying language at weekend schools was not relevant to the English children and these were removed from the English questionnaires. Some of the items in pupil questionnaire I (motivation) (25- 28) were very significant to Chinese children in the pilot and they offered a range of answers but were not relevant to the English children. For instance “I learn English because it is required for entering senior high school and University (item 33, Appendix 2.1)”. Therefore, these items were omitted from the final English questionnaires, as they were not relevant.

The items in pupil questionnaire II (see appendix 3.1) deal with the activities that pupils do in language classes. This questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part include 19 items of activities which seek to understand how often pupils do these activities in language classes. The second part contains the same 19 items of activities which intend to find out about whether the pupils think they are useful. The questionnaires were distributed to teachers and pupils both in English and Chinese schools. The return rate of the questionnaires is as follows:

**Table 3.2 Number of questionnaires distributed to pupils and teachers and the return rate in each school**

School	Pupil Questionnaire I		Pupil Questionnaire II		Teacher Questionnaire	
	Distributed	Returned	Distributed	Returned	Distributed	Returned
School A (England)	94	86, 91.4%	94	86, 91.4%	4	4, 100%
School B (China)	128	127, 99.2%	128	124, 96.8%	3	3, 100%
School C (China)	186	182, 97.8%	186	181, 97.3%	3	3, 100%

These return rates are impressive but do raise an issue which should be clear to the reader. As discussed above, the questionnaires were distributed and collected in all the classes by the teachers, at their request, and not administered directly by the researcher. This is likely to have affected the return rate, as, despite the teacher telling the children that completion was voluntary and anonymous, pupils may have felt compelled to complete the questionnaires because of the power differential between teacher and pupil (Oppenheim 1992). This was not the most desirable practice but it was necessary to adopt this approach to secure access to the sample groups. Although almost all the questionnaires for the Chinese class

were returned a number of the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I were blank. The children in these classes had simply not answered the questions. There are 9 pupils who have left the open-ended questions blank in School B (China) whilst in School C (China) there are 5 blank sheets of answers to the open-ended questions. This was in sharp contrast to the English cases, where all the questionnaires returned were completed and may reflect a cultural practice of not appearing to be uncooperative or possibly, losing face of the Chinese children. However, this is a speculative interpretation of the interesting return rates. And this does vary by case. Table 3.3 illustrates the number of pupils who did not answer the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I (Appendix 2.1).

**Table 3.3 Number of pupils who did not answer the open-ended questions in each school**

School	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Total
School A (England)	0	0	0	0
School B (China)	5	4	0	9
School C (China)	1	4	0	5

Within the two Chinese schools there is difference between the numbers of children who did not give any answers to the open-ended questions. We can see that in School B (China, poor school) the number of children who did not answer the questions was more than double that in School C (China, good school). In addition to the difference of the number of pupils who did not give any answers to the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I, pupils in the English cases gave more complicated answers than Chinese children on the whole. A lot of the

Chinese children gave very simple answers. Children in the two Chinese schools are different as well. Pupils in School C (China, good school) answered the questions in more words than pupils in School B (China, poor school).

In addition to the pupil questionnaires, I talked with both the head teacher and the teachers about my research and showed them the students' questionnaires before they were distributed to the students. Therefore consent was first sought from both the head teacher and the teacher. The teachers agreed to distribute the questionnaires in class and on a voluntary basis and this was included in the administration instructions for the teachers, so that any child had the choice to opt out of filling in the questionnaire and knew that the questionnaire was anonymous. It was explained to the teachers that if any student did not wish to do the questionnaires his/her choice was absolutely respected.

### **3.3.2.2 Teacher questionnaire**

The teacher questionnaire was designed to collect the teachers' perceptions about the importance of speaking and listening, teachers' pedagogy, teachers' role in language learning, grammar and the nature of FL. This questionnaire was based on Riley's (2009) study about the beliefs of English language learning of 661 first-year university students and their 34 English teachers at a Japanese university, Diab's (2009) research of 31 Lebanese EFL teachers' beliefs about language learning and Karavas- Doukas' (1996) study of 60 non-native English language teachers completing their MA degrees in the UK about their attitudes to CLT. The questionnaire contained two parts of closed and open-ended questions in order to give a fuller picture of the teachers' perception about the teaching and

learning of speaking and listening in China and England (see Appendix 4.1). The 42 items of closed questions were in random order to avoid leading the respondents. The first part include 42 items of closed questions, which the teachers rated on four-point scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The second part contains one open-ended question to further illuminate teachers' beliefs about the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in language lessons (Bennet 1976, Brown and McIntyre 1978).

An invitation letter was presented to each teacher (see Appendix 8.1) and the questionnaire was distributed to the ten teachers with their consent. All teachers answered the questionnaire and all returned. For the open-end question “Do you have any other opinions regarding FL learning and teaching?” seven of the teachers gave answers and three of them did not answer. For analysis purpose the closed question items were reorganized into 8 categories according to different themes as illustrated in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 New categories of the closed question items in teacher questionnaire**  
(Appendix 4.1)

New categories	Items
Grammar	1, 4, 10, 26, 31, 33
Pupils' role	5, 7,
Teacher's role	8, 25, 30,
Speaking and listening	6, 12, 19, 34, 40, 41
Culture awareness	9, 17
Pedagogy	11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 21, 23, 24, 32, 35, 36, 39, 42
Group work	3, 16, 22, 37
Perspectives about the nature of foreign language learning	2, 20, 27, 28, 29, 38

This research is more of qualitative nature because teachers' and pupils' perceptions about the teaching and learning of speaking and listening were the focus of my study. Therefore teacher interviews and pupil group interviews were conducted to further illuminate any issues emerged from teacher and pupil questionnaires and classroom observation.

### **3.3.3 Interview**

German sociologist Max Weber (1947) suggests that since the subjective meanings attached to events by individuals cannot be separated from social structure and it is important for classroom observer to understand and explain how teachers act. Therefore interviews following observations provide the chance for the taken-for-granted to be investigated in greater detail. Interviews with the class teachers and group interviews with the pupils were used to collect their views and beliefs about MFL and pedagogy from the ten teachers involved and a group of six children from each case (all together 54 children were involved in the interview). Dexter (1970; cited in Merriam, 1988, p.72) explains when we choose to use interviewing: "Interviewing is the preferred tactic of data collection when... it will get *better* data or *more* data or data *at less cost* than other tactics!" Punch (2009) notes that interview is one of the most powerful ways to understand people and it is the most prominent means to collect data since it allows the research to have access to understand people's perceptions, beliefs, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality.

Jones (1985; p. 46) puts it that: "In order to understand other persons' construction of reality, we would do well to ask them... and to ask them in such a

way that they can tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and a priori by ourselves) and in a depth which addresses the rich context that is the substance of their meanings.” This is exactly what I did in the interviews with teachers and pupils since my study is about the teachers and pupils perceptions of the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL classes. Besides observations and questionnaires face to face interviews with both the teachers and the pupils allow me to have a better understanding of their views about speaking and listening practice in MFL classes.

In my study interviews with the teachers addressed the following issues (A sample schedule is included as Appendix 6.1). The interview was based on a number of studies (Peacock 2001, Jackson 2002a, Jackson 2002b, Kırkgöz 2009) which include teacher interviews and intend to answer the following questions:

- How do Chinese/English teachers view speaking and listening as part of the curriculum?
- How do teachers plan to include oral language in MFL lessons in England/China?
- What do teachers do to include all children in speaking and listening?
- Why do they use this pedagogy?

Following the classroom observation and questionnaire, interviews with teachers were conducted to gather their views about the teaching of speaking and listening in MFL classes. The interview schedule is semi structured and includes three parts. The first part mentions the purpose of my research and informs the teachers of the confidentiality of the data, format and length of the interview and

seeks their permission to record the interview. The second part is warm up questions. The third part includes 12 open ended questions. These questions allows me the chance to seek further how teachers understand the teaching of speaking and listening in FL classes and illuminate some issues which I found in the classroom observation and questionnaires to teachers. I conducted the interview with the teachers one by one and each interview took around 30 minutes. An Informed consent form for interview (see Appendix 9.1) was shown to each teacher. All together 10 teachers from three schools were involved in the interview. The interviews were recorded with the participants' agreements. The interviews with the Chinese teachers were conducted in Chinese which is their native language so as to achieve better understanding and communication between the researcher and the participants. The interview data were transcribed in Chinese afterwards.

Interviews with the pupils were conducted to collect their views and beliefs about FL learning. The interview is designed to answer the following questions:

- How do Chinese/English pupils view speaking and listening in foreign language learning?
- How do Chinese/English pupils view teacher use of target language in foreign language classes?
- How do Chinese/English pupils view oral participation in language lessons?

The interview schedule with the pupils is semi structured which includes three parts. The first part is about the purpose of my research, the confidentiality of the

data, format and length of the interview and asking their permission to record the interview. The second part is warm up questions. The third part includes 18 open ended questions. These questions allow me the chance to seek further what are the pupils' perceptions of the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in FL classes and illuminate some issues which I found in the classroom observation. The interview with pupils is in groups of six children from each case. I talked with the teacher and the head teacher about the pupils' interview and obtained their approval. The teacher chose randomly six pupils from the class. I conducted the interview with the pupils case (class) by case and each interview took around 40-60 minutes. Altogether 54 students from nine cases were interviewed (A schedule is included as Appendix 5.1). The interviews with the Chinese children were conducted in Chinese which is their native language and it made communication and understanding between the researcher and the participants easier and better. The interviews were recorded with the participants consent. The interview data were transcribed in Chinese afterwards.

### **3.4 Ethical issues**

The chief issue of ethics raised by this research is one of consent. Informed consent was sought from both English school and Chinese school. The willingness to participate of the teachers is important and this is an opportunistic sample. To obtain the consent of the schools, a formal letter of introduction was written and this included a summary of the project, as well as details of data collection (A sample letter is included as Appendix 7.1). First the letter was presented to the head teacher of the school and the content of my research was discussed with the head teacher as well. An invitation letter was presented to

both the teachers and students (A sample letter is included as Appendix 8.1). Since in my study I am dealing with both the teachers' and the students' private views and they are entitled to be assured that all data will be treated confidentially and anonymously. To conform to the Data Protection Act the data collected do not include either the teachers' or the students' names or other unique identifiers. No individual or school is identifiable in the report. Before I entered into the schools I submitted the Application for Ethical Approval for Research Degrees and got approved by the University of Warwick which authorized the research in schools.

### **3.5 Validity and reliability**

#### **3.5.1 Transparency**

The method of this research has been developed to ensure validity and reliability of findings and conclusions, as far as possible. As Winter (2000; cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.133) puts it: "...in qualitative data validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher." However, it is important to recognize that these key research issues are specific to the type of research. In case study it is important to establish the reliability of the case by making the conduct of it transparent. Therefore all processes will be set out clearly so that the reader can follow them. This also enhances validity, as the reader is able to see any threats to the validity of the conclusions which may be caused by the conduct of the research. The use of self-report data is always a threat to the validity of

conclusions but, as it is participants' views which are to be collected, this is essential. However, transparent questionnaire will make limitation clear to the readers. For observation by piloting the method with both English and Chinese children and made sure the observation items were appropriate for this research enhanced the validity of this research. Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that it is very difficult to be bias-free in research, especially qualitative research in which human beings as part of the world were involved and definitely they would bring with them their subjectivity as beliefs, perceptions and personal experiences in the research. Therefore it is very important to minimize bias from the researcher by avoiding using leading questions in interviews, trying to achieve fidelity by being as honest as possible to the self-reporting of the participants (Blumenfeld-Jones 1995). On the other hand I used pupil questionnaires, teacher questionnaire, interviews and classroom observation to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. This triangulation of methods helped to reduce the threat to the validity in this research (Cohen, Manion et al. 2007).

Bogdan and Biklen (1992; cited in Cohen and Manion 2007, p.149) note:

In qualitative research reliability can be regarded as a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched, i.e. a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage.

This is exactly what I did in my research. In order to achieve this effect I have made careful research design and choice of instrumentation, explicit research procedure and clear and thorough description of the research to improve the

reliability of this research.

### **3.5.2 Language considerations**

A key issue for this study, which might present a threat to both the validity of conclusions and reliability of the research, is the issue of translation. The two pupil questionnaires and the teachers' questionnaire, interview schedules of both teachers and pupils in two Chinese schools were all conducted in Chinese because of the need for Chinese teachers and pupils to have a thorough understanding of the content of the questionnaires and the interview schedules, ensuring reliability. The interviews with teachers and pupils were conducted in Chinese as well in order to get more reliable data. Because English is not their native language possible misunderstanding might occur if the interviews were done in English. Language is the carrier of culture. There is not true synonymy in languages and direct translation is extremely delicate because of the possible political and social connotations of words, especially in a professional domain. Therefore Ungerson (1996) argues that in order to avoid corrupted data caused by translation sometimes loose literal translation would be more effective to keep the original meaning of the data. Translation of the data must consider both the linguistic issues and more importantly the cultural context (Acquadro, Jambon et al. 1996). It is very important to translate the data as accurately as possible to reduce bias and minimize misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the original data (Ungerson 1996). To address this issue I ensured that another Chinese speaker with experience of both the UK and Chinese education system has checked all translations of data collection instruments and all translations of data. In the event of disagreement, a third Chinese speaker was involved. After all

these were done I consulted a native English speaker with good experience of both Chinese and English education system and knowledge of the Chinese culture to further ensure the fidelity of the translation.

### **3.6 Data analysis**

It is important to plan the data analysis at the outset, otherwise it is possible to collect a large amount of data which cannot be easily analyzed (Punch 2009). Miles and Huberman (2009) discuss the drawing and verifying of conclusions from data and identify data collection, data reduction and data display as important components of this process. Having discussed data collection above, I would like to set out the issues of data reduction and display for the reader for each type of data collected, since doing this is an important part of the transparency which underlies the validity and reliability of my conclusions.

This data gives a very broad base of research evidence which would be taken as qualitative and quantitative evidence of participants' perceptions of speaking and listening in China and England. In this multiple case study, there are two possible levels of data analysis. The first, looking across the results for the whole English and whole Chinese group of teachers or children might seem of interest, but should be treated with caution as these schools and children have not been chosen as a representative sample, this analysis will not yield valid (or reliable) conclusions. However, an analysis of this sort is interesting in identifying issues which may relate principally to the differences between the countries, rather than differences between classes. This data also allows the results for each class to be compared with it, and this comparison can highlight the differences between

cases and the individualities of each case. This comparison between each case and the whole English or Chinese cohort, is, therefore, used for this reason. It is important, as part of the analysis, to consider issues across all the cases in each country, so that some issues can be discussed in relation to the very different settings explored in the review of literature. For this reason, an initial analysis by country will be included in the results section. However, each of the cases in my study are a separate setting with different conditions and expectations about language, and as I have argued in my review of literature and method, this approach to research was selected to identify the issues at work in each case. Therefore, the main examination of the data will take place at a case level. Figure 3.2 will show the diagram of analysis in this study.

**Figure 3.2 Diagram of analysis**

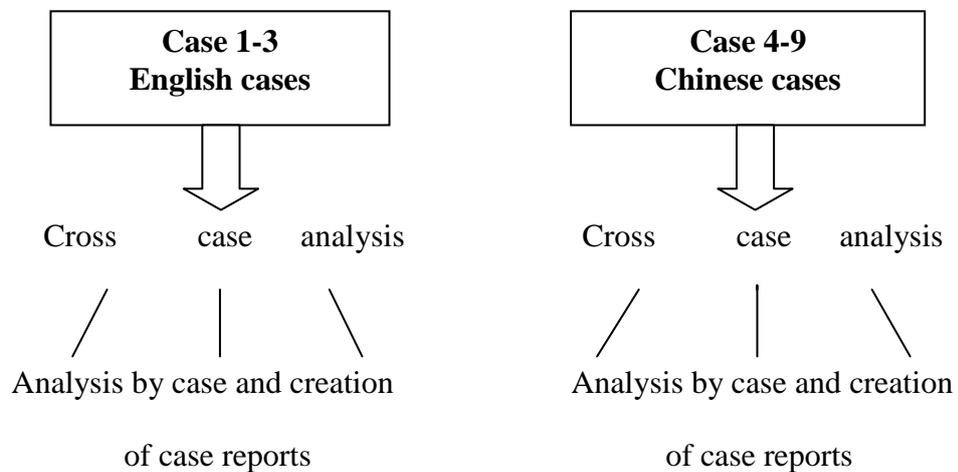


Table 3.5 shows the abbreviation of the data codes in this study.

**Table 3.5 Abbreviation of the data code in this study**

	Data type	Description of abbreviation	Examples
1	open-ended questions	OQ-number of question- case code-number code	OQ-Q2-C1-01
2	Pupil interview	PI-case code- number code	PI-C2-02
3	Teacher interview	TI- number code	TI-T1

### **3.6.1 Data analysis of observations**

Classroom observation consisted of two parts, quantitative data and field notes.

Quantitative data was analysed by calculating manually the number of the occurrences of each classroom activity in four lessons, like each teacher's utterances of TL and home language in his/her teaching, teacher's talk and children's talk in language classes. Then I put the calculations of all cases in each school together in one table for easy comparison and analysis. The teaching and learning of speaking and listening were the key interest in my study, therefore the key comparison was focused on teachers' utterances of TL with home language and teachers' talk with pupils' talk.

To ensure that field notes were accurate I refined field notes as soon as possible after the observation of each lesson, questions and queries were clarified with the teacher after class. Field notes were read several times to note the themes which answer my research questions and to compare with what I have observed in language lessons (Miles and Huberman 1994).

### **3.6.2 Data analysis of questionnaires**

The quantitative data of teacher questionnaire, pupil questionnaire I and II were uploaded into SPSS for analysis. I collected the responses as an excel spreadsheet with a new row for each respondent, one line per participant on a case basis to make it easier and clear. SPSS allows me to use simple descriptions such as percentages, means and cross tabulations to examine the data. This allows me to look at strength of feeling and also inconsistencies in responses between sections. This makes analysis processes relatively simple but it is very important to recognize that, whilst this data can be analysed as a survey across all the classes in each country to compare the findings with the literature, the data can also be analysed case by case.

The subjects' responses were measured according to a four-point Likert-scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Missing answers were given values so as to exclude them from subsequent analysis (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007). Since my study is to address the teachers and pupils perceptions about the teaching and learning of speaking and listening of MFL the analysis of my data were mostly descriptive. Therefore percentages were used to get an overall view of both the teachers and pupils opinions because of the difficulties of dealing with Likert scale data. My research does not seek to illustrate numerical estimates of the variability in the distribution (Punch 2009) because whether individual Likert items can be considered as interval-level data, or whether they should be treated as ordered-categorical data is the subject of considerable disagreement in the literature (Armstrong 1987, Jamieson 2004). The key issue is whether Likert items are interpreted as being ordinal data. The

points on my Likert scales are arbitrary and have no objective numerical basis. Furthermore, it is not possible to be sure that the 'distance' between each successive Likert point (strongly agree and agree, for instance) in my questions is equivalent, although, as discussed in the method, above, I have taken care to address issues of bias. However, because of the dispute about the ordinalness of the data, use of means and standard deviation are a disputed issue, and remain problematic (Jamieson 2004). Therefore I have not used them in my study because my study is about the participants' perception of the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL classes. My study seeks, not numeric description of the data, but exploratory qualitative answers.

In my study, given that all questions use the same Likert scale and that the scale is an approximation to an interval scale, the responses may be treated as interval data and responses to several Likert questions may be summed (Jamieson 2004). I use SPSS to calculate the students' number and percentage of strongly agreement, agreement, disagreement and strongly disagreement to each item of the closed questions in pupil questionnaire I and questionnaire II and these were collected manually into a table according to each case and school. This allows me to compare the pupils' perceptions about the teaching and learning of speaking and listening between schools and cases. For teacher questionnaire each of the four point scale were given a number, i.e. 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= disagree and 4= strongly disagree. The teachers' answers were gathered manually into one table so as to compare easily the teachers' perceptions about each item of teacher questionnaire.

English children's answers to open-ended questions of pupil questionnaire I were

first typed out and then uploaded into NVIVO with all the answers to the same question of each case put together for easy analysis. Chinese children's answers were in Chinese for avoiding misunderstanding. The answers were translated into English by the researcher. I did this in person for the reason that I was most familiar with my research and my personal experience and intuition could help handle the translation more accurately than any other person (Ungerson 1996). When I was translating the Chinese children's answers to the open-ended questions I read again and again the equivalent answers of the English children and tried to make the translation as accurate and reliable as I could. Then a native Chinese speaker who has good mastery of English language and understand both English and Chinese education checked all the translation. In case of controversy a third person was involved to come to an agreement of the translation. After this I consulted a native English speaker who understands very well the English and Chinese education and has good knowledge of Chinese culture to further confirm the fidelity of the translation. The English translations of the Chinese students' answers were uploaded into NVIVO with all the answers to the same question of each case put together for easy analysis. The answers were read again and again in order to find similar themes across cases. The answers were coded according to the recurring themes in the answers to each question. I considered the use of NVIVO to facilitate analysis of the data. However, following attendance at the training courses, I decided that whilst this software has particular advantages in identifying themes in multi source data, the hand investigation I had already undertaken to shape the data for loading was so complete that I was able to analyse the themes based on this method. I collected the recurring themes together manually and made comparisons between cases.

### **3.6.3 Data analysis of interview**

Recordings of the interviews with the English teachers and children were transcribed. Each teacher's and the class (case) interview transcription was kept in a single file and they were read again and again. They were coded according to the themes in the teacher and pupil questionnaires: motivation, effort, achievement, speaking and listening, grammar, activities, oral participation in language classes, teacher's role, teacher's use of TL, pedagogy.

The interviews with the Chinese teachers and pupils were conducted in Chinese. The transcriptions were made in Chinese as well. I did not translate all the Chinese transcriptions into English because of the excessive labour and time. I read again and again the Chinese transcription and compare answers with the equivalent answers to the same questions by the English teachers and children and coded and translated the parts which were useful for answering my research questions. Then I consulted the translation with the above mentioned native English speaker for accuracy of translation.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter talked about the overall research question and some sub-questions, research strategy, the cases and samples, method to answer my research questions, ethical issues, validity and reliability of the research language considerations, and data analysis approaches. The nature of my research question determines that case study is the most appropriate strategy for my study. Mixed method is applied to assess both the teachers' and pupils' perceptions of the

teaching and learning of speaking and listening in China and England. The next chapter will present the findings of both qualitative and quantitative data in my research to offer a clear picture of the teaching learning of speaking and listening in China and England from two layers, i.e. cross case analysis and case by case analysis.

## **Chapter Four Results**

### **Introduction**

This chapter will report the findings of my data which include pupil questionnaire I, pupil questionnaire II, pupil interviews, teacher questionnaire, teacher interviews and classroom observation. This data gives a very broad base of qualitative and quantitative research evidence of participants' perceptions of speaking and listening in China and England. However, each of the settings is a case, and as I have argued in my review of literature and method, this approach to research was selected to identify the issues at work in each case.

Therefore, analysis will be done across cases but the most important analysis will be of each case. It is by comparing each case with the whole data set that we see the importance of a case study approach. Following this analysis there is a huge amount of data and so I have tried to draw the data from each source (interviews, questionnaires, observations) together to present a clear view, highlighting patterns and discrepancies.

First I will examine the data as a whole to show the cross case analysis of the data in order to have a broad picture of the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL in China and England, so that some issues can be discussed in relation to the very different settings explored in the review of literature. Then I will do case by case analysis to investigate the similarities and differences of each case in order to have a clear picture of the teachers' and pupils' perceptions

in each case about the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL.

## **4.1 Cross case analysis**

### **4.1.1 Data collected**

The study involved examination of 9 cases of teacher and pupil perceptions of speaking and listening, and observation of lessons. A large amount of data was collected and so I have created a summary table (Table 4.1). Examples of the interviews, questionnaire, observations and coding details can be found in Chapter 3 and the appendices.

For each school I observed three classes (three cases) which include both the teacher and the pupils. I observed 4 lessons for each case. In School A, Case 2 was taught by 2 teachers (Teacher 2a and Teacher 2b). Therefore I observed 2 lessons of each of the teachers. The data collected show that in different educational systems there are factual differences between schools in England and China which can be highlighted by examining the classes in China and England together. Cross case analysis serves to contrast the findings in China and England to identify differences which might be down to the nationality, cultural setting or systems. It is a background for the presentation of the cases so as to present different pictures in each case, whereas an analysis across cases shows a more homogenous picture. In this background analysis I have focused on pupil views about speaking and listening, motivation and activities, teachers' perceptions

**Table 4.1 Summary of the data collected for all 9 cases**

Types of data		Observations of class activities	Pupil questionnaire	Teacher questionnaire	Pupil interview	Teacher interview
School A (England)	Case 1	4 lesson observation tables and notes	2 per pupil	1	1 transcribed group interview (with 6 children)	1 transcribed interview
	Case 2	4 lesson observation tables and notes (2 taught by each teacher)	2 per pupil	2 (the class has two teachers)	1 transcribed group interview (with 6 children)	2 transcribed interviews (the class has two teachers)
	Case 3	4 lesson observation tables and notes	2 per pupil	1	1 transcribed group interview (with 6 children)	1 transcribed interview
School B (China)	Case 4	4 lesson observation tables and notes	2 per pupil	1	1 transcribed group interview (with 6 children)	1 transcribed interview
	Case 5	4 lesson observation tables and notes	2 per pupil	1	1 transcribed group interview (with 6 children)	1 transcribed interview
	Case 6	4 lesson observation tables and notes	2 per pupil	1	1 transcribed group interview (with 6 children)	1 transcribed interview

<b>School C (China)</b>	Case 7	4 lesson observation tables and notes	2 per pupil	1	1 transcribed group interview (with 6 children)	1 transcribed interview
	Case 8	4 lesson observation tables and notes	2 per pupil	1	1 transcribed group interview (with 6 children)	1 transcribed interview
	Case 9	4 lesson observation tables and notes	2 per pupil	1	1 transcribed group interview (with 6 children)	1 transcribed interview
<b>Total data collected</b>	<b>36 lesson observation charts and notes</b>	<b>790 pupil questionnaires</b>	<b>10 teacher questionnaires</b>	<b>9 transcribed group interviews</b>	<b>10 transcribed interviews</b>	

about speaking and listening in MFL and practice because this is where my review of literature suggests there may be big differences between the two countries.

#### **4.1.2 Factual differences between Chinese and English school**

##### **4.1.2.1 Class size**

The numbers of children in each case are very different both in the Chinese schools and English school. Class size affects the conduct of language teaching and learning because language learning entails practice, especially speaking and listening which is very important for the students to learn a foreign language well (Anderson 1993, Jin and Cortazzi 1998b, Wu 2001, Lam 2002). In a big class there will be less chance for each child to practice their speaking and listening ability and this is a very relevant element to my study. The number of pupils in each class is shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Number of pupils and the teacher in each case and those involved in my research**

		Number of pupils in each case	Number of pupils who were involved in this research	Number of Teachers
<b>School A (England)</b>	Case 1	34	30	Teacher 1
	Case 2	27	23	Teacher 2a Teacher 2b
	Case 3	33	33	Teacher 3
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>86</b>	

<b>School B (China)</b>	Case 4	40	40	Teacher 4
	Case 5	42	41	Teacher 5
	Case 6	46	46	Teacher 6
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>127</b>	
<b>School C (China)</b>	Case 7	60	59	Teacher 7
	Case 8	63	60	Teacher 8
	Case 9	63	63	Teacher 9
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>182</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>408</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>10</b>

#### **4.1.2.2 Length of time pupils have been learning a modern foreign language**

##### **4.1.2.2.1 Years spent learning a modern foreign language**

In all 86 English children and 309 Chinese children were involved in the study.

The data in pupil questionnaire I shows that there is big difference between Chinese children and English children in the length of time the pupils have been learning a MFL. The length of learning a language does not guarantee successful outcome of the language learning but may make a difference to teacher expectations.

From Table 4.3 we can see that the majority of Chinese children (89%) have been learning English for 5 or more years whilst English children who have been learning a MFL for 5 or more years accounts for only 3.5%. The majority of English children (51.2%) learn a MFL for 2 years or less. This is a great

difference and means that the level of the language work which might be expected in Chinese classes would be higher. It also means, of course, that Chinese teachers can have a reasonable expectation of what each child has been studying because all Chinese children do English and all address the same expectations. English teachers do not know which language or for how long their children have studied and may have children in their classes with very different experiences.

**Table 4.3 Length of learning a modern foreign language in Chinese schools and English school**

Length	England		China	
	Number of pupils	percentage	Number of pupils	percentage
2 years or less	44	51.2%	4	1.3%
2-3 years	24	27.9%	5	1.6%
3-4 years	15	17.4%	23	7.4%
5 or more years	3	3.5%	275	89%

#### **4.1.2.2.2 Time spent learning foreign language per week**

The time spent learning language each week during curricular time broadly supports the review of literature but, my findings show additional factors which mean the time spent is actually very different in China and England.

In addition to schooling, which includes 5 or 6 hours of English classes each week, more than half of the Chinese children (64.1%) reported that they go to weekend school to learn English. But none of the English children reported that they had extra curriculum language learning of MFL. Among the Chinese children who go to weekend school nearly half of them (42.7%) have been learning English there for more than 2 years and most of them (83.2%) spend

more than 2 hours learning English at weekend school each week. So, my findings show a very different picture in terms of study time in England and China. Table 4.4 shows this:

**Table 4.4 Hours that the Chinese children spend at weekend school learning English**

Statement	Categories	Number	Percentage
How long have you been going to weekend school?	Never	40	12.9%
	2 years or less	133	43%
	2-3 years	60	19.4%
	3-4 years	46	14.9%
	5 or more years	26	8.4%
How many hours do you spend at weekend school per week?	1 hour	28	9.1%
	2 hours	215	69.6%
	3 hours	16	5.2%
	4 hours	17	5.5%
	More than 4 hours	9	2.9%

Besides the different length of time spent learning MFL the time which pupils spent on MFL per week actually are very different as well between English school and Chinese schools.

The interview data with the teachers and the classroom observation data in School A (England) show that the pupils have 5 MFL lessons (60 minutes) in two weeks, i.e. 2.5 hours per week which is a bit more than that required by the National Curriculum for MFL(DfES 2007). As indicated by the answers to open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I none of the children in the English school have ever had any extracurricular MFL learning beyond school teaching. Chinese children spent much more time on learning English than the English

children do MFL. Time spent on language learning, speaking and listening also varies in years as well. This time is for all aspects of language learning but it would suggest that Chinese children have far more opportunity to do speaking and listening in FL learning than English children.

The interview data with the teachers and the classroom observation data in School B (China) show that the pupils in Year 7, the first half of Year 8 and Year 9 have 6 English lessons (45 minutes) per week. Year 9 pupils go to school on Saturdays in order to have more time to finish learning the curriculum content earlier and to save time for pupils to get prepared for the big exam for senior high school at the end of year 9. The “put exam first” mentality is dominant in China (Pan and Block 2011). On top of these lessons, the pupils also have early morning English lessons (usually from 7:20 am to 7:55 am before the formal lessons which start at 8 am), 2 afternoon self-study lessons for Year 7 children (4:30 pm- 5:15 pm). For Year 8 and Year 9 pupils they have 2 afternoon self-study lessons and 2 evening English lessons (5:30 – 6:15). Year 7 and 8 pupils have 3 early morning English lessons every week and Year 9 pupils have 5 early morning English lessons every week. In the interview the teachers said that in the early morning lessons the children usually do reading aloud the texts that they have learned, words dictation by the monitor, revise what they have learned, etc. The teachers usually come to the class to look around and check. In the afternoon self-study lessons for Year 7 the children do their English homework and the English teacher is in class to answer pupils’ questions. In the evening English lessons for Year 8 and Year 9 pupils the teachers teach and talk about the grammar exercises done by pupils. Chinese children do loads and loads of

grammar exercises and the teachers spend a lot of time talking about these grammar exercises because of the exam-oriented educational system in China. Children need to do as much as possible extra-curricular test papers in order to gain high marks in the big examination at the end of year 9 the results of which will determine whether the pupils can go to a good senior high school.

From the interview with the teachers and the classroom observation data in School C (China) we know that the pupils have 6 English lessons (45 minutes) per week, i.e. one English lesson each day. The pupils even go to school on Saturdays. Year 7 and 8 pupils spend half a day on Saturdays in the school and year 9 pupils have to spend the whole day in school on Saturdays because they are going to take the big examination at the end of year 9. In the interview the teachers said that the school wants to finish the content of the curriculum teaching as early as possible so as to leave the pupils more time to revise and do more extra-curricular test papers for the big examination (Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). On top of these, the pupils have early morning lessons. Year 7 pupils usually have 3 early morning revising English lessons (from 7:20 am– 7:55 am before the normal lessons which starts at 8 am) in which they revise vocabulary that they have learned, do reading aloud, dictation of vocabulary, phrases and sentences, do grammar exercises, etc. For year 8 pupils the group of teachers who teach year 8 pupils will decide whether they will have early morning English revising lessons (3 times a week) or early teaching English lessons (2 times a week from 7:20 am– 7:55 am before the normal lessons which start at 8 am) depending on whether they need extra time to finish the curriculum content earlier. If they do need extra time to finish the teaching earlier they will have

early teaching lessons and if they do not they will do early revising lessons. For Year 9 pupils they must do early teaching English lessons (2 times a week) because, as mentioned above, the school wants to finish the teaching of the curriculum contents as early as possible so as to save more time for children to be ready for the big examination. Besides the children also have one evening lesson every day (5: 10 pm – 5: 50 pm) in which the pupils do their homework or grammar exercises and the teacher who teaches this class English will go to the classroom to answer the pupils' questions.

The details above shows that the time (hours) pupils in each case spend on language learning and speaking and listening, varies by case although all the English cases spent much less time than the Chinese cases . Some Chinese children do weekend classes and homework. Some do not. Therefore the language learning time cannot be determined precisely just by looking at school timetables or curricula because the opportunities children have vary by case, as well as by individual child. Moreover, whether the pupils actually do more speaking and listening in their language classes is one of the issues for this research, which the data (below) will address.

#### **4.1.3 Participants' perceptions about the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in foreign language and their practice**

Despite of the above factual differences between the schools in China and England they share some similarities and differences between the participants' perceptions about the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in FL and their practice.

When pupil questionnaires and the teacher questionnaire were planned, key issues were included in the questionnaires (Section 3.3). These included: the pupils' views about motivation, their own effort and achievement, grammar, speaking and listening and, the activities they undertook. The teacher questionnaires included information about some of these themes but also the teachers' use of speaking and listening, especially TL and the activities they used in teaching, as well as their views on these issues. Therefore, during data analysis these themes were identified in the results from the questionnaires by pupils and teachers, the interviews and the observations: motivation, effort, achievement, speaking and listening, grammar, activities, oral participation in language classes, teacher's role, teacher's use of TL and pedagogy. Cross case analysis was done according to these themes so that the findings for these themes could be made clear to the reader.

#### **4.1.3.1 Motivation**

Gardner and his associates (Gardner and Lambert 1972, Gardner 1985) proposed in the classical social and psychological theory that there are two main types of motivation: instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Dörnyei argues that motivation in L2 learning is more complex than this. Based on an empirical study of some Hungarian EFL learners who studied English in a school context, Dörnyei (1994a) synthesizes various lines of research by offering an extensive list of motivational components categorized into three main dimensions, the *Language Level*, the *Learner Level* and the *Learning Situation Level*. However this study only illuminates instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Items 3, 9, 13, 15, 19 and 23 in Table 4.5 are integrative motivation items. Therefore they are clustered

together. Items 2, 7 and 21 are instrumental motivation items. Both a table and a graph are demonstrated here to give the reader a clearer and more direct visual effect about the children's responses to questions.

**Table 4.5 Chinese pupils' responses to questions about motivation**

(Appendix 2.1)

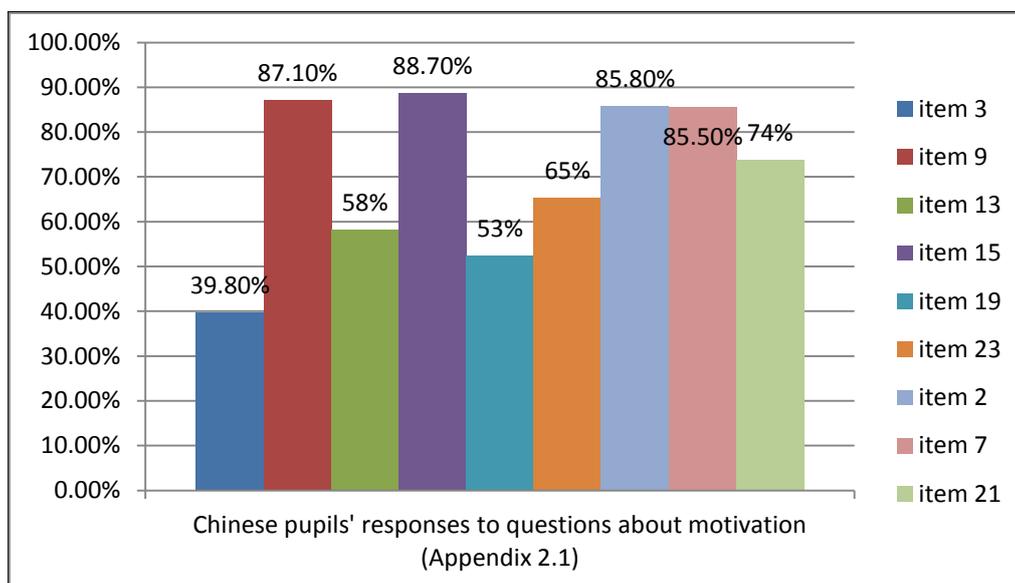
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	39.8%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	* 87.1%
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	58%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	88.7%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	53%
23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	65%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	85.8%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	85.5%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	74%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

As shown in Graph 4.1 the most important motivation for the Chinese pupils is to meet and talk to a range of people (item 15), to get a good job in the future (item 2) and talk to people when travel to a country where this language is spoken (item 7).

**Graph 4.1 Chinese pupils' responses to questions about motivation**

(representing Table 4.5 above)



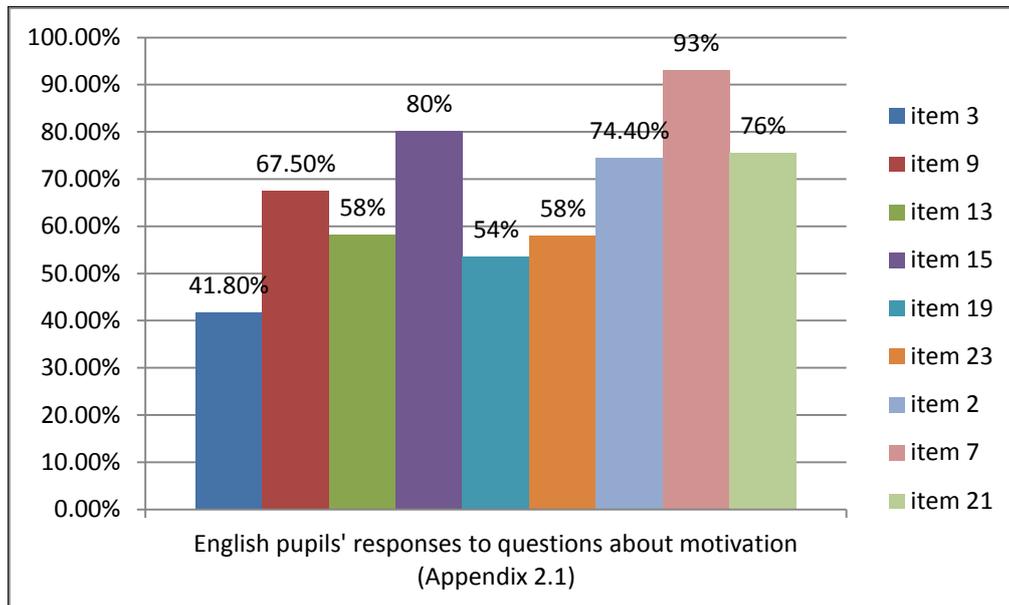
**Table 4.6 English pupils' responses to questions about motivation**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	41.8%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	* 67.5%
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	58%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	80%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	54%
23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	58%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	74.4%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	93%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	76%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

**Graph 4.2 English pupils' responses to questions about motivation**

(representing Table 4.6 above)



As indicated by Graph 4.2 the highest motivation for the English children is talk to people when travel to a country where this language is spoken (item 7), to meet and talk to a range of people (item 15), and I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad (item 21). Item 7 stands out among the motivation items, the agreement percentage is much higher than the other items.

Both pupil questionnaire I and interview data indicates that in relation to motivation Chinese children attach great importance to getting a good job. In interview all Chinese pupils mentioned learning English for getting a good job, but only one English child mentioned this. The most important motivation for the English children is to travel. The difference might be due to the cultural and economic difference between China and England. For the Chinese children they are educated about the value of education for mobility when they are very little. But the English children do not have to worry about their future because of the good welfare they can get from the country. A lot more English children thought

that they did not need to learn this language because they would always live near people who speak my language (Appendix 2.1, item 9, 32.5%). Only 10% of the Chinese children thought so. This means that the Chinese children see the importance to learn FL. Only 9% of the Chinese children thought that it was not important for them to do well in this language because there were other subjects they were good at (Appendix 2.1, item 29) whilst more than two times (18.7%) of the English children agreed to this item. The participants' views about item 9 and item 29 (Appendix 2.1) indicate the de-motivation of learning MFL in England.

#### 4.1.3.2 Effort

As mentioned above Chinese children spent much more time on learning FL in terms of both curriculum and extra-curricular time and effort. The following table and graph will show the difference between Chinese and English children in their effort on language learning.

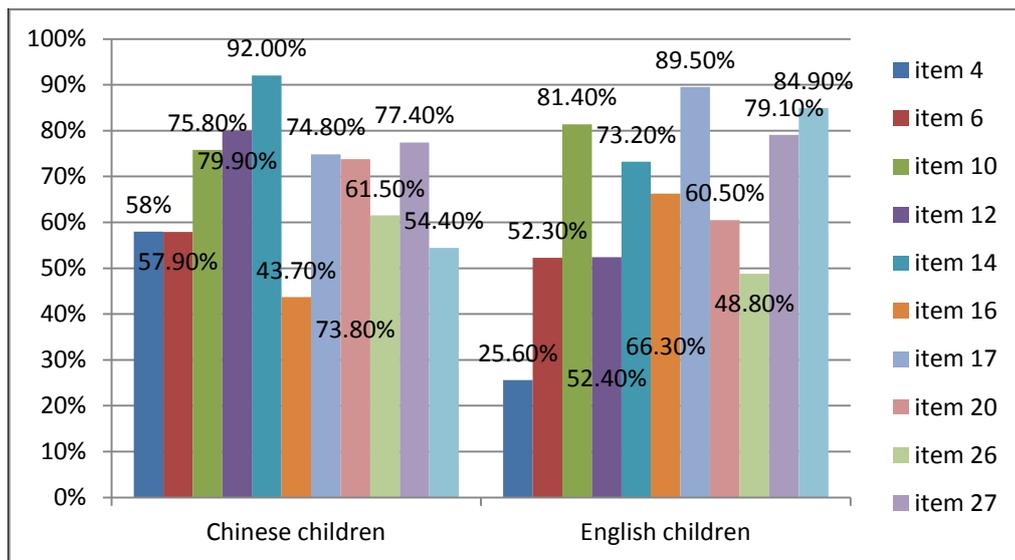
**Table 4.7 Chinese and English children's responses to questions about effort** (Appendix 2.1)

Questionnaire item	% of Chinese and English pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree	
	Chinese	English
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	58%	25.6%
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	57.9%	52.3%
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	75.8%	81.4%
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	79.9%	52.4%
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I	92%	73.2%

work harder.		
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	*43.7%	66.3%
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	*74.8%	89.5%
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	*73.8%	60.5%
26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	61.5%	48.8%
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	77.4%	79.1%
30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	54.4%	84.9%

\* The responses for these items are reversed as they are negatively-phrased questions.

**Graph 4.3 Chinese and English children's responses to questions about effort**  
(representing Table 4.7 above)



Graph 4.3 indicates that more Chinese pupils do extra work on FL than English children because 58% of the Chinese children regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework (item 4) whilst only 25.6% of the English children did so. 79.9% of the Chinese children take time to review what they had learned in FL (item 12) but only 52.4% of the English children did so. More Chinese children (92%) than the English children (73.2%) said that when someone told them they spoke this language well, they worked harder

(item 14). More English children avoid doing extra work on the language they are learning than Chinese children because 73.8% of the Chinese children stated that when they studied this language, they would not do just enough work to get by (Appendix 2.1, item 20, answer reversed) and 60.5% of the English pupils thought so. More Chinese children (61.5%) said they used every opportunity they could to improve their listening and speaking of this language (item 26) than the English children (48.8%). However despite of the fact that the Chinese children are stereotyped as hard working (Jin and Cortazzi 1998a), the pupil questionnaire I data indicates that more English children (81.4%) thought they did their homework for this language class carefully (item 10) whilst fewer Chinese children (75.8%) thought so. More English children (66.3%) than Chinese children (43.7%) thought they put as much effort as they could into their homework for FL (item 16, answer reversed). 89.5% of English children thought that they would not find all kinds of excuses for not studying foreign language (item 17, answer reversed) whilst only 74.8 % of the Chinese children thought so. The big difference between Chinese and English pupils for item 30 stands out because many more English children (84.9%) thought they tried as hard as they could to learn this language (item 30) than Chinese children (54.4%). Although interview data reveals that all Chinese children interviewed liked English and they thought it was very important to learn English, about half them would not try as hard as they could to learn FL. This may reflect that the Chinese pupils are passive learners (Bond 1996, Rao 1996, Chang 2001). And in might be the negative effect of the pressure that Chinese students have to endure. As discussed above Chinese children not only spend more years and more time each week than English children on learning FL but also work long hours on English homework,

revising vocabulary, doing grammar exercises and memorizing texts (Jin and Cortazzi 2002). As suggested by Chinese teachers from both School B (China) and School C (China) the students have textbook attached workbook and they are required to do the exercises on the workbook. Besides this, the pupils have to do loads and loads of test papers and examination-preparation exercises (Jin and Cortazzi 2002). The teachers said in the interview they require pupils to recite the texts and remember vocabulary. In Year 7 and 8 they asked pupils to read and recite the text or memorize vocabulary to their parents at home and parents will sign to prove that child has done his/her work at home although a lot of parents do not understand English at all. The second day children will submit the parents' proof to teacher. Both school and parents have done a lot to monitor pupils' language learning. We speculate it might be the heavy loads on children force them to avoid some work. This is the Chinese education situation for language learning and it echoes some general research across all subjects in this area (Jin and Cortazzi 2002).

This phenomenon was also reflected in children's work to answer the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I. None of the English children returned empty sheet of answers whilst in all there are 14 Chinese children who returned empty sheet of answers. More English children answered the questions more carefully than Chinese children. Take the question "Do you enjoy communicating with people in the language you are learning?" (OQ-Q5, Appendix 2.1) as an example. I did not ask why, however most of the English children explained why they did or did not enjoy communicating with people in FL. In all only 22.1% of the English children gave brief answers like "Yes." "No."

“Sort of” whilst 61.3% of the Chinese pupils gave those very brief answers without any explanations. Even for those questions which asked to illustrate why they hold a certain idea a lot of the Chinese pupils answered very briefly, especially children in School B (the poor school, China) This might indicate the cultural difference between the two countries. Chinese children might be passive learners. They would not disobey the teachers openly by refusing the questionnaire because they mind their own and the teachers’ face (mianzi) but participation is minimal (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b, Edwards, Ran et al. 2007b, Dai, Gerbino et al. 2011).

#### 4.1.3.3 Achievement

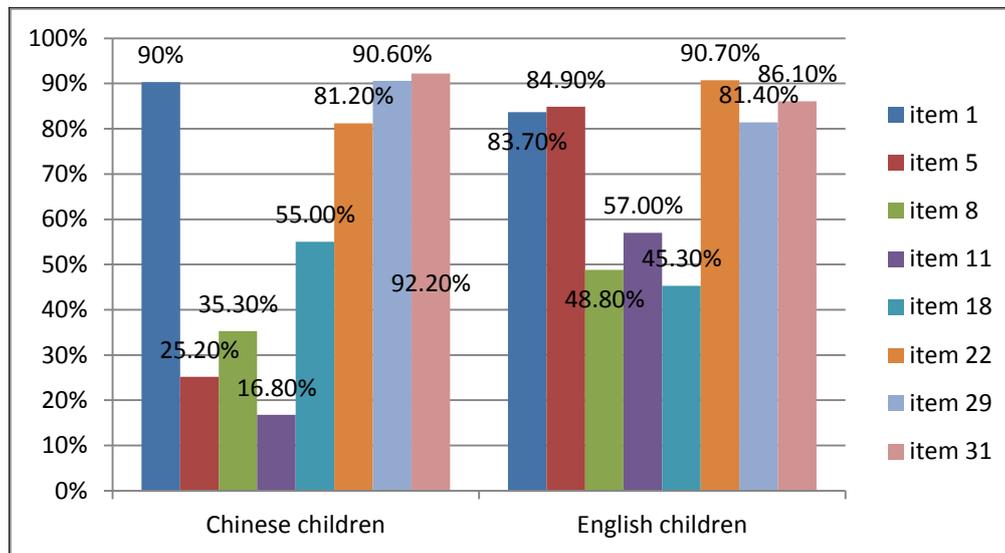
**Table 4.8 Chinese and English children’s responses to questions about achievement**

(Appendix 2.1)

Questionnaire item	% of Chinese and English pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree	
1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	90%	83.7%
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	25.2%	84.9%
8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	35.3%	48.8%
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	16.8%	57%
18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	55%	45.3%
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	81.2%	90.7%
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	*90.6%	81.4%
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	92.2%	86.1%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

**Graph 4.4 Chinese and English children's responses to questions about achievement**  
(representing Table 4.8 above)



As shown by Graph 4.4 that it is surprising to find more English children (90.7%) than the Chinese children (81.2%) thought that they worked hard in their language class because they wanted to get a good mark (item 22), as it is the Chinese education system that is exam-oriented. However, given the discussion of the rather stereotypical literature above, a lot of Chinese children see the importance of learning FL not only for exams but for wider reasons.

The results show Chinese children care more about language accuracy because only 16.8% of them agreed that it did not really matter to them if they made a lot of mistakes in the language, as long as people could understand them (item 11) whilst 57% of the English children agreed. English children are more confident about themselves than the Chinese children because 84.9% of the English children considered themselves as good language learners while only 25.2% of the Chinese children thought so (item 5).

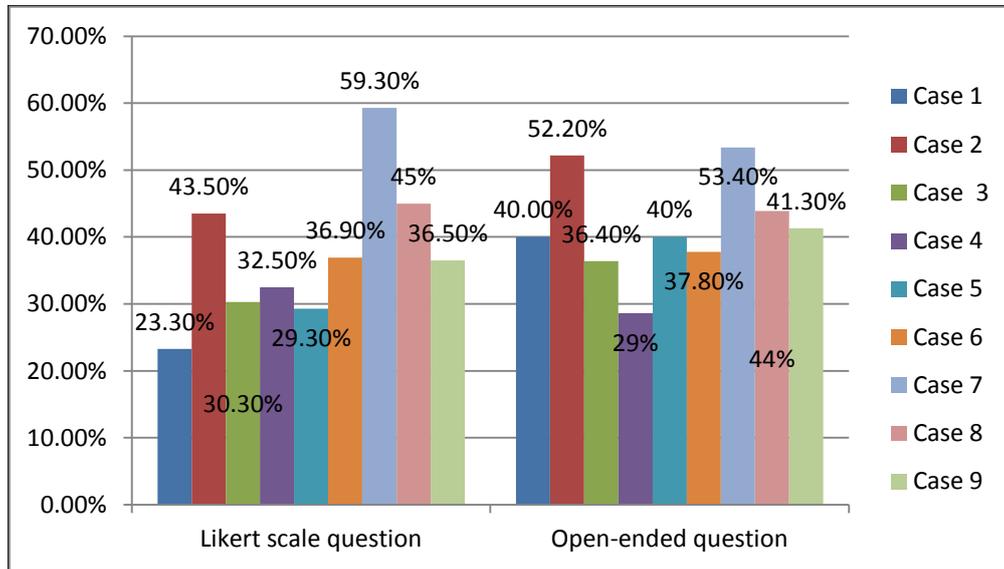
#### **4.1.3.4 Speaking and listening**

Speaking and listening is, of course, part of language but, for this study it is the real focus and so these results are of particular interest. The majority of the pupils agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 24). Whilst this might be expected of the English children, for whom all modes of language are included in the GCSE assessment (see review of literature). It was surprising to note that both the Chinese and English pupils recognized the importance of speaking and listening. Most of the Chinese (88.4%) and English (86%) pupils thought speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 24). This was a rather unexpected finding, based on my experience as an English teacher in China and argument made in the review of literature about examinations which, in China, may not include speaking and listening but are hugely important for the children. Their importance is clear from the results above. Despite this, most Chinese learners in my study recognize that, even if the exam does not contain speaking and listening, these are still as important as reading and writing. Pupil questionnaire I consists of Likert scale questions and open-ended questions in both of which children were asked to answer this question: I think speaking and listening are more important than reading and writing. Graph 4.5 illustrates the children's responses to this question in Likert scale questions and open-ended questions. The percentages stand for the pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree.

Graph 4.5 indicates that there is not big difference between children's answers to open-ended question and Likert scale question.

**Graph 4.5 Comparison of children’s answers to open-ended question and Likert scale question**

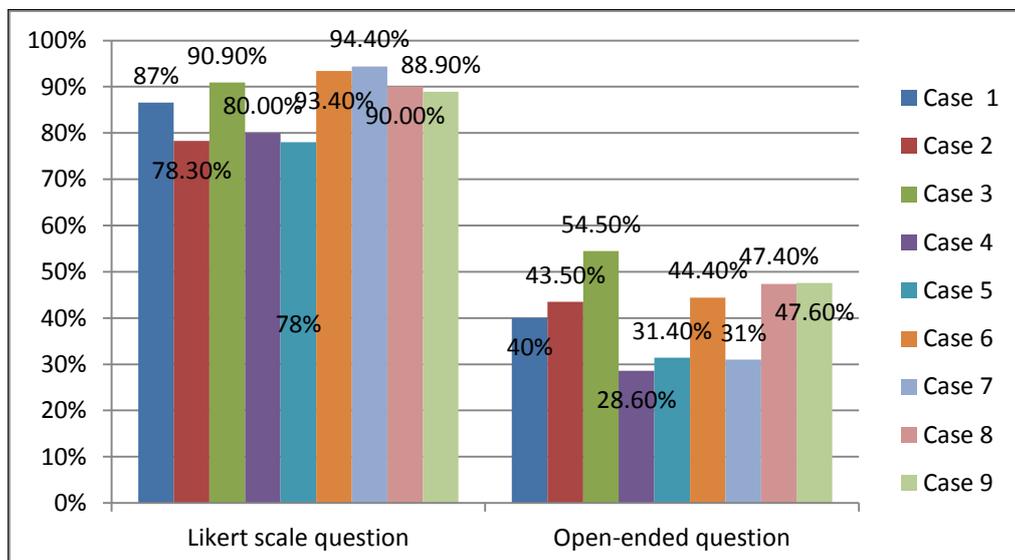
(I think speaking and listening are more important than reading and writing.)



Pupils in all 9 cases were asked to answer this question: I think speaking and listening are as important as reading and writing in both Likert scale questions and open-ended questions. Graph 4.6 illustrates a comparison of their answers. The percentages stand for the pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree.

**Graph 4.6 Comparison of children’s answers to open-ended question and Likert scale question**

(I think speaking and listening are as important as reading and writing.)



From Graph 4.6 we can see that the number of both Chinese and English children who agreed that speaking and listening are as important as reading and writing in their answers to the open-ended question dropped dramatically. This might relate to the “forced choice” Likert scale discussed above, where the students did not have a choice of “neutral” or “no opinion”. Meaning that the Likert-type questions forced them to make a choice but when asked an open question, they did not have a strong opinion. However, it is notable that the previous question does not show this effect.

Both Chinese and English children expressed the same idea in the group interview that in real life or long term speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing and the Chinese pupils said if it were not for exams speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing. This is very important finding because it is the very focus of my study and it is not a finding I could have anticipated from the literature. The quotations below will further illustrate children’s views about the importance of speaking and listening.

Some English children’s answers to open-ended question 2 (Do you think speaking and listening is more important or reading and writing is more important in learning a foreign language? Why do you think so? Appendix 2.1):

- “Speaking and listening, because the main way of communicating is speaking and you have to be able to take things in (OQ-Q2-C1-01).”
- “Speaking and listening are more important. If you really good at speaking and listening you can talk to a foreign person and listen to him.

But it doesn't really matter if you cannot write a French letter (OQ-Q2-C2-01).”

- “I think speaking and listening because you normally speak to people not write. You have to be able to understand what they are saying and be able to talk back (OQ-Q2-C3-01).”

Some Chinese students' answers:

- “Speaking and listening are more important because you will use them more in real life. You learn English mainly is to communicate with people but not to write. Speaking and listening are more practical and useful (OQ-Q2-C5-01).”
- “Speaking and listening are more important because in our future work we will use English to communicate rather than reading and writing (OQ-Q2-C6-01).”
- “I think speaking and listening are more important because we learn English is not only for exams but also for future development (OQ-Q2-C7-01).”

It is particularly exciting that this finding seems to relate to the views of the teachers expressed in their questionnaires and interviews .The teacher questionnaire reveals that all the teachers in nine cases agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing. The following interview excerpt might illustrate the relationship between teacher's and pupils' perceptions.

Teacher 2a (English) said:

We work on the principle that the students hear the new language first, then they practise it, then they read it, then they write it. In a standard language lesson we would expect that to be the order of things.

Teacher 8 (Chinese) said:

I think speaking and listening should be more important because language is a tool for communication. However under Chinese education system we have to focus more on reading and writing because of the big exams.

Both the Chinese and English children state that they would like to be able to speak the language perfectly (Appendix 2.1, item 31) which might be good motivation for them to speak the language. But there was a gap between what they claimed and what they did in their language learning, because my classroom observation data shows that both Chinese and English children never spoke FL when they talked to the teacher or peers unless they were specifically asked to. This seems to be a major learning opportunity for speaking and listening which is simply lost.

When asked “How could you improve your speaking and listening ability?” (OQ-Q3, Appendix 2.1) the Chinese and English children share some similar recurring themes: practice, speak with people in the language and listen to the language. What is different from the English pupils is that a lot of the Chinese children talked about listen to the tapes, listen to or sing English songs or music,

watch English films or TV shows to help improve speaking and listening ability. The Chinese children have resources to use at home because the Chinese education is textbook-based (Hu 2005, Cheng 2008, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011) therefore every child has text book and attached tapes. The teachers require the children to regularly listen to the tapes at home or at school as suggested by the interview data with the Chinese teachers. This is another example of the teacher's influence on students (Horwitz 1988, Elbaum, Berg et al. 1993, Kern 1995). The English children were not given tapes/CDs and did not seek out these experiences spontaneously. This is an interesting finding when England has open internet but Chinese internet is not so free.

#### **4.1.3.5 Grammar**

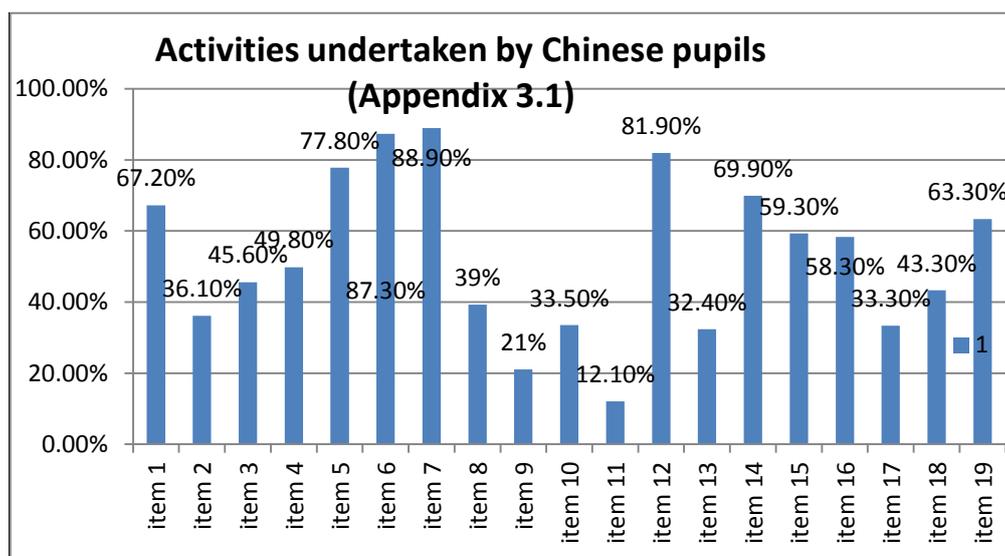
Teacher 1 (England) is extreme about the importance of grammar as data in teacher questionnaire revealed that she even thinks: "learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules and by mastering the rules of grammar, students become fully capable of communicating with a native speaker." It is notable that she is a French national, educated in France. All the other teachers consider grammar as very important in learning FL but not as much as Teacher 1. It is very surprising that it is the English teacher not the Chinese who holds such extreme idea about grammar because the exams in China attached great importance to grammar (Cheng 2008). However, this point is worth noting because it underlines the importance of a case study approach and the recognition that children's speaking and listening experience may be affected very much by the views of their teacher. We speculate that it might be the teachers' influence most of the Chinese (89%) and English (84.9%) children

thought grammar was very important for learning a language well (Appendix 2.1, item 28) (Horwitz 1988, Kern 1995). Both the Chinese and English children agreed that they tried to find out what mistakes they made in this language so that they could correct them (Appendix 2.1, item 27) which shows that they see the importance of accuracy in language learning. Chinese and English children shared similar perceptions about FL learning, but they were very different about the activities they undertook.

#### 4.1.3.6 Activities

The following chart will show how often the Chinese children did these activities. The most striking pattern, and difference, is that the activities done by the Chinese and English children are very different. They do, mostly, totally different activities and, when asked which ones are useful, the Chinese and English children value different activities.

**Graph 4.7 Activities undertaken by Chinese pupils**

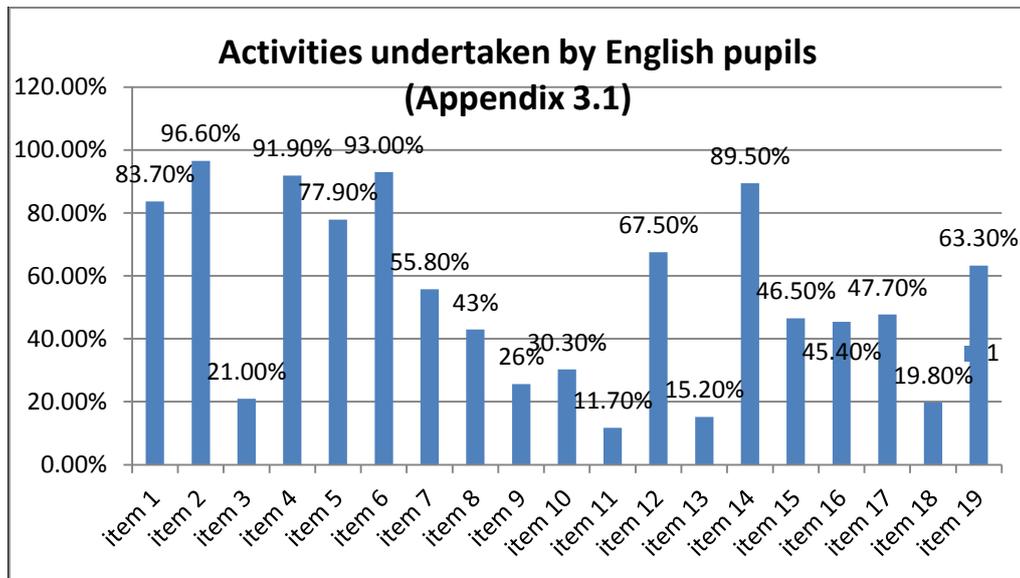


Graph 4.7 indicates that for Chinese children the most often done activities are

(in descending order according to the percentage of participants' agreement):

- a. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)
- b. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- c. item 12 (grammar exercises in textbooks)
- d. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language)
- e. item 17 (filling in worksheets)

**Graph 4.8 Activities undertaken by English pupils**



As shown in Graph 4.8 for the English children the most often done activities are

(in descending order according to the percentage of participants' agreement):

- a. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- b. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- c. item 4 (writing)
- d. item 14 (talking in pairs)
- e. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the

passage)

Both Chinese and English children considered item 6 (repeating words and phrases) as the second most often done activities. This means that they have done a lot of repetition of words and phrases in language lessons, which is consistent with the data in teacher questionnaire because all the teachers agreed that it was very important that students repeat and practice a lot (Appendix 4.1, item 24). This is another example of the teacher's influence on pupils (Rennie 1989). However except item 6 the other often done activities were different between the Chinese and English children and their views about the usefulness of these activities were very different as well.

For the English children the most useful activities are (in descending order according to the percentage of participants' agreement): Item 2, 6, 4, 14, 1 (Appendix 3.1), which were exactly the same and in exactly the same order with the most often done activities. This indicates that the teacher's beliefs and practice do help shape pupils' beliefs (Rennie 1989).

For the Chinese children the most useful activities are (in descending order according to the percentage of participants' agreement):

- a. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language)
- b. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- c. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)
- d. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work

on what you have heard)

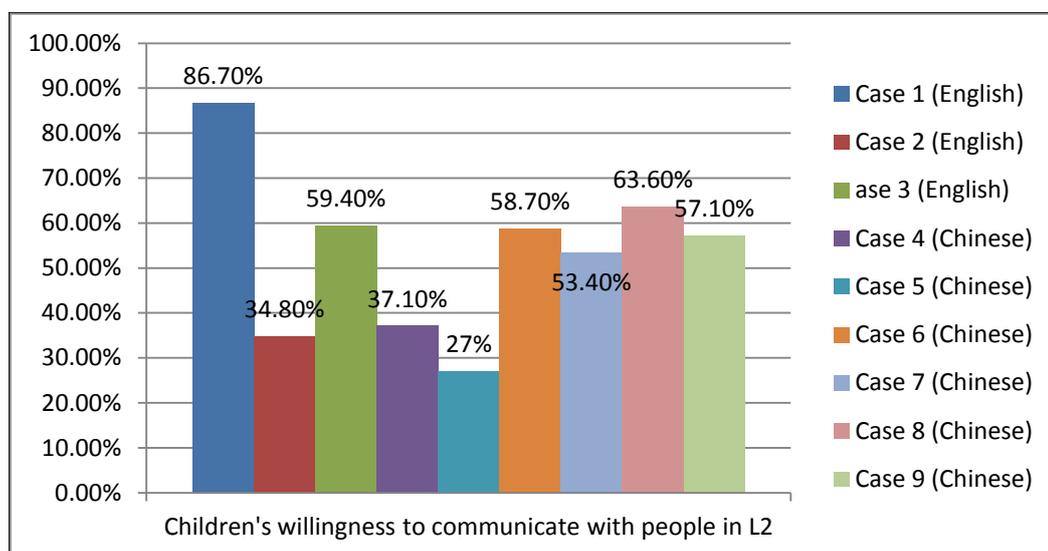
e. item 4 (writing)

For the Chinese children the most useful activities Item 5, 6 and 7 are the same with the most often done activities, but in different order. Item 2 and item 4 were not included in the most often done activities. Although the Chinese children did not do a lot of the listed activities they held more positive perceptions towards most of the activities than the English children because more than 70% of the Chinese pupils thought 16 out of 19 of the listed activities were useful whilst 70% of the English children thought only 9 out of 19 of the listed activities were useful. However, as the Chinese children did not do these activities this might be the lure of the unknown!

#### **4.1.3.7 Oral participation in language classes**

Pupils' answers to the open-ended question "Do you enjoy communicating with people in the language you are learning?" (OQ-Q5, Appendix 2.1) indicate that there is a slight difference between English and Chinese children's motivation to speak the language as 62.4% of the English children said they enjoyed communicating with people in the language they were learning whilst 51.7% of the Chinese children said so. It is interesting to compare each case with the cross-case analysis. Graph 4.9 will show students' views in each case about using the language to communicate with people. The percentage stands for the agreement to the open-ended question "Do you enjoy communicating with people in the language you are learning?" (OQ-Q5, Appendix 2.1)

**Graph 4.9 Children’s perceptions about using foreign language to communicate with people**



Graph 4.9 shows that Case 1 children stand out. They demonstrate much stronger interest to use FL to communicate with people than children in the other cases. Children in Case 6 were the most positive among the three cases in School B (China). This is another example of the teachers’ positive influence on pupils (Horwitz 1988, Kern 1995). Teacher questionnaire reveals that all teachers agreed that it was important to encourage pupils to speak in the foreign language as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 19) and they thought group work was essential in helping pupils to develop communicative competence (Appendix 4.1, item 3). But classroom observation data indicates that in practice questions/answers were the most done practice in most of the cases.

In the interview all Chinese children expressed their willingness to speak FL in language classes. They said they were not afraid of making mistakes and would not avoid speaking English because their peers would not laugh at them.

However children in Case 1 (English) said in the interview that they felt very

embarrassed to speak FL in front of friends and some of the children would avoid talking in FL. Pupils in Case 2 (English) said in the interview that they thought it was the teacher who made them feel bad when they made mistakes. This phenomenon was really out of my expectation because, in my review of literature, I noted the phenomenon of “mianzi”, which was likely to mean Chinese children would be likely to be shy and afraid of losing face if they made mistakes. I assumed that the English children would not be afraid of making mistakes. However, this finding is even more surprising when compared with the interview data (see Section 4.2.2.7). Despite of the beliefs of Chinese children that they were not afraid to speak in class and of many English children who felt the same, in fact neither Chinese nor English children spoke any FL to teacher or peers unless they were specifically asked to answer a question in the FL, and in the Chinese classes, this was often done as a whole class, not as individual answers. This is another example of the gap between what pupils claimed they were willing to do in speaking and listening and what they did.

One important finding, which has to be considered in interpreting the answers to my questionnaire in this section, is that speaking out in class means something very different in China and in England. My observations showed that Chinese children were rarely required to speak individually in class, whereas English children usually answered questions individually. This might mean that Chinese children were not afraid to speak out in class because they did not anticipate this being an individual experience but would expect to speak in unison with the whole class.

#### **4.1.3.8 The teacher's role**

Teacher questionnaire indicates that all the teachers agreed that the teacher as transmitter of knowledge is only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson (Appendix 4.1, item 25) and the learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allows each student to develop his/her full potential (Appendix 4.1, item 14). Interview with teachers revealed that except Teacher 2b (School A, England) was very certain that teacher should be facilitator in language class the other three English teachers were either not certain whether teachers should be facilitators in language class or stated that it depended. However all the Chinese teacher thought that teacher should be facilitator in language class. However in practice all the teachers did most of the talking (see Section 4.1.3.10) and their teaching were teacher-led. The classroom observation data shows that there is a gap between what the teachers believed and what they actually did.

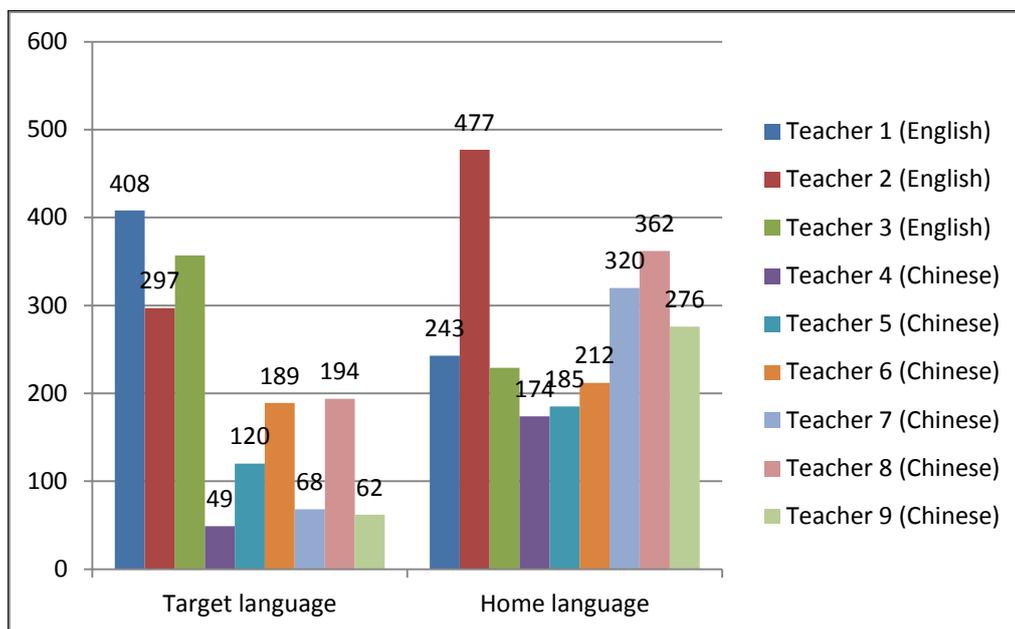
#### **4.1.3.9 Teacher's use of target language**

Graph 4.10 will show the difference of using TL in language classes by the teachers. The figures in Graph 4.10 indicate the number of short utterances, i.e. one sentence. In my observation I noted down each short utterance of the teacher and the pupils and long utterance which is longer than one sentence.

As shown in Graph 4.10 English teachers used more TL in their teaching than Chinese teachers. Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 (England) used TL more than home language in their teaching. These two teachers not only had the most short TL

**Graph 4.10 Teacher's use of target language**

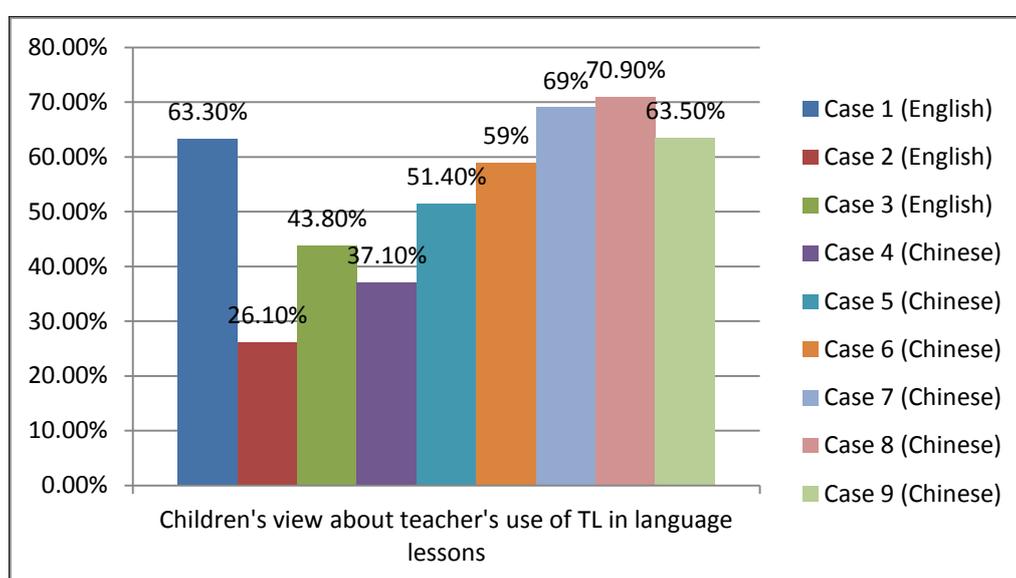
(Appendix 1)



utterances and also more long TL utterances (Teacher 1 had 13 long TL utterances; Teacher 3 had 26 TL long utterances). Teacher 2 (England) had only one long TL utterance. Among the Chinese teachers only Teacher 6 used three long TL language utterances all the other Chinese teachers only used very simple classroom TL like “Good morning”, “Turn to page...”, “Very good”, “Silent”. Teacher 7 (School C, China) translated nearly every English sentence into Chinese. Chinese teachers had a lot more long home language utterances than English teachers. This indicates that although all the teachers believed that it was very important to use FL to teach as much as possible as revealed by teacher questionnaire and interviews there is gap between what teachers believed and what they actually did in practice. For the pupils it means that the English pupils heard more FL in their learning time. Interview data shows that Chinese children all liked teacher to use FL to teach as much as possible although they rarely had chance to hear teacher teach in English, whilst some of the English children said that they hated teachers use FL all the time and some of them preferred that

teacher teach in half TL and half English. It is necessary to compare this with children's views about teacher use of TL in their answers to open-ended question 4 (Do you like teachers to use the language you are learning as much as possible? Why? Appendix 2.1) as illustrated in Graph 4.11. The percentage indicates pupils' agreement to the question.

**Graph 4.11 Children's view about teacher's use of target language**



As illustrated in Graph 4.11 pupils in Case 1 were the most positive among the three English cases in School A (England) because Teacher 1 used the most TL in language classes as discussed above. Among three cases (Case 4-6) in School B (China) children in Case 6 demonstrated the highest interest in teacher's use of TL because Teacher 6 tried her best to use TL as much as possible. Again this shows the positive impact of the teacher on pupils (Horwitz 1988, Kern 1995). Children in School C (China, Case 7-9) were the most positive among all the cases both in England and China. Generally speaking Chinese children demonstrated more interest in teacher's use of TL than English children. This might be because they seldom have the chance to hear the language, as suggested

by the classroom observation data in my study.

#### **4.1.3.10 Pedagogy**

Most of the teachers, either English or Chinese, share similar perceptions about most of the pedagogical items in teacher questionnaire. Their perceptions reflect positive views about CLT (as discussed in the review of literature) as most of the teachers agreed that for students to become effective communicators in the foreign language, the teachers' feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students' responses (Appendix 4.1, item 11). They all agreed that the learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allowed each student to develop his/her full potential (Appendix 4.1, item 14). The teachers all said they were tolerant with pupils' errors in language learning (Appendix 4.1, item 18). The teachers did not think that the communicative approach to language teaching produced fluent but inaccurate learners (Appendix 4.1, item 23), they thought that teachers should encourage pupils to guess if they did not know a word (Appendix 4.1, item 35), it was important to use TL to teach as much as possible and speaking and listening were an integral part of language ability (Appendix 4.1, item 40). This was confirmed in the observations, which showed that they all tolerate errors and do not stop pupils when they are talking, so the teachers in both countries are consistent. All of the teachers agreed (four of them strongly agreed) that it was important that students repeat and practise a lot (Appendix 4.1, item 24). Pupil questionnaire II and classroom observation data shows that in China and England repeating words and phrases aloud (Appendix 3.1, item 6) were the second most often done activities in language lessons. This is another

case of teachers' beliefs exert influence on their practice (Pajares 1992).

Despite their perceptions about FL there is a gap between what the teachers believe and what they actually did in practice in the use of group discussion work, as indicated by the following data from teacher questionnaire, interviews and classroom observation. All teachers agreed that group work allowed students to explore problems for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their own learning. It was therefore an invaluable means of organizing classroom experiences (Appendix 4.1, item 16) and group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix 4.1, item 24). However my classroom observation data shows that the pupils in Case 3 had done 6 group works and all the other English children had done very little group work. The Chinese children in Case 6 did 5 group works and 3 pair works and the other Chinese children had done very little group work. Except for answering teachers' questions, the pupils were seldom involved in classroom speaking and listening interactions.

The teachers all agreed that the learner-centred approach to language teaching encouraged responsibility and self-discipline and allows each student to develop his/her full potential (Appendix 4.1, item 14). However in their teaching they did most of the talking and their teaching was teacher-led (Hu 2005). The teachers all believed that it was very important to encourage pupils to speak in the foreign language as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 19) and it was very important to use FL to teach as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42). However the

classroom observation data indicates that, except for Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 who used more TL than home language to teach, the other teachers all used more home language in their teaching.

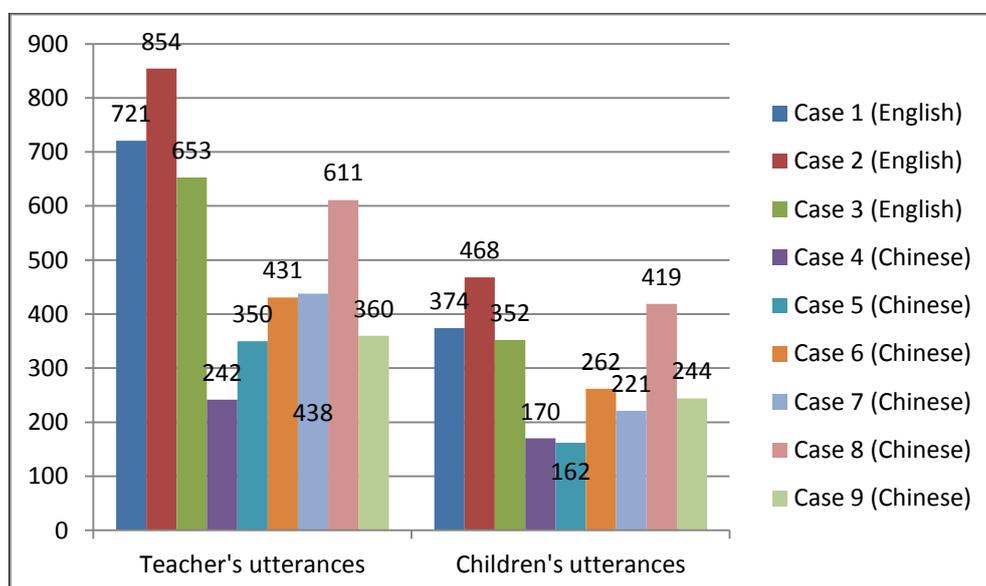
Despite the different cultures, educational system in China and England the data from the teachers' questionnaire and interview indicate that both the Chinese and English teachers share similarities in their perceptions about the following aspects of FL:

1. They all think that TL is important in language teaching and they should use as much TL as possible in their teaching.
2. They all agree that speaking and listening are important integral part of the language ability which the pupils should master.
3. Both Chinese and English teachers are tolerant with pupils' language errors in speaking and they think pupils' confidence is very important and they should not discourage the pupils to speak by constantly correcting their language errors. But they assume that language errors in writing should be corrected because it is important to develop pupils' ability to use the written language accurately.

Classroom observation data indicates that both Chinese and English teachers' teaching was teacher-led. The teacher did most of the talking and the predominant technique in language classes was questions and answers without free discussion (Naiman, Fröhlich et al. 1978). It is necessary to compare teacher's talk with pupils' talk in the four language lessons I observed to see the patterns of teaching in MFL classes. Graph 4.12 will illustrate teachers' talk and

children's talk in all the cases. The graph only includes the short utterances of teachers and pupils because long utterances are very difficult to compare. Short utterance refers to one single sentence and long utterance is more than one sentence. Children's utterances do not include pair work, group work, whole class read aloud text and talking to peers.

**Graph 4.12 A comparison of teachers' talk and children's talk in the four lessons I observed**



From Graph 4.12 we can see the pattern of teacher's pedagogy in all the nine cases. Teachers did much more talk than children in language lessons. The English teachers and Teacher 8 (Chinese) did more talk than the other teachers.

#### **4.1.4 Conclusions about cross case analysis**

There are some patterns across the classes in China and England, as might be expected, but these are not the patterns which the literature might have suggested were likely. The children in the two different countries have very different

amounts of time spent studying FL. This part of the data does not reveal how much of this time is spent on speaking and listening, but there is certainly more time for the Chinese children to engage in listening and speaking in class time. However, the difference of time spent on language learning, speaking and listening, the length of time does not guarantee successful results of language learning, especially speaking and listening. Good language learning is determined by several factors, such as pupils' perceptions, motivation, aptitude, effort, influence of teachers' beliefs, pedagogy, etc. (Norton and Toohey 2001, Johnson 2008). The results above are simply a broad picture of the data for each country. One reason for choosing a case study method was to enable me to see how far classes were similar and different. For this reason the next part of this chapter will concentrate on results for each case. Case by case analysis will be done according to the themes mentioned in the cross case analysis and will give a clear picture of the teachers and pupils' perceptions about the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL in each case.

## **4.2 Case by case analysis**

The aim of this case by case presentation of results is to make links between various data types (pupil questionnaire I, pupil questionnaire II, pupils' interviews, teacher questionnaire, teacher interview and classroom observations) to offer a picture of each case and make clear what is distinctive about the views of the participants about speaking and listening and language learning in each case. Therefore a case report of the results of each of these sources of data was compiled, organized in the themes discussed above. For this reason, I will present the key findings for each data source according to the themes to offer a

clear picture of pupils' and teachers' views of speaking and listening, set in the teaching and learning of MFL in each case.

#### 4.2.1 Analysis of Case 1 (School A, England)

Case 1 includes the teacher and 30 children from an English top set Spanish class. Section 1 of Pupil Questionnaire I shows that, for most of them, this is their second year of learning Spanish. Of all the English cases, in this case most of the pupils (70%) have studied language for the shortest time but, as the findings below indicate, they show very high levels of motivation and concern about achievement. The class is taught by an English trained teacher of French origin. None of the pupils goes to weekend school to learn MFL.

**Table 4.9 Number of participants (Case 1)**

	Categories	Number	Percentage
Sex	Boys	12	40%
	Girls	18	60%
Language	Spanish	30	100%
Length of learning a foreign language	2 years or less	21	70%
	2-3 years	2	6.7%
	3-4 years	7	23.3%
	5 or more years		

\* Table 4.9 shows the number of students who were involved in my study according to gender, language and length of learning a foreign language in Case 1 (School A, England)

Section 2 of pupil questionnaire I aims to gather the key points of pupil motivation and perceptions about MFL using a Likert scale type statement bank to address the themes below.

**Table 4.10 New categories of the items in Pupil Questionnaire I**

(Appendix 2.1)

New categories	Items
Motivation	2, 3, 7, 9, 13, 15, 19, 21, 23
Effort	4, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 26, 27, 30
Achievement	1, 5, 8, 11, 18, 22, 29, 31
Speaking and listening	24, 25
Grammar	28

**4.2.1.1 Motivation**

Both a table and a graph will be included to give the readers a clearer and more direct visual effect.

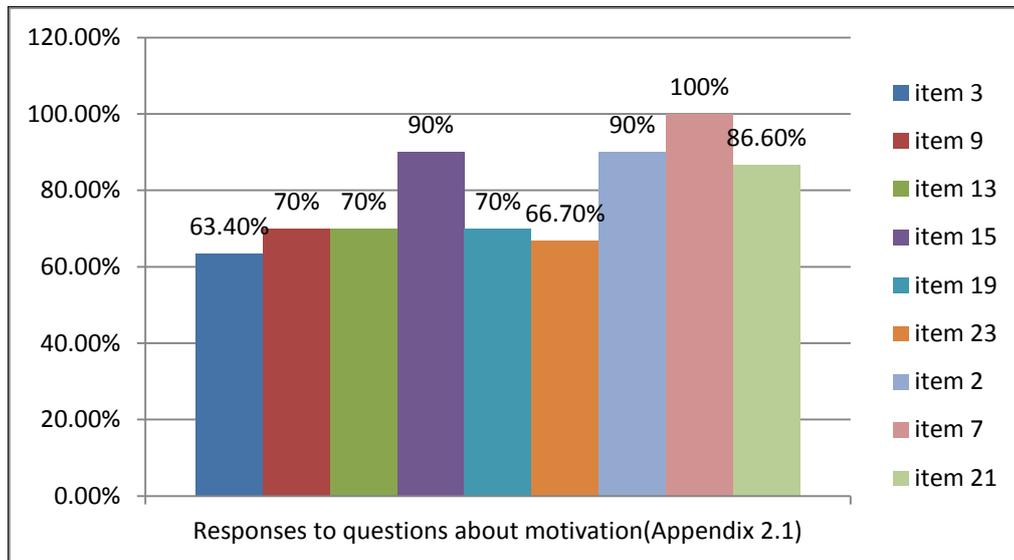
**Table 4.11 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 1)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	63.4%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	* 70%
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	70%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	90%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	70%
23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	66.7%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	90%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	100%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	86.6%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

### Graph 4.13 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 1)

(representing Table 4.11 above)



From Graph 4.13 we can see that children’s instrumental motivation in this class is very high (much higher than the cross case analysis or either of the other two English cases). The most important motivations are: for travelling (item 7), for getting a good job in the future (item 2) and for meeting and talking with a range of people (item 15). 100% of the children agree to item 7, which indicates that the most important motivation for pupils in this case is for travelling and it is a very good motivation for them to learn the language. When asked in the interview what motivated them to learn a FL, the responses all fell into instrumental motivation category which is consistent with pupils’ response in pupil questionnaire I. The children answered:

- “If you go to another country you can speak the language.” (PI-C1-01)
- “Knowing you are going to do a test in it.” (PI-C1-02)
- “Maybe you might need the language in a future job, e.g. as a translator.”(PI-C1-03)
- “Going to university need to know another language.”(PI-C1-04)

When asked whether it is important and necessary to learn a FL and why among the six children who spoke five gave positive answers and one answered negatively. One pupil put it: “Speak a foreign language makes you feel more intelligent (PI-C1-02).” Another child thought: “Learning a foreign language broadens your way to university because you have more choices (PI-C1-03).” Still another child answered: “It is not necessary to learn a foreign language because English is easier for us and even if you go on holiday, at the hotels people are taught to speak English (PI-C1-04).”

This is the kind of opinion that contributes to the de-motivation of the English children to learn MFL as is suggested by literature about English children’s motivation to learn MFL (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007, Coleman 2009). In relation to integrative motivation around 60-70% of the children are positive about most of the items. But item 15 stands out, with 90% of the children motivated by having the chance to talk to a range of people, which indicates that pupils in this case are keen on talking with people and this might motivate them to engage more in speaking FL. It is interesting to speculate whether this pattern is related to the fact that most of these children have chosen to take up Spanish, a world language, in the last two years. However, when the children were asked in their interview why they learn Spanish they all said that it was compulsory to learn a FL in their school and they could choose between French and Spanish and Spanish is easier than the other languages.

#### **4.2.1.2 Effort**

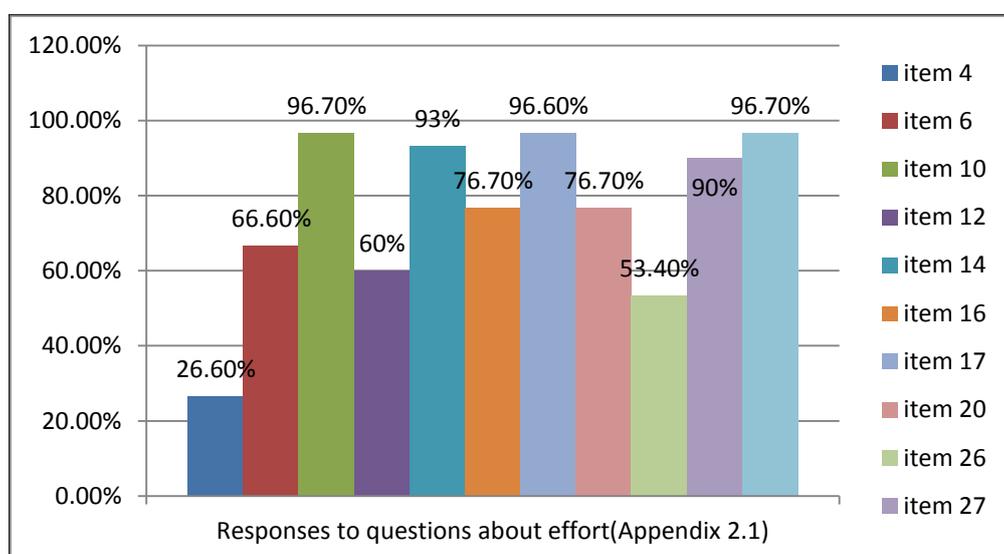
**Table 4.12 Responses to questions about effort (Case 1)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	26.6%
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	66.6%
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	96.7%
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	60%
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I work harder.	93.3%
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	*76.7%
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	*96.6%
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	*76.7%
26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	53.4%
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	90%
30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	96.7%

\* The responses for these items are reversed as they are negatively-phrased questions.

#### Graph 4.14 Responses to questions about effort (Case 1)

(representing Table 4.12 above)



Graph 4.14 indicates that over 60% of the pupils in this case responded positively to most of these items. Pupils' agreements to items 10, 14, 17, 27 and 30 are very high. This indicates that the children in this class believe they try hard with their work and do not avoid it. However, items 4 and 12 receive the lowest agreement, which indicates that majority of the pupils do not do extra work on this language beyond school work. This is very interesting for children in a top set, who have, therefore been judged high achievers. This is the same with all the English cases and shows a very different culture of learning from the Chinese cases.

#### 4.2.1.3 Achievement:

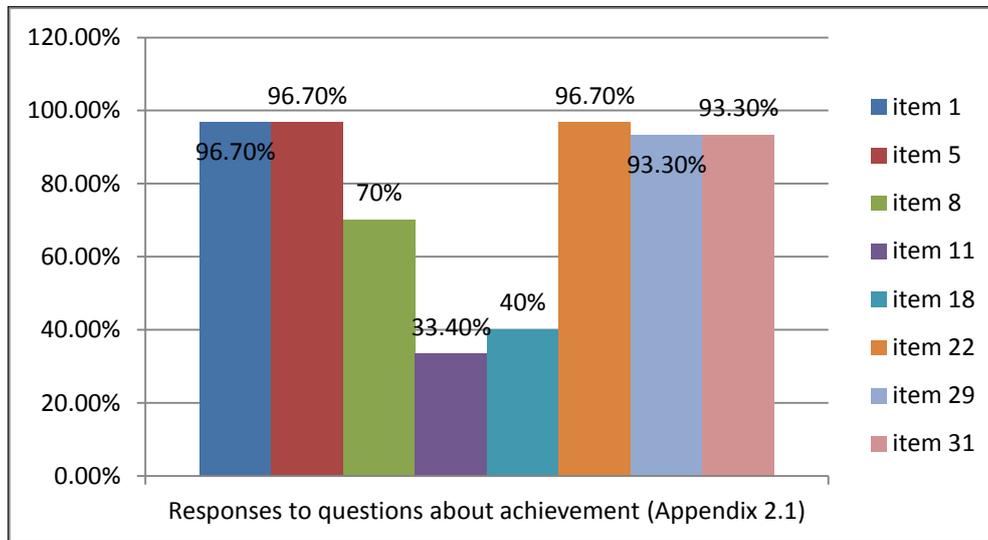
**Table 4.13 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 1)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	96.7%
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	96.7%
8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	70%
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	33.4%
18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	40%
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	96.7%
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	*93.3%
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	93.3%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

### Graph 4.15 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 1)

(representing Table 4.13 above)



From Graph 4.15 we can see that pupils' perception of achievement in this case is the most positive among the three cases in School A. What makes this case distinctive is that the pupils are the most confident among the three cases (in which children in case 2 are of mixed ability and case 3 is top set as well) because 96.7% of the children considered themselves as good language learners (item 5). This percentage is the highest among not only the English cases but also the Chinese cases included. Pupils in this case show strongest concern about achievement as indicated that 96.7% of the pupils stated that they worked hard at Spanish because they wanted to get good mark (item 22) and they attach greatest importance to language accuracy because only 33.4% (the lowest among the three English cases) of them thought it did not really matter to them if they made a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people could understand them (item 11).

#### 4.2.1.4 Speaking and listening

The pupils' views in pupil questionnaire I about speaking and listening indicate that the majority of the children in this case see the importance of speaking and listening in FL learning because 86.6% of the pupils thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (item 24) and 23.3% of them thought speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (item 25). The group interview was entirely consistent with this pattern but allowed the pupils to explain why they believed speaking and listening are important. The children thought speaking and listening were very important because they were important for communication.

The children's comments are:

- "Speaking and listening are the most important skills."(PI-C1-01)
- "You do not need writing and it is mainly speaking and listening."  
(PI-C1-02)
- "If you go on a holiday you need to speak to people and understand people."(PI-C1-03)

However the children's answers to the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I are different from their responses to Likert scale questions in the same questionnaire. When asked "Do you think speaking and listening are more important or reading and writing are more important in learning a foreign language?" 40% of the children thought speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing and 40% of them considered speaking and listening as important as reading and writing.

In the open-ended questions of pupil questionnaire I the pupils were asked how you could improve your speaking and listening ability. Their answers were in great detail and very diversified. The most frequently mentioned themes in their answers were: practice, revise, speak the language or talk to people and listen to the language. One of the children mentioned listening to tape and two pupils stated watching TV shows and films to improve speaking and listening ability. However most of the pupils did not say what materials they would listen to improve their listening ability. The children in this case seemed to put emphasis on vocabulary because 30% of them mentioned learning or practicing new words to improve their speaking and listening ability.

The following were some of the pupils' answers:

- “I think I could improve by revising the work that I did that day or a few days ago. That could help to develop my speaking and listening skill.”  
(OQ-Q2-C1-01)
- “Practice. The more you speak a language the better you get and the more you listen the better you get. It’s just repetition and practice.”  
(OQ-Q2-C1-02)
- “The best way to improve your ability is to practise. You need to speak a lot, listen a lot. By using these skills often you will become better at them like anything you do a lot.” (OQ-Q2-C1-03)

When asked in the group interview what the best way to develop speaking and listening ability was the children answered that if they could have more interactive activities, like plays and more speaking throughout the lesson, not just

writing it would help them to improve speaking. None of the children mentioned they could do something at home to practise speaking and listening. This is another example that the English children do not do extra work beyond schooling.

It is necessary to compare the pupils' views with their teacher's to see the relationship. Teacher 1 strongly agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 40). It might be the influence of the teacher, that majority of the pupils (86.6%) hold the same idea. Teacher 1 thought that it was easier to speak than understand a foreign language (Appendix 4.1, item 34) which is consistent with her ideas in the interview. In the interview she said: "I think writing is always very important, because if you are capable of expressing your opinions on paper, you are not too far from being able to say them. You just need the extra help with pronunciation." Teacher 1's perceptions about speaking and listening is consistent with her teaching as she tried to include speaking, listening, reading and writing in the term's work.

#### **4.2.1.5 Grammar**

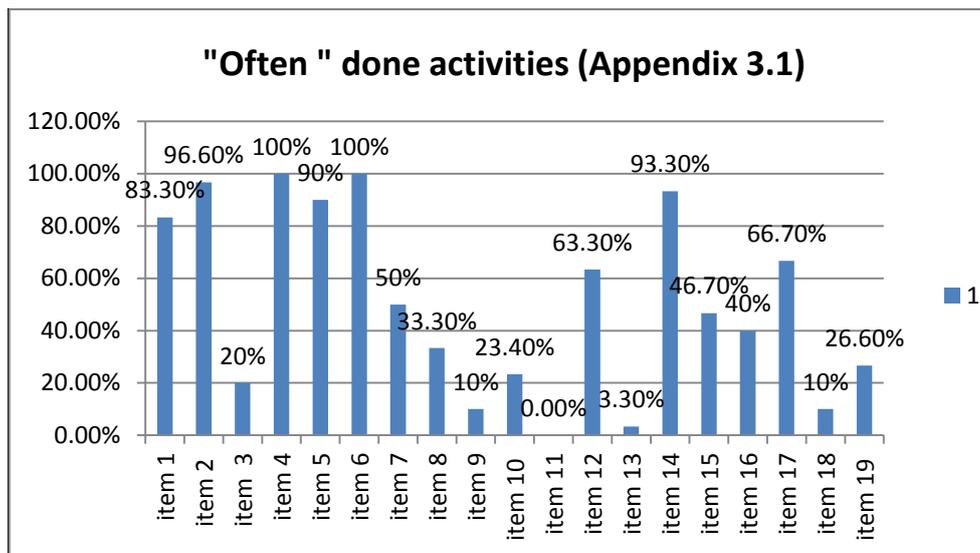
93.5% of the children in this case thought that grammar was very important for learning a language well (Appendix 2.1, item 28). This is the highest percentage in School A which indicates that the pupils' views are affected by their teachers' perceptions (Galton 1983, Rennie 1989) about MFL because the data of the teacher questionnaire shows that their teacher holds a very strong view that grammar is very important. The teacher questionnaire indicates that she thought

that learning a FL was mostly a matter of learning grammar rules (Appendix 4.1, item 31) and she strongly agreed that by mastering the rules of grammar, students became fully capable of communicating with a native speaker (Appendix 4.1, item 26). She even thought that knowledge of the rules of a language could guarantee ability to speak the language (Appendix 4.1, item 10). Her view is in line with her ideas in the interview and her influence on her pupils is obvious because great majority (93.4%) of her pupils thought grammar was very important for learning a language well while less students in the other two cases in School A (England) thought so (73.9% for case 2 and 84.8% for case 3). This is an example of how teacher's perception exerts influence on pupils' (Galton 1983, Horwitz 1988, Rennie 1989, Kern 1995). Teacher 1's (an English teacher of French origin) opinion about grammar was rather unexpected, based on the prevailing teaching approaches in the English professional literature (Nunan 2004, Richards 2006, Johnson 2008) because it is an English teacher, not a Chinese teacher who attaches so much importance to grammar.

#### **4.2.1.6 Pupil preferences of activities**

Pupil questionnaire II is consisted of two parts. The first part aimed to find out how often the pupils do the activities in MFL classes and the second part aimed to gather pupils' perceptions about the usefulness of these activities with the goal of finding out whether they value speaking and listening orientated activities.

**Graph 4.16 “Often” done activities (Case 1)**



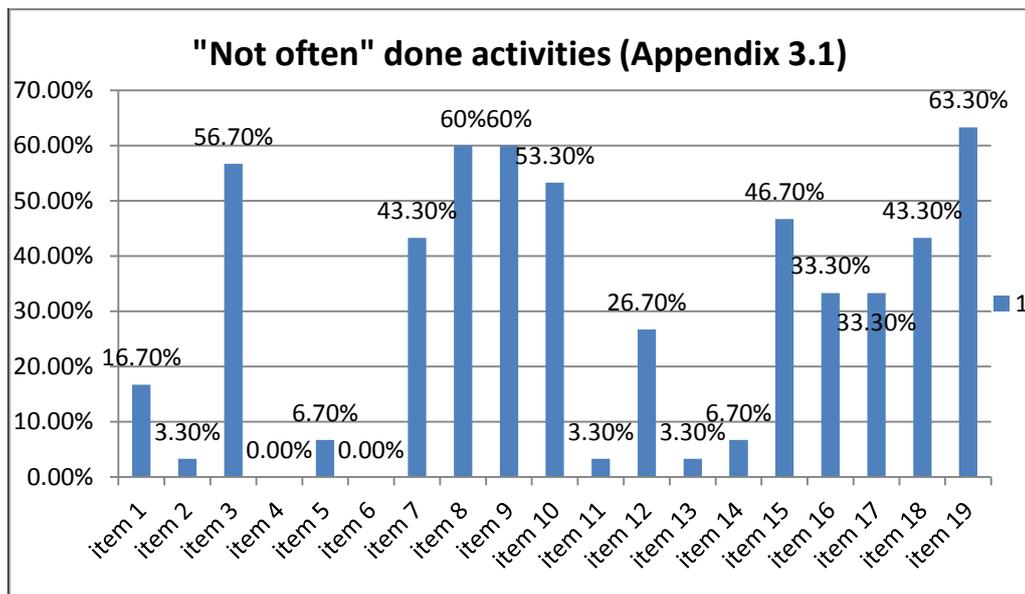
Graph 4.16 shows the pupils’ views about the “Often” done activities (The percentages are the agreement of “Very often” and “Often” put together).

The data indicate that the activities the pupils in Case 1 (School A, England) believe most often done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils, see Appendix 3.1):

- a. item 4 (writing)
- b. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- c. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- d. item 14 (talking in pairs)
- e. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language)

The above data shows that the pupils in this case have done a lot more translation work than the other two cases in School A (England).

**Graph 4.17 “Not often” done activities**

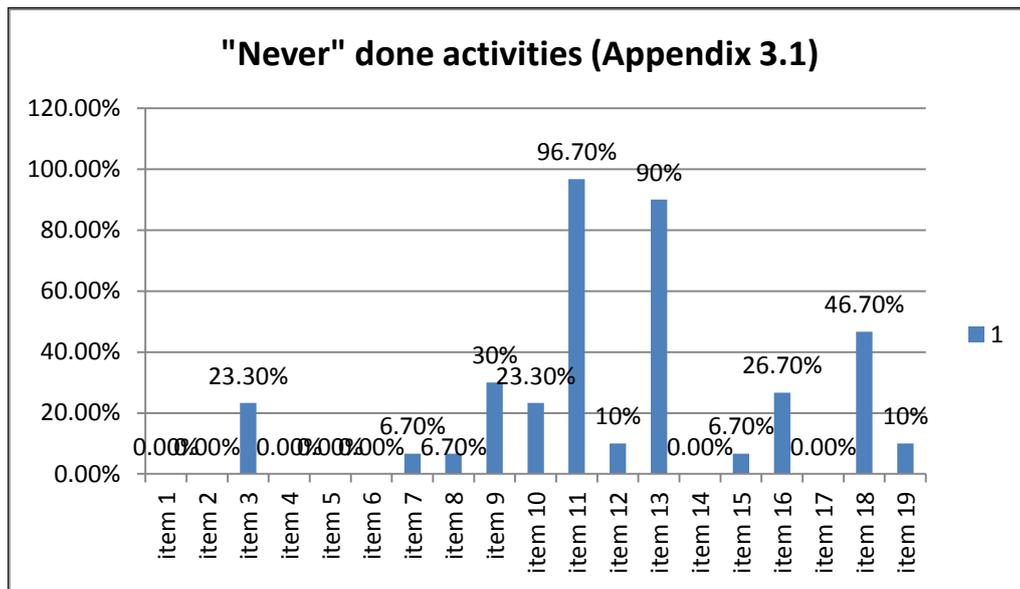


Graph 4.17 indicates that the activities pupils think least “often” done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 19 (playing spoken games in class)
- b. item 8 (answering true/false questions (speaking) )
- c. item 9 (discussion of pictures)
- d. item 3 (reading about the life in another country/cultural awareness)
- e. item 10 (talking about things that really happen in life)

Graph 4.18 shows that the top “Never” done activity pupils believe is drama (item 11). The data above indicates that there were not many activities in language classes, which conforms to what I have found from the classroom observation data. From the above “Not often” and “Never” done activities we can see that there are not much speaking practice and culture awareness in the language classes.

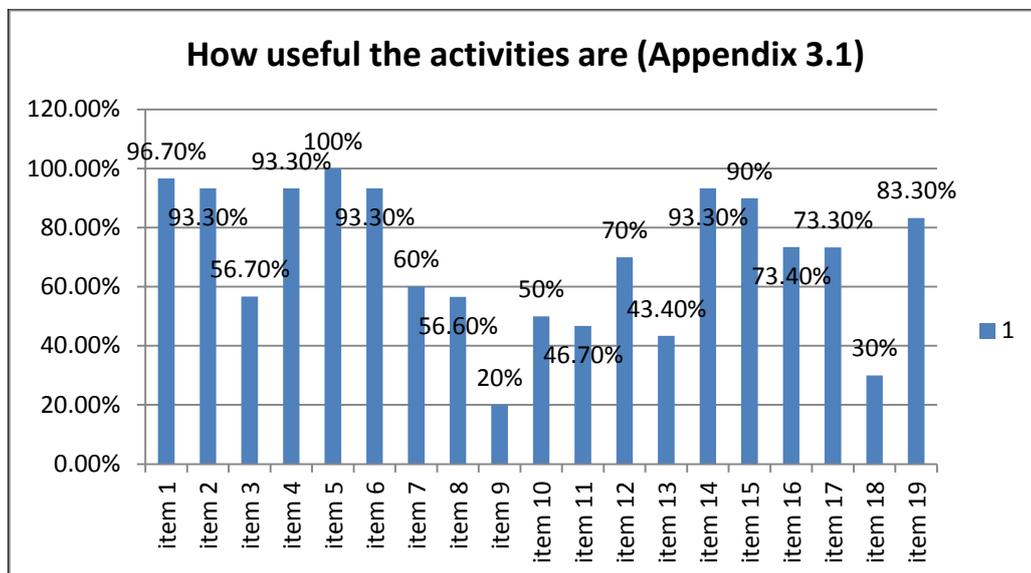
**Graph 4.18 “Never” done activities (Case 1)**



Graph 4.19 illustrates the children’s opinions about how useful the activities are.

The percentages are agreement of “Very useful” and “Useful” put together.

**Graph 4.19 How useful the activities are (Case 1)**



From Graph 4.19 we can see that children in Case 1 thought that the most useful activities are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from

- foreign language to home language)
- b. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)
  - c. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
  - d. item 4 (writing)
  - e. item 6 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)

What is surprising is that the English children thought translation as the most useful in language classes although they did not do much in language classes as I have observed. Although the order of the usefulness of the items in each case is different within the three cases in School A (England) the children's views of the usefulness of the activities in language classes are very similar. It is interesting to notice that half and half of the children thought drama was useful and useless. But the interview with the pupils indicates that they liked drama but they had never done any. The children said that they liked to do speaking games in language classes, e.g. a competition in which they were so eager to win and it would motivate them to do a good job.

The data of teacher questionnaire indicates that Teacher 1 holds positive views about group work and she strongly agreed that group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix 4.1, item 3), but she thought that the students did their best when taught as a whole class

(Appendix 4.1, item 36). This is an example that teacher beliefs will exert influence on their practice (Pajares 1992, Peacock 2001). In her class I observed that Teacher 1 did most of the talking. Her total utterance was 721 short and 18 long (Short utterance is one sentence at one time. Long utterance is more than one sentence at one time). Pupils' utterance was 344. The teacher's talking is more than two times of the pupils'. The children only did one group work talking in the four lessons that I observed. Although the pupils did two word games, two pair activities and one oral activity, what they did the most in language classes was that teachers asked questions and each time one pupil was pointed to answer.

#### **4.2.1.7 Oral participation in language class**

Answers to the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I indicate that great majority of the children in Case 1 (86.7%) enjoy communicating with people in the language they were learning. This might be due to their teacher's positive influence because Teacher 1 used the most TL in language classes (Horwitz 1988, Elbaum, Berg et al. 1993, Kern 1995) and pupils had a lot of exposure to TL. The group interview results suggest that those children felt there was rather too much writing in their language lessons. Children in Case 1 complained that they did too much writing and very little speaking in language class, although this is not what their questionnaires show. The observation notes show an interesting pattern in this class. When Class 1 (and indeed, all the classes in this school) did speaking assessment they were saying a prepared passage from memory and they did not really understand what they were saying. The children explained that this was required in their GCSE but the children thought this would not really help them learn to speak the language. One child said: "When you do the speaking

you are reading it, but not really knowing what you are saying. You are reading what you remember. You do not actually know what you are saying.” They said that everybody got so nervous and worried when they were going to have a speaking test. The children thought that the language classes were boring. They thought if they could have more interaction and some plays to get them interested in learning it would be more helpful. This is consistent with Ofsted report (2008) which concerns about lack of spontaneous and creative speaking in language classes. When asked if they were afraid of being laughed at by peers if they made mistakes when they spoke target language the children said: “That is the only reason people are so nervous about speaking that they may be laughed at by their friends.” And they said that some of them would avoid speaking the language. This is consistent with my classroom observation data which shows that children never spoke FL with teacher or peers. In language classes they do not have a lot of chance to practice speaking when they go home there is even less chance. In the interview the children said that they never do speaking and listening at home, e.g. watch Spanish TV programme, find something from the internet to listen, etc. They said they had listened to a song of Spanish alphabet and they said they would listen if they could have more of these kinds of songs. This is linked to the finding, above, about lack of homework.

#### **4.2.1.8 Teacher’s use of target language in language classes**

Pupils’ answers to the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I demonstrates that 63.3% of the children in this case liked the teacher to use the language they were learning as much as possible while 26.7% of them answered as “Sometimes.” “Sort of.” Or “It depends.” In the group interview, when asked

if they like the teacher to use more FL to teach the children all said that they like the teacher to use Spanish to teach because they thought it was good.

What makes Teacher 1 distinctive is that she used the most TL in her teaching among the ten teachers as illustrated in the cross case analysis. She did 408 short utterances and 5 long utterances in TL (Teacher 2: 297 short, 1 long; Teacher 3: 357 short, 26 long). Teacher 1's view about TL is revealed in the following interview excerpt:

I try to speak as much Spanish as I can in my lessons. I do not want them to understand everything that I say, but I want them to be able to catch a few words. For example, when they ask me silly questions, I will say 'No se.' I never said to them what that meant, but at the end of the lesson I said to them 'How do you say: I do not know?' They all put up their hands and they all said "No se". I have never taught it, but because I use it, it helps them. Because they see I have a go at it, they have a go as well. Because I know you can present it in a way that makes them understand it. That is really hard, but it needs to be challenging as well. They are not good kids, they need to be challenged. They do not need to have everything on a plate. They need to feel that they have to work, and I know they are capable of understanding me. It takes practice, and that is it. The first month, they go just passive. Then they start to think 'OK, I know that.' But it takes time. You should not be scared to use target language in a lesson (TI-T1).

The classroom observation data shows that she used Spanish in nearly all her teaching except explaining some grammar points. Even if pupils did not

understand she would use gestures or body language or posters or newspapers on the wall to help pupils understand. She once told, in Spanish, a created story about herself having a meal with David Cameron. The story lasted for about 4 minutes and she did not speak even one word of English. The pupils understood the story well and they did enjoy it very much. Then the pupils were asked to write in Spanish a similar passage about someone they were interested in.

#### **4.2.1.9 Teacher's role**

In the questionnaire Teacher 1 agreed that the teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' was no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom (item 8) and the role of the teacher in the language classroom was to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing, and example (item 30). She strongly agreed that the teacher as transmitter of knowledge was only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson (item 25). But in the interview Teacher 1 was not sure about teacher's role as facilitator because she thought that she was the only person in the language lesson who knew the language how could she facilitate. This indicates that although Teacher 1 accepts the changing of the teacher's role in language teaching, in real teaching she still served mostly as an authority and instructor and did most of the talking.

#### **4.2.1.10 Pedagogy**

In teacher questionnaire Teacher 1 strongly agreed that it was very important to use FL to teach as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42) and students should be encouraged to guess if they did not know a word in the foreign language (item

35) which is consistent with her practice. She encouraged the pupils to guess the meaning of new words. Although teacher 1 believed that the learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allowed each student to develop his/her full potential (Appendix 4.1, item 14) she strongly agreed that students did their best when taught as a whole class by the teacher and small group work might occasionally be useful to vary the routine, but it could never replace sound formal instruction by a competent teacher (Appendix 4.1, item 36). This is consistent with her teaching. Her teaching was teacher-led. In her lessons I observed she did most of the talk because the classroom observation data shows that it is in such area as: teacher asks questions, teacher lectures, teacher gives instructions and teacher keeps order that most densely locate the data. The observation data revealed a predominance of question/answer techniques in language class, with little free discussion or culture background work. This is consistent with Naiman et al.'s study (1978).

In summary, Class 1 is a highly motivated class which shows the strongest concern about achievement. The children in this case are the most confident among the children in the nine cases and they are keen on talking with people because over 86% of the children think speaking and listening are important in learning a FL. Their positive perceptions about speaking and listening might motivate them to engage more in speaking FL.

#### **4.2.2 Analysis of Case 2 (School A, England)**

Case 2 includes two teachers and 27 children from an English mixed ability

French class. Case 2 is the smallest class among all the cases. This is their second year of learning French.

**Table 4.14 Number of participants (Case 2)**

	Categories	Number	Percent
Sex	Boys	11	47.8
	Girls	12	52.2
Language	French		
Length of learning a foreign language	2 years or less	10	43.5
	2-3 years	10	43.5
	3-4 years	1	4.3
	5 or more years	2	8.7

\* Table 4.14 shows the number of students who were involved in my study according to gender, language and length of learning a foreign language in Case 2.

The following part will discuss the findings of this case according to the following themes.

#### 4.2.2.1 Motivation

**Table 4.15 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 2)**

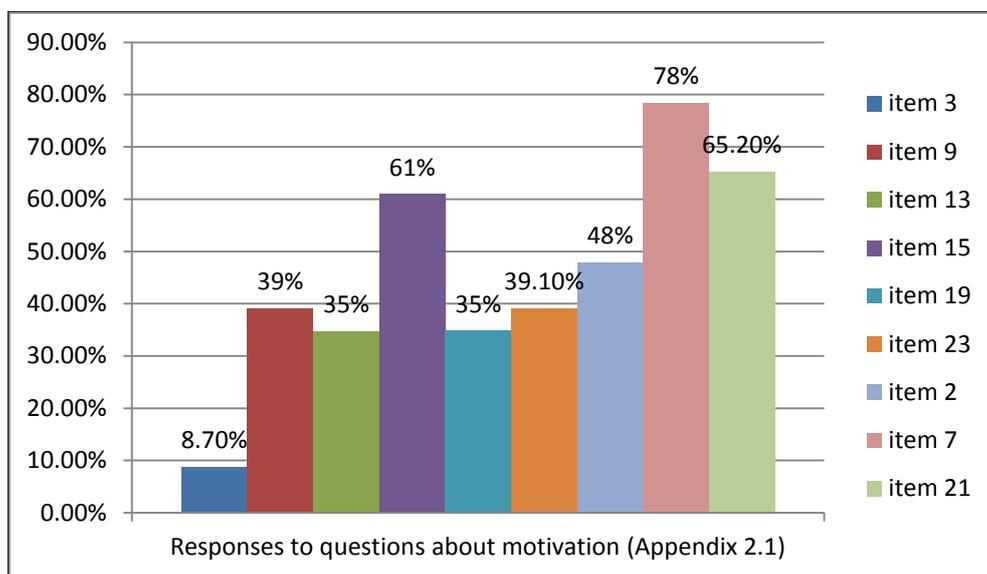
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	8.7%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	*39%
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	35%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	61%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	35%

23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	39.1%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	48%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	78%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	65.2%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

### Graph 4.20 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 2)

(representing Table 4.15 above)



From Graph 4.20 we can see that children’s motivation to learn FL in Case 2 is overall the lowest among the three English cases. The pupils’ instrumental motivation range from 47.8% to 78.3%, which is lower than the other two English cases. Case 2 has the lowest motivation (78.3%) even for travelling (item 7) compared with the other two English cases (Case 1, 100%; Case 3, 97%). Pupils’ agreement to item 3 is extremely low. The low motivation is consistent with the interview data. When asked in the group interview what motivates you to learn FL only one child said: “It could be useful (PI-C2-01).” Another child said: “I suppose it looks good on your CV (PI-C2-01).” All the other children think that learning a FL is not necessary because England is a pretty important

country and English is the most universal language.

#### 4.2.2.2 Effort

**Table 4.16 Responses to questions about effort (Case 2)**

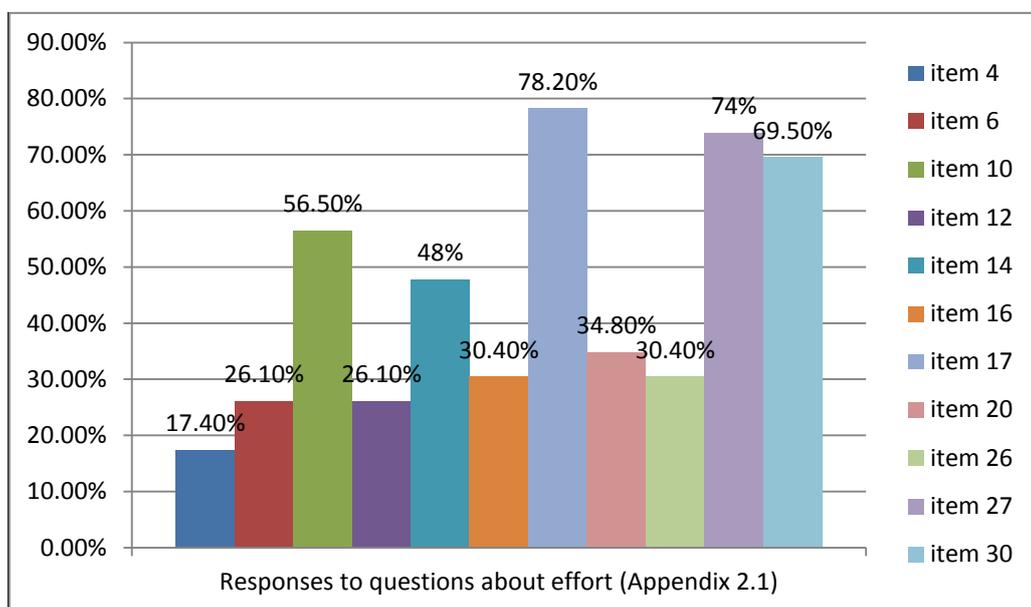
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	17.4%
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	26.1%
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	56.5%
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	26.1%
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I work harder.	48%
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	* 30.4%
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	* 78.2%
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	* 34.8%
26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	30.4%
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	74%
30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	69.5%

\* The responses for these items are reversed as they are negatively-phrased questions.

Graph 4.21 shows in general the pupils' commitment to learning French is lower than the pupils in the other two English cases in School A. Their response to items 6, 12, 16 and 20 are negative with only around 20-30% of the pupils show positive attitudes towards learning French. Although 78.2% of the children said that they would not avoid learning the language (Item 17) they would not like to put extra effort into doing FL beyond schooling because only 30.4% of them said

### Graph 4.21 Responses to questions about effort (Case 2)

(representing Table 4.16 above)



they would put as much effort as they could into their homework for FL (item 16) and only 17.4% of the children said they regularly set aside some time to find material in FL apart from homework (item 4). Only 26.1% of the children said they would use every opportunity they could to improve their knowledge of FL (item 6) and 65.2% of the pupils agreed that they did just enough work to get by when they study French (item 20).

#### 4.2.2.3 Achievement

**Table 4.17 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 2)**

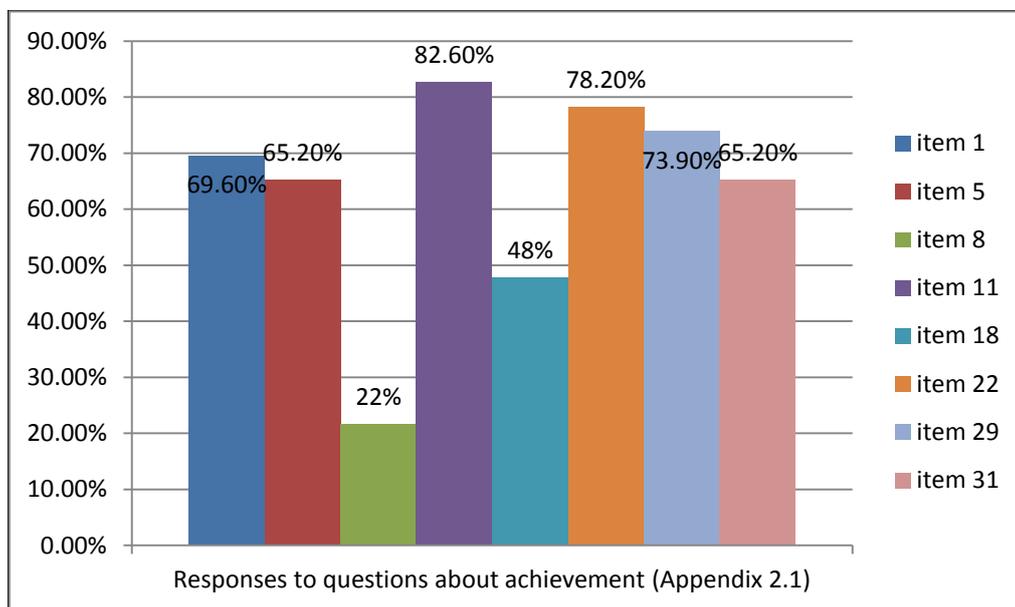
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	69.9%
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	65.2
8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	22%
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	82.6%

18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	48%
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	78.2%
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	*73.9%
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	65.2%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

### Graph 4.22 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 2)

(representing Table 4.17 above)



From Graph 4.22 we can see that pupils in this case are the least confident among the three English cases because only 65.2% of them consider themselves as good language learners (item 5). This percentage is the lowest among the three English cases (Case 1, 96.7%; Case 3, 87.9%). The pupils do not care much about language accuracy because the great majority of them (82.6%, the highest among three English cases) thought it did not really matter to them if they made a lot of mistakes in FL, as long as people could understand them (item 11) and they do not care much about marks because more fewer pupils (78.2%; Case 1, 96.7%; Case 3, 94%) agreed that they worked hard in their language class

because they wanted to get a good mark (item 22).

#### **4.2.2.4 Speaking and listening**

Pupils in Case 2 attach greater importance to speaking and listening. The data in pupil questionnaire I indicates that although majority of the pupils (78.3%) thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (item 24) more children (43.5%; Case 1, 23.3%; Case 3, 30.3%) than the other two English cases thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (item 25). However children's answers to the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I indicates that even more children in Case 2 see the importance of speaking and listening because 52.2% of the children thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing while 43.5% of them thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing. The interview data is consistent with their views in pupil questionnaire I. Children in this class thought speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing because they thought "You write much less than you talk nowadays, especially with phones (PI-C2-01)." "What motivates people to learn a FL is the fact that they can communicate with different people, but you communicate by speaking and listening obviously, not really by reading and writing (PI-C2-01)." The children's answers to the open-ended question how you could improve your speaking and listening ability were comparatively simple than children in the other two English cases. The recurring themes in their answers were: practice, revise, work hard, speak the language and listen to the language. Children in this case seemed to be more classroom-based because a few of them mentioned listen hard or carefully in class.

It is necessary to compare the children's views with their teachers to see the relationship. The two teachers in Case 2 all agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 40) and their perceptions about speaking and listening in the teacher interview are as follows: Teacher 2a holds the idea that "For passing the exam, the four skills are all important. For practical purposes I suppose, what most people are going to use, speaking is the most important." And she said in practice "We work on the principle that the students hear the new language first, then they practise it, then they read it, then they write it." And this is what she did in her teaching as indicated by classroom observation data. Teacher 2b thought that speaking and listening, reading and writing were of equal importance and she tried to include them all in her teaching. She said: "I try to build them all in each lesson by planning, and by starting with listening and reading activities and moving on to speaking and writing (Teacher 2b)." In her teaching Teacher 2b tries to include all four modes of FL as indicated by classroom observation.

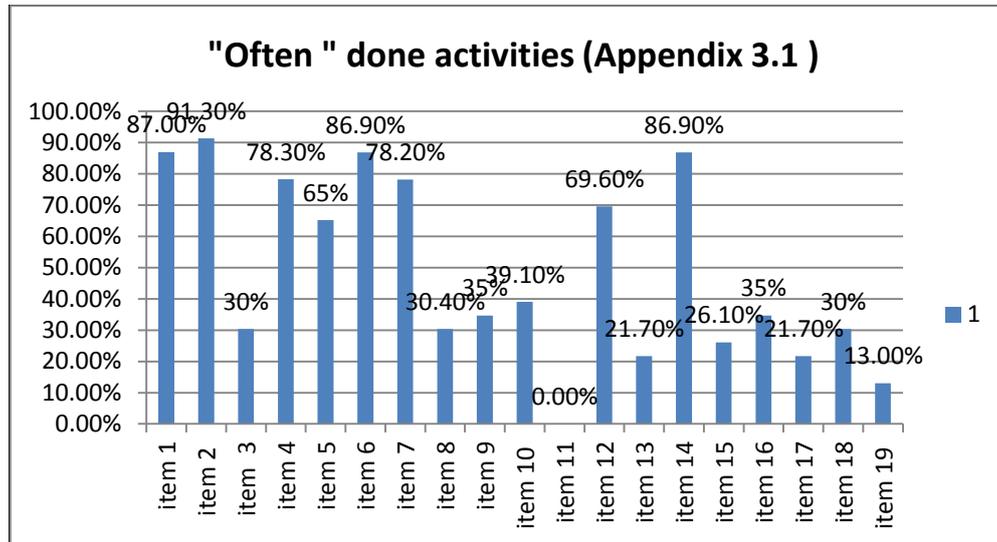
#### **4.2.2.5 Grammar**

In this case 73.9% of the pupils think that grammar is very important for learning a language well (item 28). The percentage is the lowest among the three English cases. The two teachers hold the idea that grammar is important for learning a FL, but they are not as extreme as Teacher 1 (England). The interview excerpt shows Teacher 2a's perception about grammar: "The children have to know the grammar rules, or they cannot apply the language to different contexts. We show them examples, and ask them to try and see the patterns that are there, and to suggest how things work." The classroom observation data shows that they did

talk about grammar rules in the traditional way.

#### 4.2.2.6 Pupil preferences of activities

Graph 4.23 “Often” done activities (Case 2)



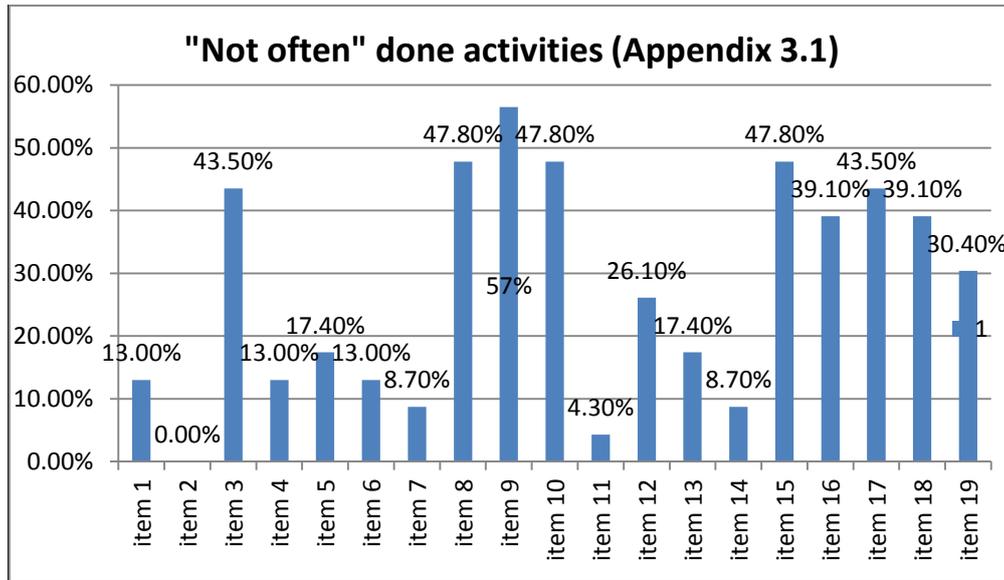
Graph 4.23 indicates that the activities the pupils in Case 2 (School A, England) believe most often done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils, see Appendix 3.1):

- a. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- b. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)
- c. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- d. item 14 (talking in pairs)
- e. item 4 (writing)

The above data shows that the pupils in this case have done a lot listening, reading and writing practice in language lessons. Graph 4.24 shows children’s

perceptions about the “Not often” done activities in their language classes (the percentage of agreement).

**Graph 4.24 “Not Often” done activities (Case 2)**



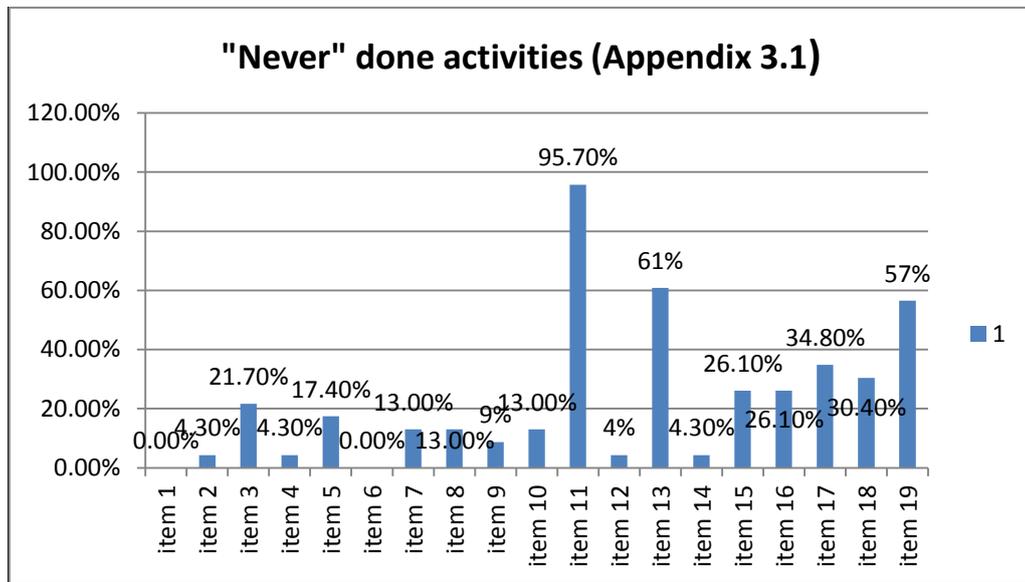
Graph 4.24 indicates that the activities pupils think least “often” done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 9 (discussion of pictures)
- b. item 8 (answering true/false questions (speaking) )
- c. item 10 (talking about things that really happen in life)
- d. item 15 (talking in groups)
- e. item 3 (reading about the life in another country/cultural awareness)

Graph 4.25 shows that the activity pupils think least “often” done is drama (item 11) which is the same with the other two English cases. This is consistent with that I have observed in language classes. The data above indicates that the language classes are teacher-led, which conforms to what I have found from the classroom observation data. From the above “Not often” and “Never” done

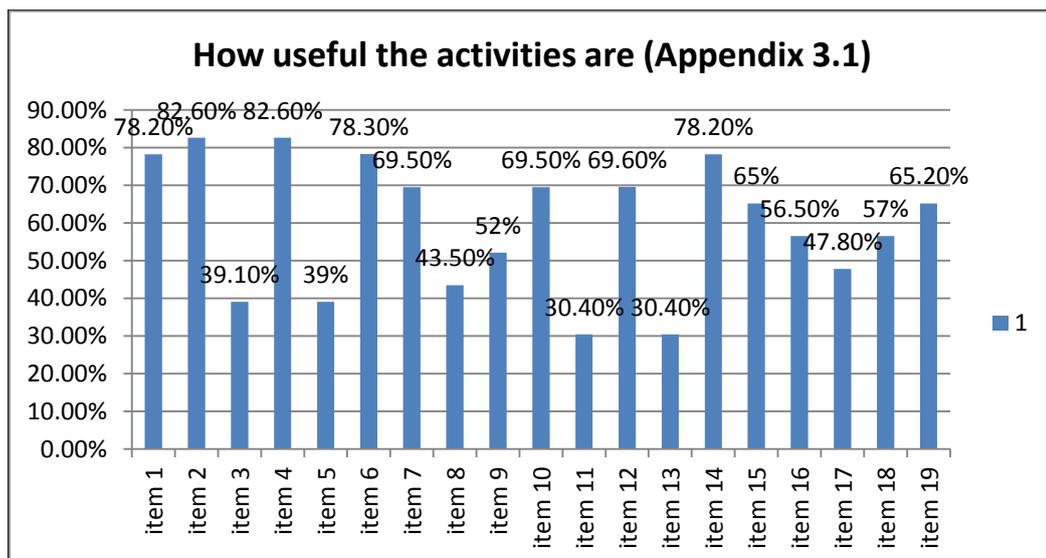
activities we can see that there are not much speaking practice and culture awareness in the language classes.

**Graph 4.25 “Never” done activities (Case 2)**



Graph 4.26 illustrates the children’s opinions about how useful the activities are. The percentages are agreement of “Very useful” and “Useful” put together.

**Graph 4.26 How useful the activities are (Case 2)**



Graph 4.26 indicates that children in Case 2 think that the most useful activities are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard),
- b. item 4 (writing)
- c. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- d. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)
- e. item 14 (talking in pairs)

The above data shows that activities pupils think most useful are exactly the same with those that they think most “often” done activities although in different order. This indicates that teacher’s beliefs and practice exerts influence on students (Horwitz 1988, Rennie 1989).

Teacher questionnaire results show that the teachers in Case 2 hold positive views about group work and learner-centred approach because they agreed that group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix 4.1, item 3) and they thought that the learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allowed each student to develop his/her full potential (Appendix 4.1, item 14). But as the classroom observation data illustrates that in their teaching they did most of the talking and their teaching was teacher-led. In the classes I observed the teachers’ total utterance was 854 short and 27 long. Pupils’ utterance was 447 short. The teacher’s talking is more than two times of the pupils’. The children did one pair work and no group work talking in the four lessons that I observed.

What the children did the most in language classes was to answer teacher's questions.

#### **4.2.2.7 Oral participation in language class**

The open-ended question data shows that not many children in this case are interested in using FL as only 34.8% of the pupils said that they enjoyed communicating with people in the language they were learning whilst over half of them (52.5%) claimed that they did not like it and 13% of them stated as "Not really." "Sort of." or "Sometimes". The group interview data demonstrates that like Case 1 pupils in this case also complained that they did too much writing and not learning what they really wanted to learn, like "Where is the toilet?" They said: "They do not teach us the things you would actually use." "It's hard to learn a new language and I think they teach it in a hard way." And they hoped that teachers could include some activities, e.g. drama, French breakfast and trips to France to make the language lessons more interesting.

When asked if they were afraid of being laughed at by peers if they made mistakes when they spoke the language the children said: "No, the teachers make you feel bad, the students do not make fun of each other because everyone makes mistakes." They said that they would not avoid speaking the language. In language classes the children have very little chance to practice speaking when they go home there is even less chance. In the interview the children said that they never do speaking and listening at home, e.g. watch Spanish TV programme, find something from the internet to listen, etc. This is linked to the finding, above, about lack of homework.

#### **4.2.2.8 Teacher's use of target language in language classes**

The open-ended question data indicates that only 26.1% of the children in Case 2 liked teacher use FL as much as possible while most of them (60.9%) did not like it and 13% of them were not sure. The group interview data show the same pattern. When asked if they liked the teacher to use more FL to teach the children all said they did not really like the teacher to use FL to teach all the time. They thought they could not understand and they complained that the teacher did not teach them the things they really needed when they go to France, like "Where is the toilet?" One pupil said: "I hate it when the teacher is speaking French in class because we do not understand what she is saying (PI-C2-01)."

What is distinctive about Case 2 is that Teacher 2a's views about TL teaching is different from the other teachers in my research. She suggested: "It is difficult to explain the language in TL. I also think for less able students it is quite hard to build relationships with them if you always talk to them in TL. I think building relationships with pupils is very important."

Although the teacher questionnaire data indicates that both Teacher 2a and Teacher 2b agreed that it was very important to use TL to teach as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42) their practice was different from their beliefs. As indicated by the classroom observation data teachers in Case 2 used more home language to teach. They had 297 short TL utterances and only 1 long TL utterance. However they used 477 short home language utterances and 26 long home language utterances, which indicate that they did not teach much in TL.

#### **4.2.2.9 Teacher's role**

As for teacher's role in language lessons the teachers in Case 2 accept the changing of the teacher's role in language teaching as illustrated by their reply in the teacher questionnaire. They agreed that the teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' was no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom (Appendix 4.1, item 8) and the teacher as transmitter of knowledge was only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson (Appendix 4.1, item 25). What makes Case 2 distinctive is that the two teachers demonstrated their knowledge about CLT, especially Teacher 2a is a very experienced and well-informed teacher as shown by interview data.

She argues:

I have always talked about communicative language. We try and encourage the students to use the language, to be spontaneous with the language. That gets more difficult when we get into key stage 4. The new exam specification does not require any spontaneity. It is all learnt off by heart. There is a dilemma between how we would like to teach the students and how we end up teaching the students because of the requirements of the exam specification (TI-T2a).

In the interview Teacher 2b is the only teacher who is very certain that teacher should be facilitator in language class. But Teacher 2a was not sure about teacher's role as facilitator. She said:

I feel concerned about all the new things that are going on with teaching and learning. We are talking a lot more in the schools now about independent learning, and teachers being facilitators and not teachers.

Teacher seems to be the wrong word now. With a FL there is a limit to how much they can learn on their own. In languages we have to have a major input to the lessons, to provide the right models for the students (TI-T2a).

This indicates that although Teacher 2a and 2b accept the changing of the teacher's role in language teaching, in real teaching they still served mostly as an authority and instructor and did most of the talking.

#### **4.2.2.10 Pedagogy**

The two teachers in Case 2 demonstrated positive perceptions about CLT as indicated in teacher questionnaire because they agreed that it was very important to use FL to teach as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42) and students should be encouraged to guess if they did not know a word in the FL (Appendix 4.1, item 35) and the learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allowed each student to develop his/her full potential (Appendix 4.1, item 14). And in interviews they said that they tried to encourage pupils to speak FL as much as possible. But in real teaching they did most of the talking as indicated in previous analysis about teacher's use of TL. Their teaching was more formal, traditional and teacher-led. They used more home language than TL to teach. It might be due to the ability of pupils in this case it is difficult for teachers to use more TL in their teaching as suggested by Teacher 2a in the interview.

To summarize, pupils in Case 2 demonstrated comparatively low motivation,

effort and achievement than pupils in the other two English cases. Although they see more importance in speaking and listening they do not like teacher to use FL much in language lessons. Although the two teachers understand CLT their teaching does not reflect much CLT principles.

#### **4.2.3 Analysis of Case 3 (School A, England)**

Case 3 includes the teacher and 33 children from an English top set French class. This is their second year of learning French. The majority of the children (75.8%) have been learning French for 2-3 years.

**Table 4.18 Number of participants (Case 3)**

	Categories	Number	Percent
Sex	Boys	11	33.3
	Girls	22	66.7
Language	French	33	
Length of learning a foreign language	2 years or less	13	39.4
	2-3 years	12	36.4
	3-4 years	7	21.2
	5 or more years	1	3.0

\* Table 4.18 shows the number of students according to gender, language and length of learning a foreign language in Case 3

The following part will discuss the findings of this case according to the following themes.

##### **4.2.3.1 Motivation**

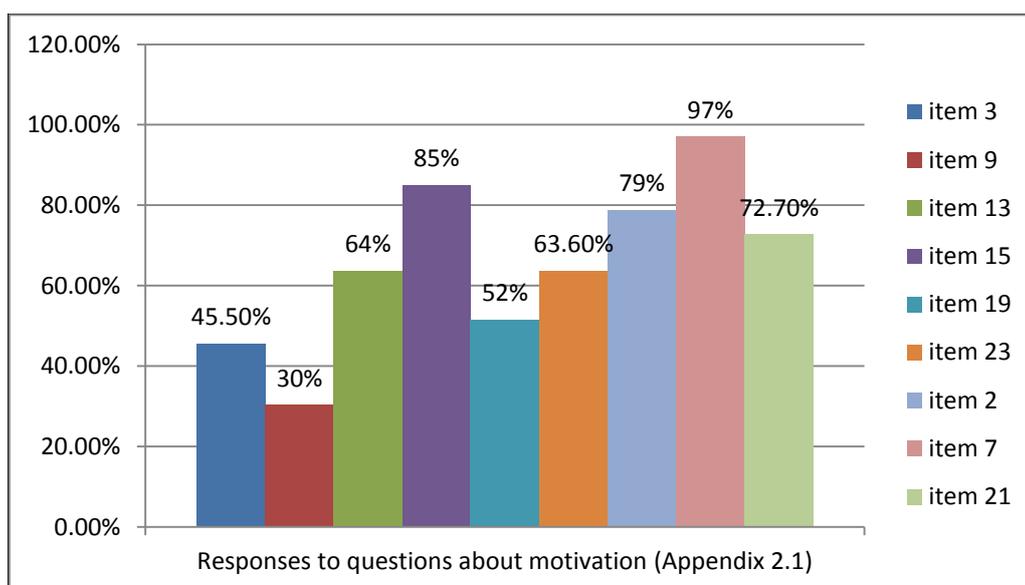
**Table 4.19 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 3)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	45.5%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	* 30 %
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	64%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	85%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	52%
23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	63.6%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	79%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	97%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	72.7%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

### Graph 4.27 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 3)

(representing Table 4.19 above)



As shown in Graph 4.27 motivation in Case 3 is generally positive although it is not as high as Case 1 (England). The top three motivations are: for travelling

(item 7), meeting and talking to a range of people (item 15) and getting a good job in the future (item 2). The pattern is the same with Case 1 (England). The interview data indicates that when asked what motivated them to learn a FL the pupils answered “It is good when you are able to speak a FL and understand what they are saying (PI-C3-01).” “It is interesting to learn a language and see how they communicate with each other (PI-C3-02).” “A good job in another country, a good CV (PI-C3-03).” “You are better prepared for the future if you want to go to another country to have a job there and explore (PI-C3-04).” Pupils in this class saw learning a FL as good chance for their future job which was not mentioned in the other two cases in the English school. The pupils’ motivation to learn FL is mainly instrumental which is consistent with their views in pupil questionnaire I.

#### 4.2.3.2 Effort

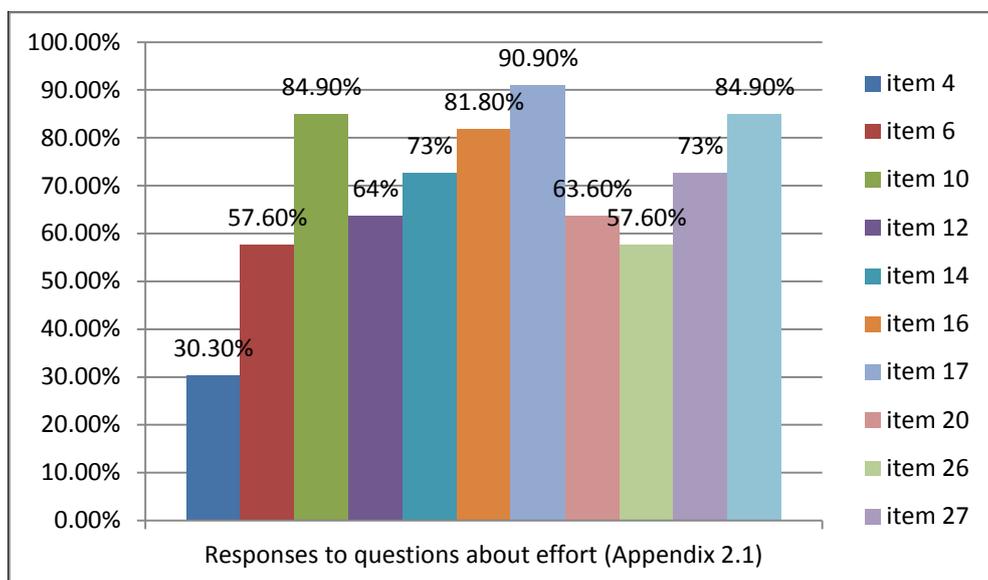
**Table 4.20 Responses to questions about effort (Case 3)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	30.3%
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	57.6%
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	84.9%
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	64%
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I work harder.	73%
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	* 81.8%
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	* 90.9%
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	* 63.6%

26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	57.6%
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	73%
30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	84.9%

\* The responses for these items are reversed as they are negatively-phrased questions.

**Graph 4.28 Responses to questions about effort (Case 3)**  
(representing Table 4.20 above)



Graph 4.28 shows that children's effort at learning FL is generally positive. Great majority of the pupils would not avoid putting effort in learning the language because 90.9% of them said they would not find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language (item 17), 81.8% of them claimed that they put as much effort as they could into their homework for foreign language (item 16) and 84.9% of the children stated that they did their homework for this language class carefully (item 10) and they tried as hard as they could to learn this language (item 30). But as top set students only 30.3% of them agreed that they regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework (item 4) and 57.6% of the children said they used every opportunity they could to

improve their knowledge of this language (item 6). This indicates the children in this top set class would not do extra work on learning FL beyond schooling as is the same case in the other English cases. The children said in the interview that they never do any work after school, let alone speaking and listening, although they are top set students.

#### 4.2.3.3 Achievement

**Table 4.21 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 3)**

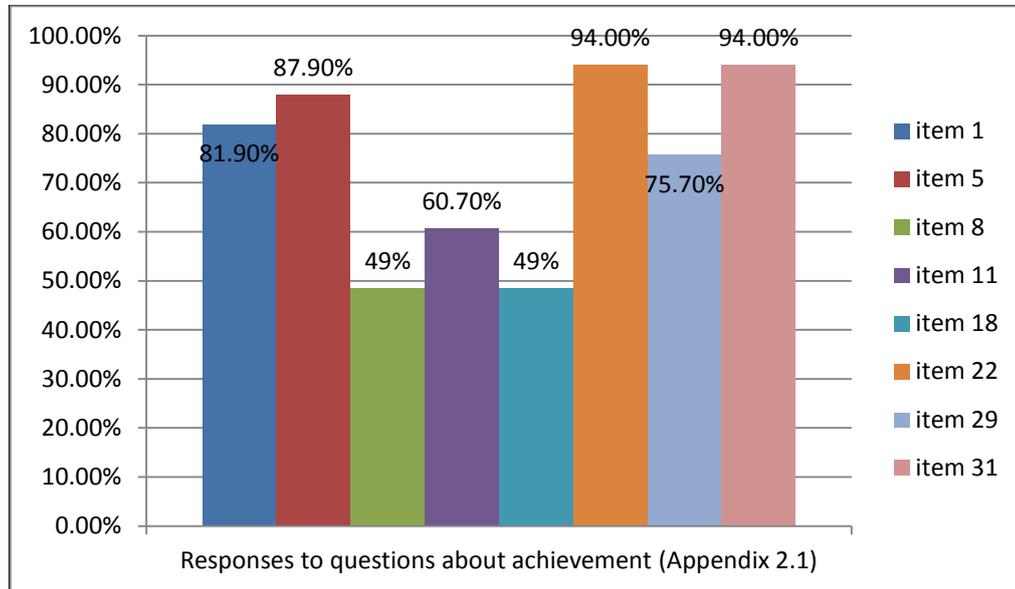
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	81.9%
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	87.9%
8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	49%
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	60.7%
18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	49%
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	94%
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	*75.7%
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	94%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

From Graph 4.29 we can see that achievement in this case is generally positive. Most of the children in this case are confident because 87.9% of them consider themselves as good language learners (item 5). Great majority of the pupils (94%) cares about marks (item 22). Over 80% of the children show strong desire to speak FL well as suggested by the data (item 1 and 31). Item 31 got the highest agreement among the three cases in School A (England) which shows

that children in Case 3 have a strong desire to speak FL perfectly.

**Graph 4.29 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 3)**  
(representing Table 4.21 above)



#### 4.2.3.4 Speaking and listening

Pupil questionnaire I results show that great majority of the children in this case see the importance of speaking and listening in FL learning because 90.9% of the pupils thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (item 24) and 30.3% of them thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (item 25). This pattern concurs with the open-ended question data of pupil questionnaire I as 54.5% of them thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (item 24) and 36.4% of them thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing. Children's answers to the open-ended questions of pupil questionnaire I were detailed and full of varieties. The recurring themes in their answers were: practice, speak the language and listen to the language. They mentioned listening to the recordings of the French people and TV programmes

to improve their speaking and listening ability. This pattern was similar in the three English cases. However the children show different perception in the interview. They said speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing. They said: “You can listen to their accent, see how to pronounce the words, so you can communicate (PI-C3-01).” “You do not have to write, you can just talk to people (PI-C3-02).”

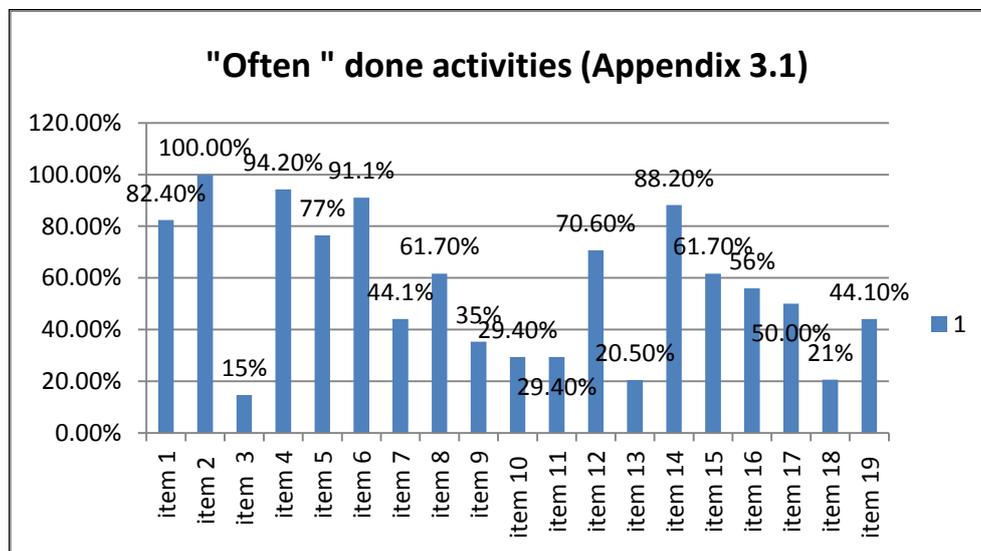
It is necessary to compare the pupils’ views with their teacher’s to see the relationship. Teacher 3 strongly agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 40). It might be the influence of the teachers, that majority of the pupils (90.9%) hold the same idea (Galton 1983, Horwitz 1988). Teacher 3 is the only teacher who strongly agreed that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 41). We speculate it might be her influence that more pupils (30.3%) than Case 1 (23.3%) thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 25) and as indicated by the group pupil interview findings. Teacher 3 thought speaking was the most important among the four language skills. She said in the interview: “I guess ultimately, because not all of them will continue to study French and take a degree, the majority will not, but if they can speak some French when they are older, when they are on holiday, when they meet a French person, I think speaking is the most important in the long term view (Teacher 3).” She said: “I try to do all four skills in every lesson, a bit of each at least.”

#### 4.2.3.5 Grammar

Majority of the pupils (84.8%) thought that grammar was very important for learning a language well (Appendix 2.1, item 28). This is in parallel with their teacher's views about grammar. Teacher 3 thought grammar was very important but she was not extreme as indicated by interview data: "I try not to give them too much grammar. We do it every so often, but I do focus on the communicative side of the language. It is more important that they know how to say important things, rather than conjugate verbs. So long as they understand and can recognize, I think that is the most important thing (Teacher 3)."

#### 4.2.3.6 Pupil preferences of activities

Graph 4.30 "Often" done activities (Case 3)



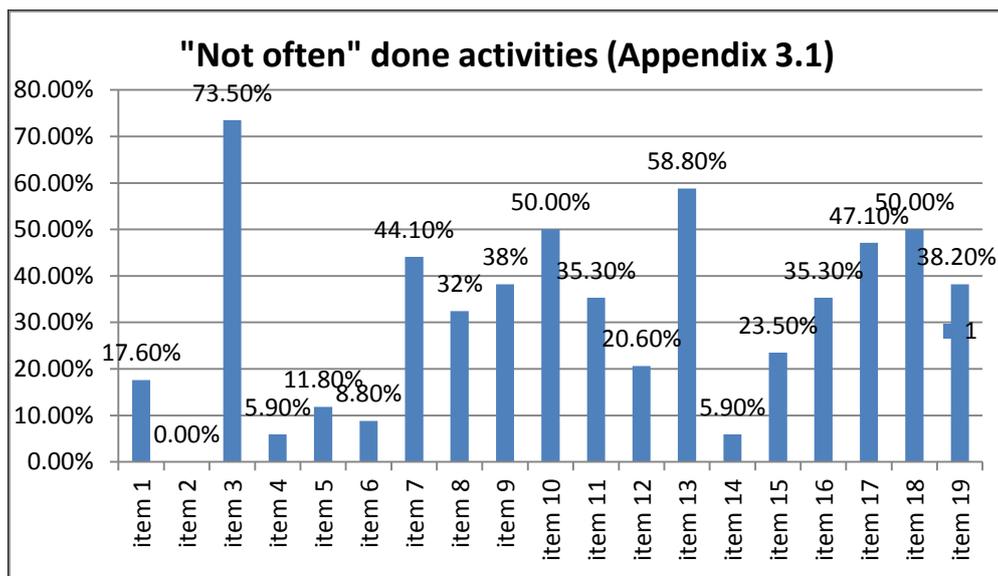
Graph 4.30 indicates the activities that the pupils in Case 3 (School A, England) believe most often done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils, see Appendix 3.1):

- a. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)

- b. item 4 (writing)
- c. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- d. item 14 (talking in pairs)
- e. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)

What makes this case distinctive is that although the most “often done” activities in the three English cases are quite similar pupils in Case 3 did more “drama” (item 11), “talking in groups” (item 15), “speaking in role with others” (item 16) and “playing spoken games in class” (item 19). This indicates that pupils in this case have more speaking practice in language classes. This is in line with the classroom observation findings. All together children in Case 3 did 6 group works, 4 games and 1 pair work within the 4 lessons I observed. This is very different from the other two English cases.

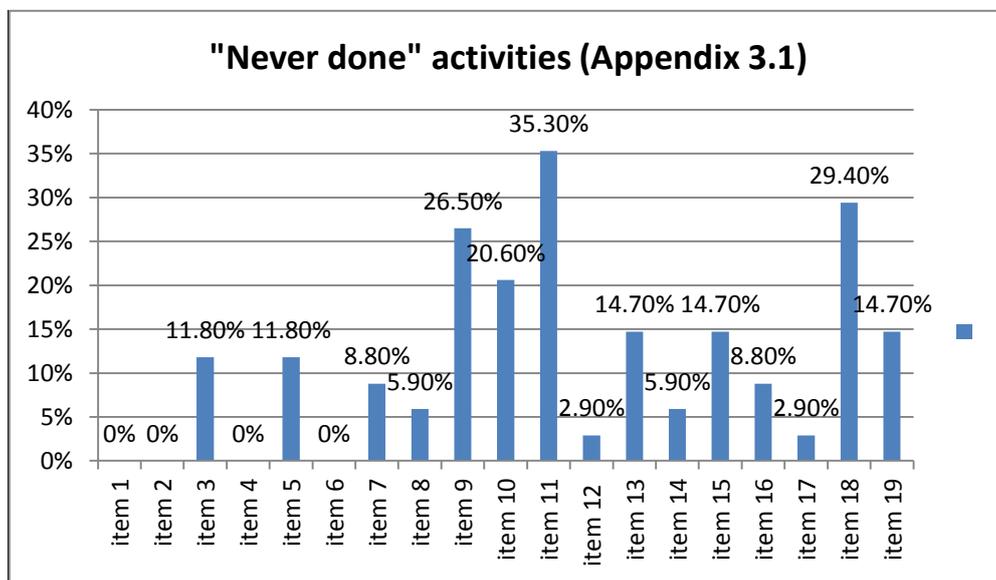
**Graph 4.31 “Not Often” done activities (Case 3)**



From Graph 4.31 we can see that the activities pupils think least “often” done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

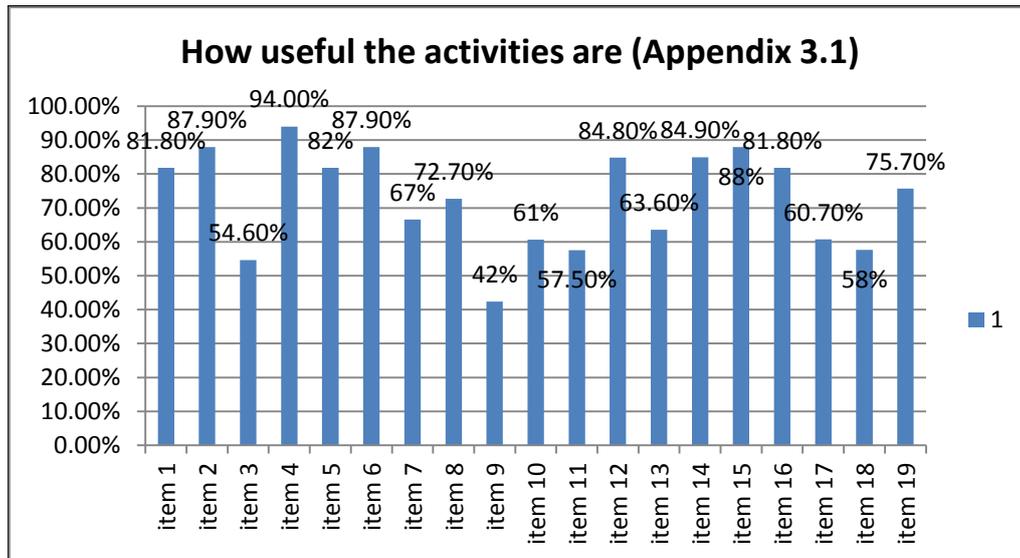
- a. item 3 (reading about the life in another country/cultural awareness)
- b. item 13 (going up to write on the electronic whiteboard)
- c. item 10 (talking about things that really happen in life)
- d. item 18 (flash cards (reading words and saying them))
- e. item 17 (filling in worksheets)

**Graph 4.32 “Never done” activities (Case 3)**



As Graph 4.32 shows that although the activity pupils think least “often” done is drama (item 11), which is the same with the other two English cases, 29.4% of the children thought they often or very often did drama. This is different from the other two English cases. Children in this case did more oral activities in language classes, which is consistent with classroom observation data. Graph 4.33 illustrates the children’s opinions about how useful the activities are. The percentages are agreement of “Very useful” and “Useful” put together.

**Graph 4.33 How useful the activities are (Case 3)**



Graph 4.33 shows that children in Case 3 thought the most useful activities are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 4 (writing)
- b. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- c. item 6 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)
- d. item 15 (talking in groups)
- e. item 14 (talking in pairs)

From Graph 4.33 we can see that pupils in this case are more positive towards most of the activities. Most of them thought majority of the activities were useful.

As suggested by interview data that the children said drama was their best loved activity. However 57.5% of them thought that drama was useful in pupil questionnaire I which means nearly half of them thought drama was useless.

From the pattern of those activities which children thought to be useful we find

that the children usually considered those activities that they often did as useful. This is another example that teacher's belief and practice did exert influence on pupils' belief (Galton 1983, Horwitz 1988, Rennie 1989).

The teacher questionnaire data suggests that Teacher 3 held very positive views about group work since she strongly agreed that group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix 4.1, item 3) and allowed students to explore problems for themselves and thus had some measure of control over their own learning. It was therefore an invaluable means of organizing classroom experiences (Appendix 4.1, item 16). Her beliefs did manifest in her teaching as her pupils did the most group speaking work, pair work and games among the three English cases.

#### **4.2.3.7 Oral participation in language class**

Open-ended question data indicates that over half of the children in Case 3 liked to use FL to communicate with people as 59.4% of the children claimed that they enjoy communicating with people in FL. When asked whether they were afraid of being laughed at by peers if they made mistakes when they spoke the language the children said: "No, I think everyone in our class is quite sensible and understands that you make mistakes because it is a new thing that you are learning, so you are not going to pick it up overnight (PI-C3-01)."

#### **4.2.3.8 Teacher's use of target language in language classes**

As demonstrated by the open-ended question data 43.8% of the children said that

they liked the teacher to use FL as much as possible while 37.5% of them stated that they did not like it and 12.5% of the children were not sure. This means that only less than half of the children like the teacher to use FL as much as possible. This is in parallel with group interview data. In the interview when asked if they liked the teacher to use FL to teach as much as possible the children said they preferred a bit of both FL and home language. As indicated by teacher questionnaire data Teacher 3 strongly agreed that it was very important to use FL to teach as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42) and she expressed the same idea in the interview. Teacher 3 said:

I do try and use as much TL as I can. It is important. Next year I want to use more signs round the room, to encourage them to use more TL, so instead of saying “I have forgotten my book” they can tell me in French. Or “Can I open a window?” so they can spontaneously use the TL themselves as much as possible. That is really quite important (TI-T3).

And she did what she claimed. As shown by classroom observation data Teacher 3 used more TL than home language in her teaching. She had 357 short TL utterances and 26 long TL utterances. She used the most long TL utterances among the three English cases, which indicates that she used more TL to teach instead of short classroom TL. She had 229 short home language utterances and 39 long home language utterances.

#### **4.2.3.9 Teacher’s role**

In the questionnaire Teacher 3 agreed that the teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' was no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language

classroom (Appendix 4.1, item 8) and she strongly agreed that the teacher as transmitter of knowledge was only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson (Appendix 4.1, item 25). But she did not agree that the role of the teacher in the language classroom was to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing, and example (Appendix 4.1, item 30). Teacher 3 thought that teacher's role varied as she explained in the interview "With new language it is teacher-led, because you are presenting the new language. Then it is best, as quickly as you can, once you have given them that language, to do a more pupil-led activity. The initial starting point is always with the teacher. Often, after the pupils have practised, you have to come back and talk about improving - that kind of thing, which goes back to the teacher (TI-T3)." Teacher 3 did what she said. She tried her very best to get the pupils involved as much as possible by using all kinds of activities in language classes and her pupils were very motivated to learn as indicated by classroom observation and interview data.

#### **4.2.3.10 Pedagogy**

Teacher 3 is a new teacher. What makes her distinctive is that she used more TL to teach and she tried to use all kinds of activities to make the language classes interesting, motivate the pupils and get them involved. The pupils were highly motivated and very active in class. She was not very strict and was very kind and nice to the children. But the class was under good control. Teacher 3 tried to employ all kinds of ways, e.g. inviting a French visitor to language lessons, group work, pair work, games, singing songs, guessing, to get the pupils involved and make the lessons interesting and the pupils were really very happy

and highly motivated and they enjoyed the lessons very much. The experience of having a French visitor in language lessons was very impressive. Teacher 3 invited a French visitor who is a teacher in France to two of her lessons. This was the first time they had visitor in a language class. The visitor did an introduction about herself and her school in French. The children were given a table of information and the pupils worked in groups to tick the correct information that they heard from the visitor. Then pupils answered questions about the visitor in English, e.g. What is her name? Where was she born? How many brothers she has? The visitor wrote the correct answers on board. After this the pupils asked questions of the visitor about her school and the French children, but in English. Pupils' questions were full of varieties, e.g. school uniform, food, sports, timetable and exams. The pupils were given the visitor's and her pupils' email address and they will exchange emails. The visitor asked the pupils to write a simple letter in French and she would bring the letters to her French pupils. The pupils were very motivated and enjoyed the lesson. This was a very good experience for the children to learn language. Teacher 3 did put a lot of effort to make the language lessons more interesting and she was very successful in doing so.

To summarize, pupils in Case 3 hold very positive perceptions about FL and they were motivated to learn. Most of the children would like to put effort in the language they were learning and they showed good commitment. Their teacher tried her very best to get the children involved and make the language lessons interesting and the pupils enjoyed the language lessons very much.

#### 4.2.4 Analysis of Case 4 (School B, China)

School B is one of the poor schools in the local area. The majority of the children are immigrants from other poor areas in China and the pupils have less family support than the native children. As discussed in the review of literature all the Chinese children in this research study English as FL because it is compulsory in Chinese schools (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Hu 2002b).

Case 4 includes the teacher and 40 students. This is the smallest class in the 6 Chinese cases but still is bigger than the English cases.

**Table 4.22 Number of participants (Case 4)**

	Categories	Number	Percent
Sex	Boys	20	50%
	Girls	20	50%
Language	English	40	100%
Length of learning English	2 years or less	1	2.5%
	2-3 years	2	5%
	3-4 years	4	10%
	5 or more years	33	82.5%
Do you go to weekend school?	Yes	26	65%
	No	14	35%
How long have been going to weekend school?	Never	5	12.5%
	2 years or less	16	40%
	2-3 years	9	22.5%
	3-4 years	7	17.5%
	5 or more years	3	7.5%
Hours spent at weekend school per week	1 hour	3	7.5%
	2 hours	31	77.5%
	3 hours	3	7.5%
	4 hours		
	More than 4 hours	2	5%
How many hours	Less than 1 hour	21	52.5%

do you work on English apart from school?	1-2 hours	18	45%
	2-3 hours	1	2.5%
	3-4 hours		
	More than 4 hours		
What do you usually do on English at home?	Revise what we have learnt at school	12	30%
	Do grammar exercises	4	10%
	Do homework set by teacher	16	40%
	Do listening and speaking exercises		
	Watch English TV programme	1	2.5%
	Read complementary English materials		

\* Table 4.22 indicates the number of students who were involved in this research according to gender, language, length of learning English, whether go to weekend school, length of going to weekend school, hours spent at weekend school per week, hours spent self- learning English at home and what they learn at home (Case 4)

The background information is different from the English cases because in the pilot study we found these information included here was irrelevant with the English children but they are very important for investigating English language teaching and learning in the Chinese schools. As showed in the above table the great majority of the children (82.5%) in this case have been learning English for 5 or more years and 65% of them go to weekend school to learn English beyond schooling. More children in Case 4 did less extra work on English than the other two cases in School B (China) because about half of the children (52.5%) spent less than 1 hour on English apart from school (Case 5, 36.6% ; Case 6, 19.6%). When asked what do you usually do on English at home 82.5% of the children said they did some work at home. This is the highest percentage among the three cases in School B. Among them 30% of the pupils answered as revise what they

have learnt at school, which is the highest among the three cases in School B (China) and 40% of the children do homework set by teacher. 10% of the children spent their time doing grammar exercises at home which is the highest among the three cases, which might be the influence of their teacher's strong belief for the importance of grammar (Galton 1983, Horwitz 1988, Rennie 1989). Only 2.5% of the pupils watch English TV programmes. This indicates that most of the Chinese children spent their time doing homework or revising what they have learned at school, beyond which very few of the children did extra work, especially for speaking and listening. The following part will illustrate the findings of Case 4 according to the following themes.

#### 4.2.4.1 Motivation

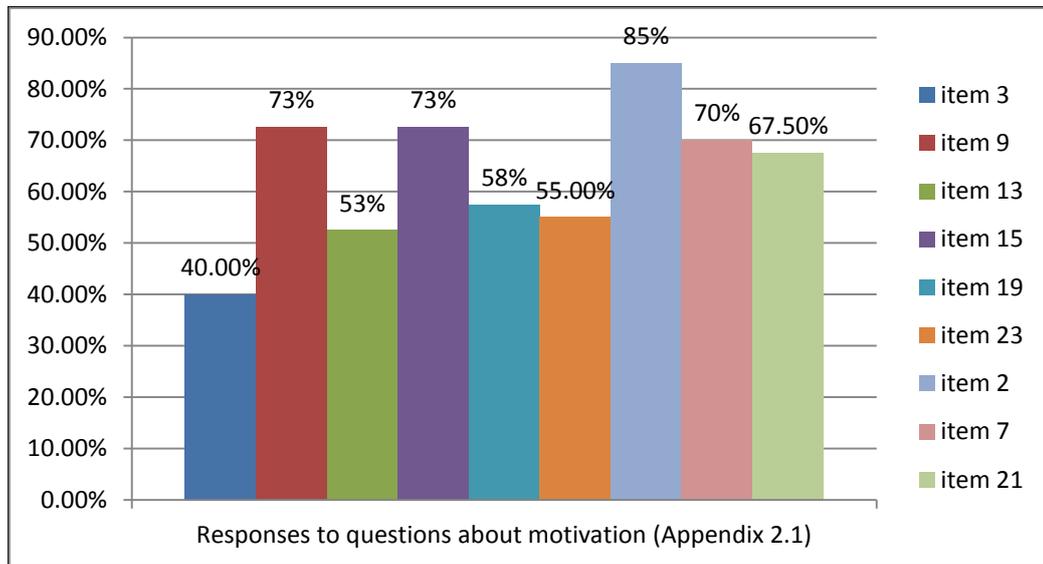
**Table 4.23 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 4)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	40%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	* 73%
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	53%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	73%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	58%
23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	55%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	85%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	70%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	67.5%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

### Graph 4.34 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 4)

(representing Table 4.23 above)



Graph 4.34 indicates that motivation in this case is the lowest among the three cases in School B (China). The most important motivation was getting a good job in the future (item 2) which was outstanding among the motivation items. The second was meeting and talking to arrange of people (item 15) which shows that children would like to talk to people. Item 9 also rank second, which indicates that most of the pupils (72.5%) in this case see the importance of learning FL. When asked in the interview about what motivated you to learn English they answered: “It is compulsory for the big exam at the end of Year 9 and National Matriculation Exam (PI-C4-01).” “It is necessary to learn English if you want to study abroad (PI-C4-02).” “It is good for your future job (PI-C4-03).” “It is necessary to understand other countries culture (PI-C4-04).” Their motivation mainly falls into instrumental category. When asked if English is important they answered: “Learning English is very important because it was compulsory for exams (PI-C4-05).” “English is useful in future jobs because English is global language (PI-C4-06).” The children interviewed all said they liked English.

#### 4.2.4.2 Effort

**Table 4.24 Responses to questions about effort (Case 4)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	37.5%
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	37.5%
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	65%
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	68%
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I work harder.	78%
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	* 25%
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	* 60%
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	* 67.5%
26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	52.5%
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	65%
30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	67.5%

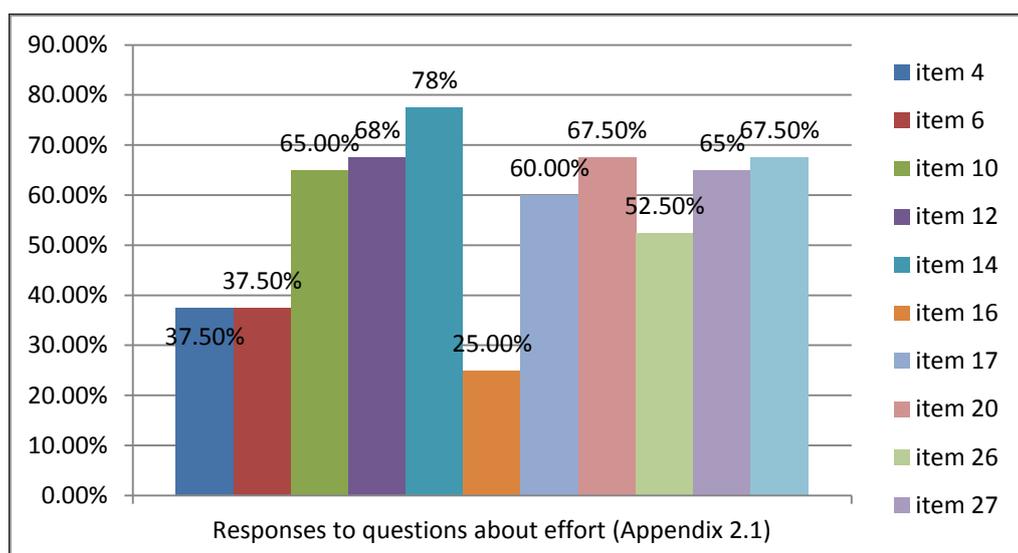
\* The responses for these items are reversed as they are negatively-phrased questions.

As indicated by Graph 4.35 most of the children in Case 4 would try hard with their work and not avoid learning the language because 67.5% of them said that they would try as hard as they could to learn English (item 30). Over 65% of the children said they did their homework for this language class carefully (item 10) and they took time to review what they have learned in this language (item 12). But only 25% of them said that they put as much effort as they could into their homework for English (item 16). However only 37.5% of them said that they regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from

homework (item 4) and they used every opportunity they could to improve their knowledge of this language (item 6). This means that most of the children would not avoid doing homework and revising what they have learned at school, but they would not do more extra work on English language. The group interview data reveals that some of the children in this case watched English films at home to help improve speaking and listening ability. 65% of the children went to weekend school to learn English. This is an example of the Chinese children doing more work on learning FL.

#### Graph 4.35 Responses to questions about effort (Case 4)

(representing Table 4.24 above)



#### 4.2.4.3 Achievement

Table 4.25 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 4)

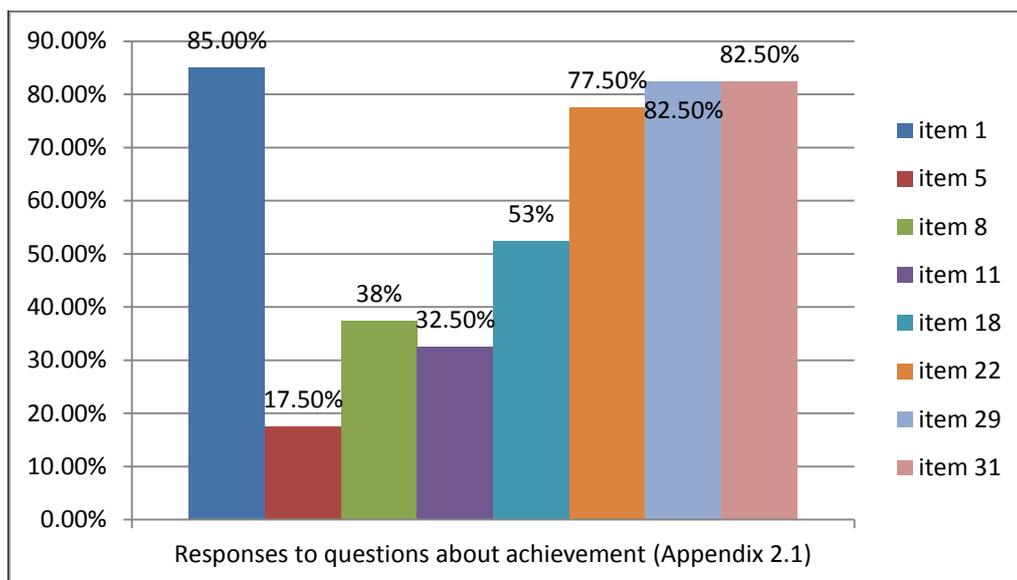
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	85%
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	17.5%

8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	38%
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	32.5%
18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	53%
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	77.5%
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	* 82.5%
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	82.5%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

**Graph 4.36 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 4)**

(representing Table 4.25 above)



From Graph 4.36 we can see that although the children in this case were not as confident as most of the English children because only 17.5% of them consider themselves as good language learners (item 5) they show good interest in speaking English because over 82% of them said that they wanted to take the time to study this language so that they would be able to speak it well (item 1) and they would like to be able to speak this language perfectly (item 31) and 77.5% of them said that when someone told them they spoke this language well, they

worked harder (item 14). Majority (77.5%) of the children care about marks (item 22).

#### **4.2.4.4 Speaking and listening**

The majority of the children in Case 4 see the importance of speaking and listening in FL learning because 80% of the pupils thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (item 24). This is in line with the group interview data. From the children's answers to the open-ended questions of pupil questionnaire I we can see that 28.6% of the children thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing and the same number of pupils (28.6%) thought speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing. However more children (37.1%) considered reading and writing as more important because of the big exams in China from which we can see the washback effect of exams in China (Dai, Gerbino et al. 2011, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). Their answers to the open-ended questions of pupil questionnaire I suggests that when asked how to improve their speaking and listening ability some of the themes were similar with the English children's answers. The most often mentioned themes were: listen to tapes, watch English films and TV shows, listen more, speak more, practice, read more, read aloud more. What was different from the English children's answers was that 45.7% of the children in this case mentioned listening to tapes. As the Chinese education is text-book based (Lam 2002, Hu 2005, Chang 2006) every child has text book and attached tapes. As indicated by teachers' interview data children were required to listen to the tapes at home and some of the teachers asked their pupils to listen to the tapes every day. A few of the children talked about listening to

English songs and watching English films and TV shows to improve their speaking and listening ability. This is consistent with group interview data. In the interview when asked how to develop speaking and listening ability the children said that they should listen more to textbook recordings (tapes), read aloud texts and talk more in English with teachers and peers. From this we can see the importance of text book in China. The children's views about speaking and listening resonated with their teacher's ideas. As indicated by teacher questionnaire data Teacher 4 agreed that speaking and listening are as important as reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 40) and speaking and listening are more important than reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 41).

This was further revealed in the interview. Teacher 4 thought among the four language skills speaking was the most important, but in China due to the exam-oriented education system they had to focus on reading, grammar exercises and a little writing because speaking and listening were not assessed. The pupils did one listening unit per module (there are four units in one module) and listened to recording of texts from the textbook. This is the listening practice pupils did in language classes because although she saw the importance of speaking and listening Teacher 4 seldom used English to teach except some very simple classroom English, like "Good morning." "Sit down" "Good" as the classroom observation data indicates.

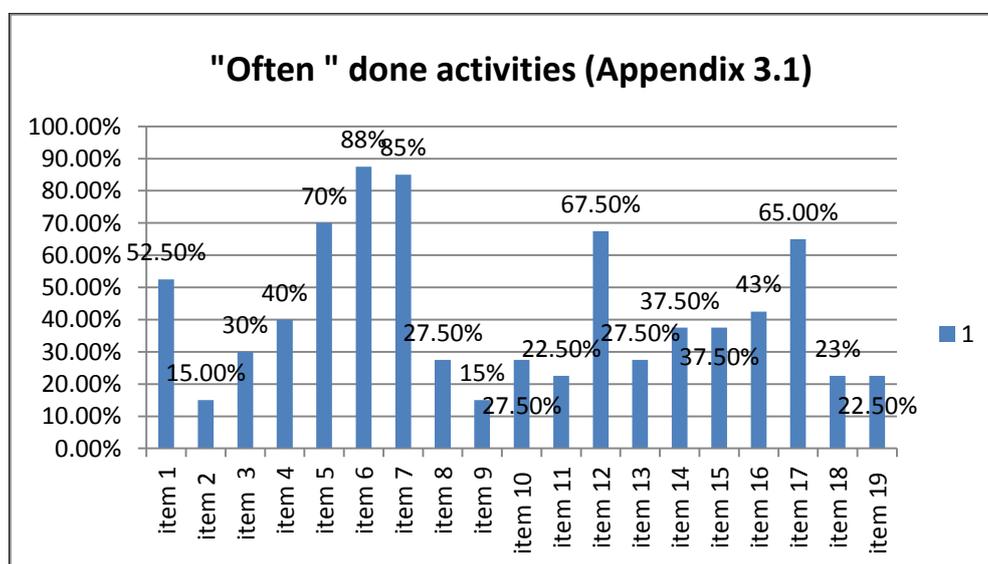
#### **4.2.4.5 Grammar**

85% of the children thought grammar was very important for learning a language well (Appendix 2.1, item 28). The children's views about grammar are in parallel with their teachers perceptions. As revealed in teacher questionnaire Teacher 4

was extremely supportive to the importance of grammar because she thought that grammatical correctness is the most important criterion by which spoken language performance should be judged (Appendix 2.1, item 1). She even agreed that by mastering the rules of grammar, students became fully capable of communicating with a native speaker (Appendix 4.1, item 26) and learning a foreign language was mostly a matter of learning grammar rules (Appendix 4.1, item 31). This is not surprising because under the exam-oriented Chinese education system both teachers and pupils consider grammar as very important (Pan and Block 2011) because they account the biggest mark in exams (Cheng 2008, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011).

#### 4.2.4.6 Pupil preferences of activities

**Graph 4.37 “Often” done activities (Case 4)**



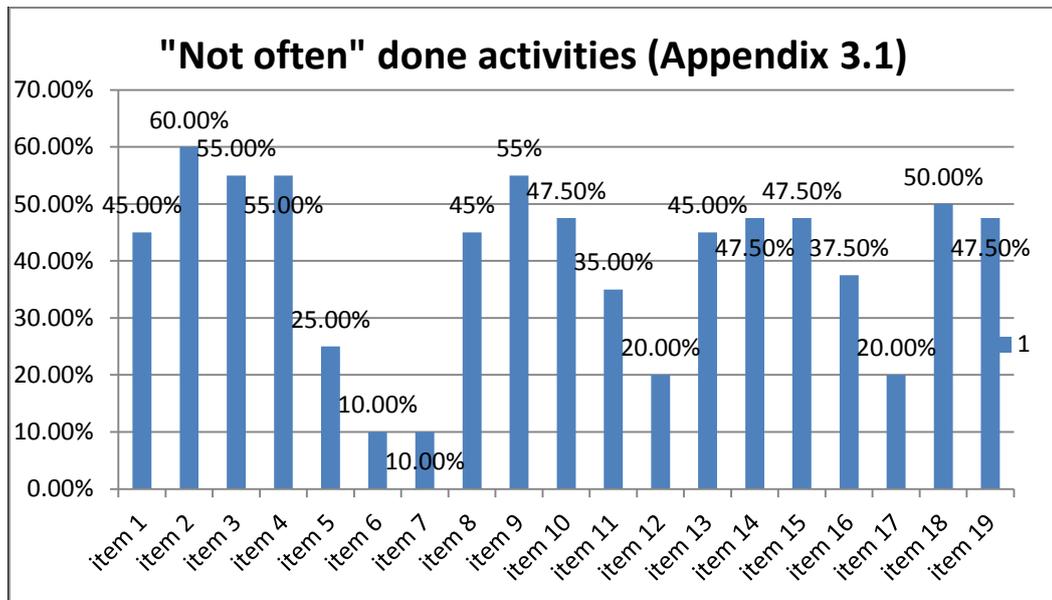
Graph 4.37 shows that the activities that the pupils in Case 4 (School B, China) believe most often done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils, see Appendix 3.1):

- a. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)

- b. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)
- c. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language)
- d. item 12 (grammar exercises in textbooks)
- e. item 17 (filling in worksheets)

The above most “often” done activities reflect the examination-led education in China. They are entirely in parallel with what I have observed in the language lessons in Case 4.

**Graph 4.38 “Not often” done activities (Case 4)**

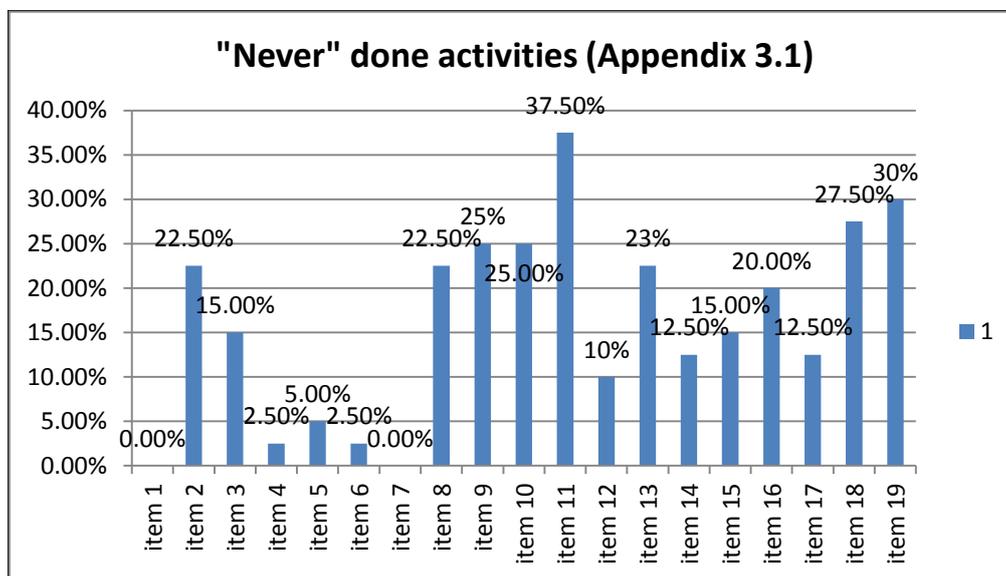


From Graph 4.38 we can see that the activities pupils think least “often” done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- b. item 3 (reading about the life in another country/cultural awareness)
- c. item 4 (writing)
- d. item 9 (discussion of pictures)

e. item 18 (flash cards (reading words and saying them))

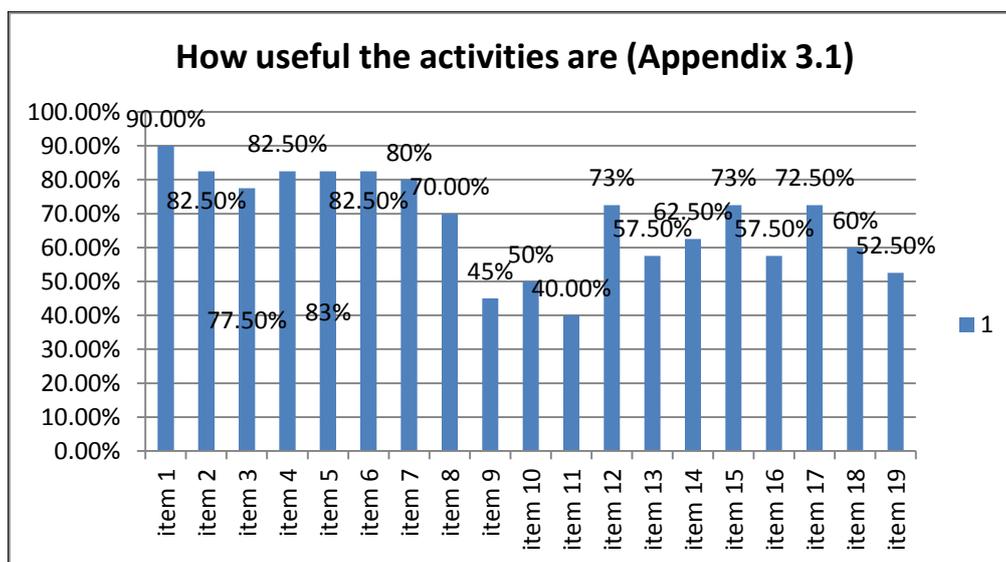
**Graph 4.39 “Never” done activities (Case 4)**



Graph 4.39 shows the pupils in Case 4 thought the least done activity was drama.

From Graph 4.39 we can see that children in Case 4 rarely have speaking and listening activities in language classes. What they have done reflects textbook-based, grammar-centred nature of the language lessons (Hu 2005).

**Graph 4.40 How useful the activities are (Case 4)**



From Graph 4.40 we can see that children in Case 4 think that the most useful activities are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)
- b. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- c. item 4 (writing)
- d. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language)
- e. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)

It is interesting to notice that the activities that children believe to be most useful were those that they often did in language classes and they served the purpose for exams. This is another example of teacher's influence on pupils (Galton 1983, Horwitz 1988, Rennie 1989). In the group interview the children stated that they liked games, but they seldom did any. Although the pupils have rarely done most of the activities listed in pupil questionnaire II they held positive attitudes towards most of the activities. This is different from the English children.

The teacher questionnaire indicates that Teacher 4 held positive views about group work and she strongly agreed that group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix 4.1, item 3), however she never asked her pupils to do any group work. The pupils did two

pair works. It might be due to the Chinese education system teachers have to spend a lot of teaching time doing grammar and reading explanation without much time for children to do speaking and listening practice (Pan and Block 2011).

#### **4.2.4.7 Oral participation in language class**

As suggested by the answers to the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I only 37.1% of the children said they enjoyed communicating with people in English. Whilst more children (42.9%) claimed that they did not like it and 20% of them were not sure. This indicates children's low motivation to speak the language. As shown by the group interview data when asked if they were afraid of being laughed at by peers if they made mistakes when they spoke the language the children said: "No, I do not think our peers will laugh at me." When asked if they would like to answer questions voluntarily they said when they knew the answer they would love to, otherwise they would not. And they all said that they love teacher to use more English to teach. However in reality they seldom have the chance to speak English spontaneously except answering teacher's questions as shown by the classroom observation data.

#### **4.2.4.8 Teacher's role**

Although Teacher 4 expressed in her interview that teacher ought to be a facilitator in language learning, in reality she had to be knowledge transmitter because of the big pressure of the exams in China. However in the teacher questionnaire she stated very different views about the role of teacher as she did not agree that the teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' was no longer adequate to

describe the teacher's role in the language classroom (Appendix 4.1, item 8) and she believed that the role of the teacher in the language classroom was to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing, and example (Appendix 4.1, item 30). This means that Teacher 4 did not accept the changing of teacher's role in language teaching and her belief was in line with her practice. This is another example that teacher's beliefs determine his/her practice (Pajares 1992).

#### **4.2.4.9 Teacher's use of target language**

The children's answers to the open-ended questions indicate that only 37.1% of them liked the teacher to use TL as much as possible. While 51.4% of them did not like it and 8.6% of the children were not sure. This is not consistent with the group interview data. In the group interview the children stated that they all liked the teacher to use more English to teach because it could help them improve their listening ability. However although Teacher 4 agreed that it was very important to use FL to teach as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42) as indicated by the teacher questionnaire data her practice was very different from her belief. As demonstrated by Graph 4.10 in cross case analysis Teacher 4 used the least TL in her teaching. In total she used only 49 short TL utterances and 174 home language utterances. She used a lot more home language than TL in her teaching. One reason might be in two lessons that I observed most of the time the children did test papers and she did not teach much. But even if she did speak English in class she only used very simple classroom English as explained above. Therefore the children have little chance to hear TL in class. This is the case in most of the Chinese classes except Case 6 (School B, China).

#### **4.2.4.10 Pedagogy**

Teacher 4's beliefs about FL pedagogy reflect the old grammar-translation method which is dominating in ELT in China (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Hu 2005, Cheng 2008, Li 2010, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011) and applied by most of the Chinese teachers in my research as the classroom observation data indicates. As demonstrated in the teacher questionnaire data that Teacher 4 was extreme about the importance of grammar as illustrated above. She still saw teacher's role as authority because she did not agree that the teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' was no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom (Appendix 4.1, item 8). She believed that learning a FL is a matter of translating from home language (Appendix 4.1, item 20) and learning a lot of new vocabulary (Appendix 4.1, item 29). Her beliefs did exert influence on her practice as I observed in her teaching her pedagogy reflected the typical Chinese old grammar-translation method which was teacher-led, textbook-centred and teacher did most of the talking. Teacher 4 followed exactly textbook contents with some complementary test papers and grammar exercises. Therefore she spent a lot of teaching time talking about vocabulary, test papers and grammar exercises which were the priority in language learning and chief contents of exams in China (Cheng 2008, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011).

In summary, Case 4 reflects typical Chinese language learning and teaching style. Although most of the children (65%) go to weekend school to learn English beyond schooling and they spend much longer time learning language than English children as illustrated above in the cross case analysis they did not have much chance to have speaking and listening practice as the teachers seldom

spoke English in class neither included listening teaching in language classes.

This means although Chinese pupils ought to have more chance to do speaking and listening due to length of learning language in school and after school

however in reality this is not the case.

#### 4.2.5 Analysis of Case 5 (School B, China)

Case 5 includes the teacher and 42 students. The children in this class are of mixed ability.

**Table 4.26 Number of participants (Case 5)**

	Categories	Number	Percent
Sex	Boys	16	39%
	Girls	25	61%
Language	English	41	100%
Length of learning English	2 years or less	1	2.4%
	2-3 years		
	3-4 years	6	14.6%
	5 or more years	34	82.9%
Do you go to weekend school?	Yes	20	48.8%
	No	21	51.2%
How long have you been going to weekend school?	Never	8	19.5%
	2 years or less	22	53.7%
	2-3 years	7	17.1%
	3-4 years	3	7.3%
	5 or more years	1	2.4%
Hours spent at weekend school per week	1 hour	4	9.8%
	2 hours	30	73.2%
	3 hours	1	2.4%
	4 hours	1	2.4%
	More than 4 hours	3	7.3%
How many hours do you work on English apart from school?	Less than 1 hour	15	36.6%
	1-2 hours	20	48.8%
	2-3 hours	5	12.2%
	3-4 hours	1	2.4%
	More than 4 hours		

What do you usually do on English at home?	Revise what we have learnt at school	4	9.8%
	Do grammar exercises	1	2.4%
	Do homework set by teacher	10	24.4%
	Do listening and speaking exercises		
	Watch English TV programme	2	4.9%
	Read complementary English materials		

\* Table 4.26 shows the number of students who were involved in this research according to gender, language, length of learning English, whether go to weekend school, length of going to weekend school, hours spent at weekend school per week, hours spent self- learning English at home and what they learn at home (Case 5)

Table 4.26 indicates that great majority of the children (82.9%) in this case have been learning English for 5 or more years. This case has the fewest children (48.8%) among the three cases in School B (China) who went to weekend school to learn English beyond schooling. However this case has the most children (14.6%) who spent more than 2 hours on English apart from school compared with the other two cases in School B (Case 4, 2.5% ; Case 6, 4.3%). When asked what do you usually do on English at home only 41.5% of the pupils did some work at home. Among them 9.8% of the children answered as revise what they have learnt at school and 24.4% of them do homework set by teacher. Only 4.9% of the children watch English TV programmes at home. This indicates that as the same with the other two cases in School B most of the Chinese children spent their time doing homework or revise what they have learned at school, beyond which very few of the children did extra work, especially for speaking and listening. The following part will illustrate the findings of this case according the following themes.

### 4.2.5.1 Motivation

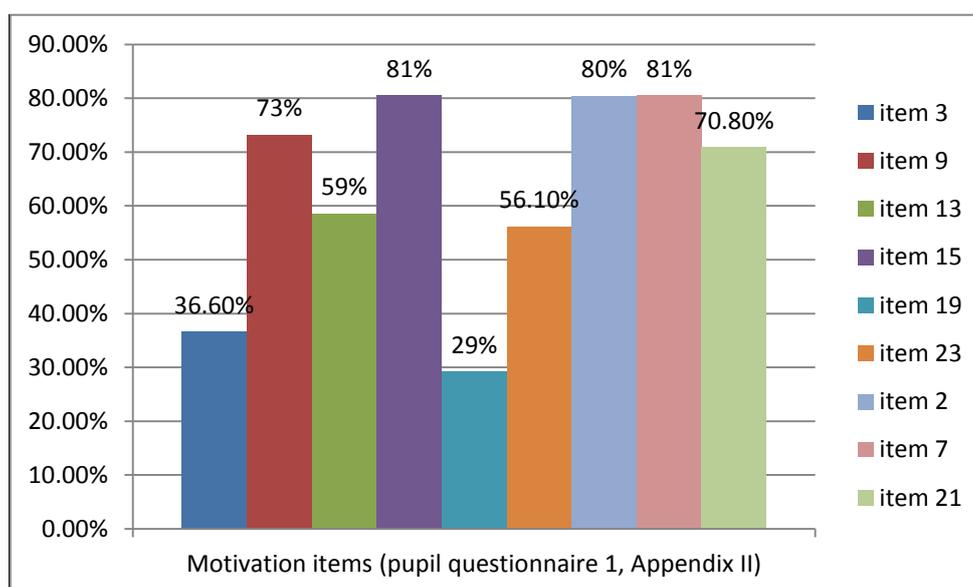
**Table 4.27 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 5)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	36.6%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	* 73%
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	59%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	81%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	29%
23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	56.1%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	80%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	81%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	70.8%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

**Graph 4.41 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 5)**

(representing Table 4.27 above)



Graph 4.41 shows that for children in this case the most important motivations were: for meeting and talking to arrange of people (item 15), for travelling (item 7) and for getting a good job in the future (item 2). When asked in the interview what motivated you to learn English they answered: “It is a compulsory core subject and compulsory for exams (PI-C5-01).” “It is necessary to learn English if you want to study abroad (PI-C5-02).” “We learn English so that we can communicate with English speaking people (PI-C5-03).” “We learn English in order to understand western culture (PI-C5-04).” “It is useful for future job and English is a must skill (PI-C5-05).” They all said they liked English and it is important to learn English.

#### 4.2.5.2 Effort

**Table 4.28 Responses to questions about effort (Case 5)**

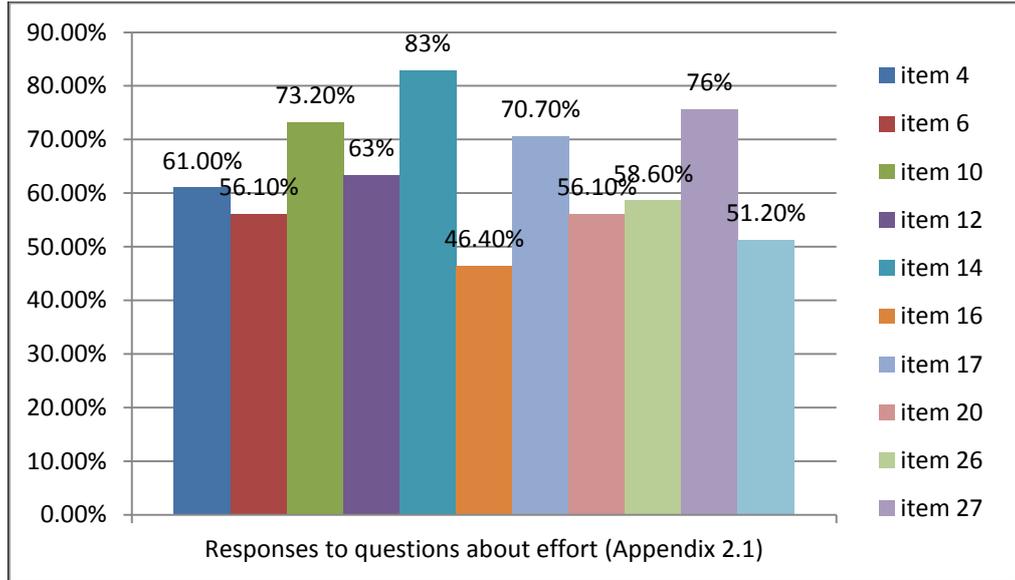
<b>Questionnaire item</b>	<b>% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree</b>
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	61%
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	56.1%
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	73.2%
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	63%
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I work harder.	83%
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	* 46.4%
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	* 70.7%
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	* 56.1%
26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	58.6%
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	76%

30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	51.2%
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\* The responses for these items are reversed as they are negatively-phrased questions.

**Graph 4.42 Responses to questions about effort (Case 5)**

(representing Table 4.28 above)



As indicated by Graph 4.42 most of the children in this case demonstrated positive effort in learning English as 73.2% them said that they did their homework for this language class carefully (item 10) and 70.7% of the children would not avoid learning the language (item 17). Most of the children (63.4%) said and they took time to review what they have learned in this language (item 12). Most of the children in this case would put extra effort in learning the language beyond school work because 61% of them said that they regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework (item 4) and 56.1% of the pupils stated that they used every opportunity they could to improve their knowledge of this language (item 6). Group interview data demonstrates that some of the children in this case would watch English film and English TV programs to improve their speaking and listening ability.

### 4.2.5.3 Achievement

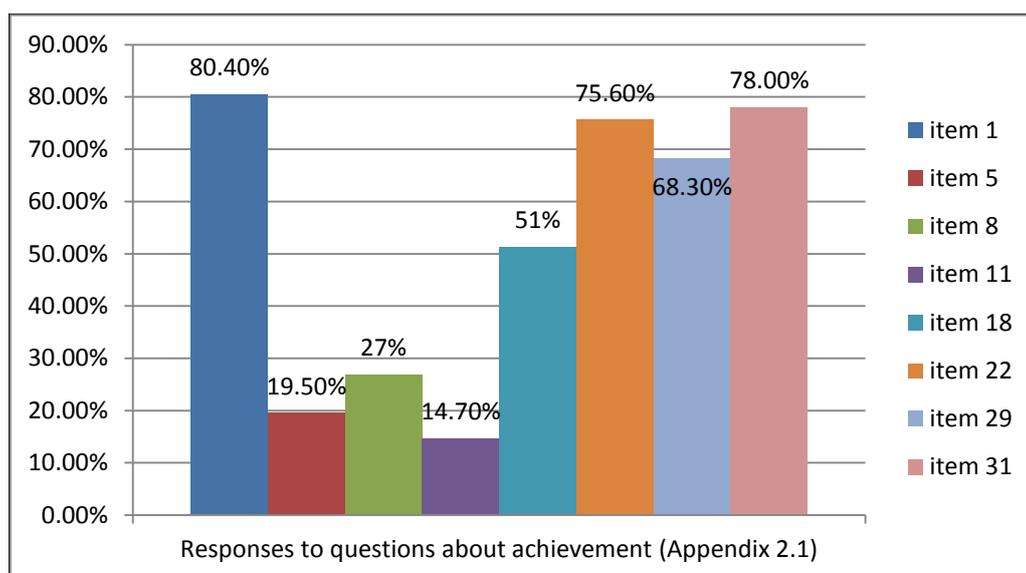
**Table 4.29 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 5)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	80.4%
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	19.5%
8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	27%
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	14.7%
18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	51%
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	75.6%
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	* 68.3%
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	78%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

**Graph 4.43 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 5)**

(representing Table 4.29 above)



From Graph 4.43 we can see that pupils in Case 5 were not confident about themselves because only 17.5% of them consider themselves as good language

learners (item 5). However great majority of the children in this case showed strong interest in speaking the language well because 80.4% of them said that they wanted to take the time to study this language so that they would be able to speak it well (item 1) and 78% of them would like to be able to speak this language perfectly (item 31) and 82.9% of them claimed that when someone told them they spoke this language well, they worked harder (item 14). Majority (75.6%) of the children in this case care about marks (item 22).

#### **4.2.5.4 Speaking and listening**

Most of the children in this case see the importance of speaking and listening in FL learning because 78% of the pupils thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (item 24) and 29.3% of them thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (item 25). The pupils' answers to the open-ended questions suggest that more children (40%) thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing. Whilst 20% of the pupils stated that reading and writing were more important because they account more marks in the big exams in China. Again we see the washback effect of the important Chinese exams (Dai, Gerbino et al. 2011, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). This echoes their views in the group interview. In the interview some children thought reading and writing were more important because speaking and listening were not tested. But they said that if it were not for exams they thought speaking and listening were more important because they were more useful for communication. Open-ended question data shows that their perceptions about how to improve their speaking and listening ability share similarity with children in Case 4. The recurring themes were: listen to tapes,

speak the language, listen to English songs, music and broadcast, watch English films and TV programmes, read more, read aloud texts, read aloud after tapes. 51.5% of the children stated that they would improve their listening by listening to the tape. Children's perceptions in the open-ended questions are highly in line with their views in the group interview. In the interview when asked how to develop speaking and listening ability they said that they should listen more, practice more and watch English TV programmes. The children's views about speaking and listening were consistent with their teacher's ideas. As indicated by teacher questionnaire data Teacher 5 agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 40) while she did not agree that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 41). It might be her belief that has impact upon her pupils because not many children (29.3%) thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 25). Teacher 5 said in the interview that the four language skills of language were equally important. But they most focused on reading and doing grammar exercises because of the exam-oriented education system in China (Pan and Block 2011), which is in accordance with her teaching as indicated by the classroom observation data.

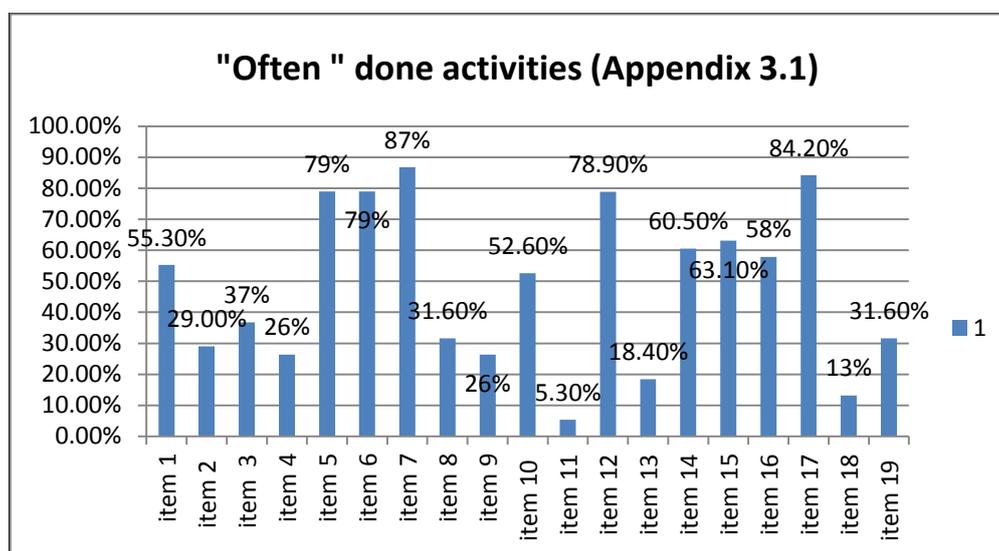
#### **4.2.5.5 Grammar**

85.4% of the children thought grammar was very important for learning a language well (Appendix 2.1, item 28). The children's views about grammar are in line with their teachers perceptions. As revealed in teacher questionnaire Teacher 5 saw the importance of grammar but she did not go to extremes. She thought that grammatical correctness was the most important criterion by which

spoken language performance should be judged (Appendix 2.1, item 1) and she agreed that direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar was essential if students were to learn to communicate effectively (Appendix 4.1, item 33). This is consistent with her teaching as I observed in her classes she applied direct instruction of the grammar rules and terminology which is another example that teacher's belief determines what they do in practice (Pajares 1992).

#### 4.2.5.6 Pupil preferences of activities

**Graph 4.44 "Often" done activities (Case 5)**



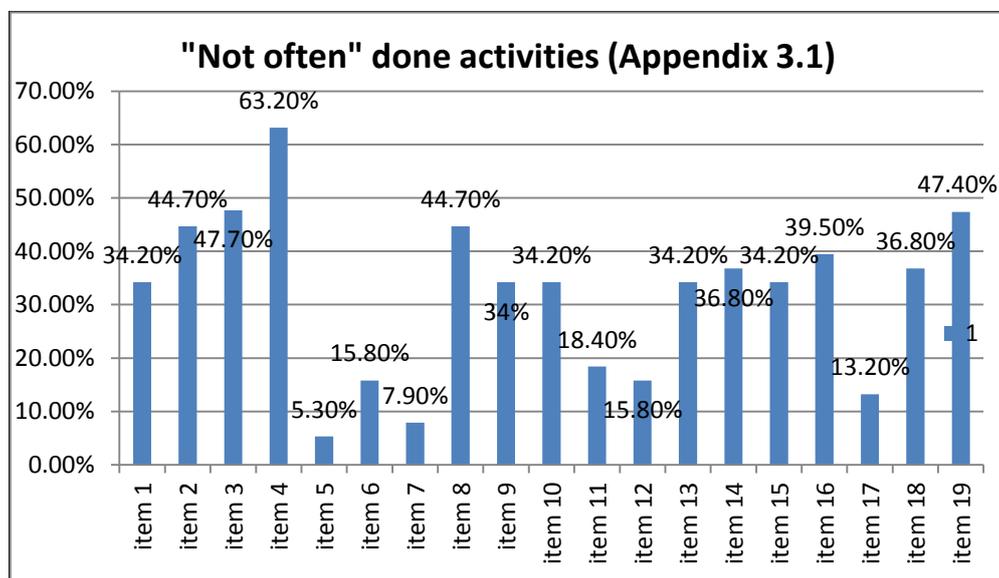
As shown in Graph 4.44 the activities that the pupils in Case 5 (School B, China) believed most often done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils, see Appendix 3.1):

- a. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)
- b. item 17 (filling in worksheets)
- c. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language)
- d. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)

- e. item 12 (grammar exercises in textbooks)

The above most “often” done activities were exactly the same with Case 4 although in different order. This phenomenon reflects the examination-led education in China. They are entirely in parallel with what I have observed in the language lessons. It is very interesting to notice that about 60% of the children thought they often or very often did talking in pairs (item 14), talking in groups (item 15) and speaking in role with others (item 16). However in my observation the pupils did two group works, but about pronunciation, translation, ask/answer questions and revise words. The pupils did not have any creative use of FL because except asked to answer teachers questions they never used FL.

**Graph 4.45 “Not often” done activities (Case 5)**

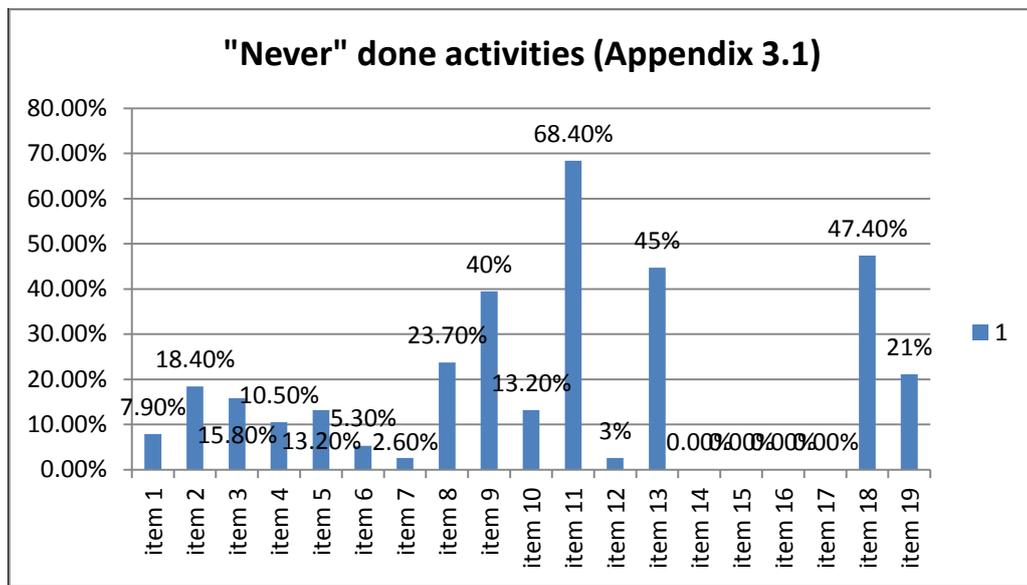


From Graph 4.45 we can see that the activities pupils think least “often” done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 4 (writing)
- b. item 3 (reading about the life in another country/cultural awareness)

- c. item 19 (playing spoken games in class)
- d. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- e. item 8 (answering true/false questions (speaking))

**Graph 4.46 “Never” done activities (Case 5)**



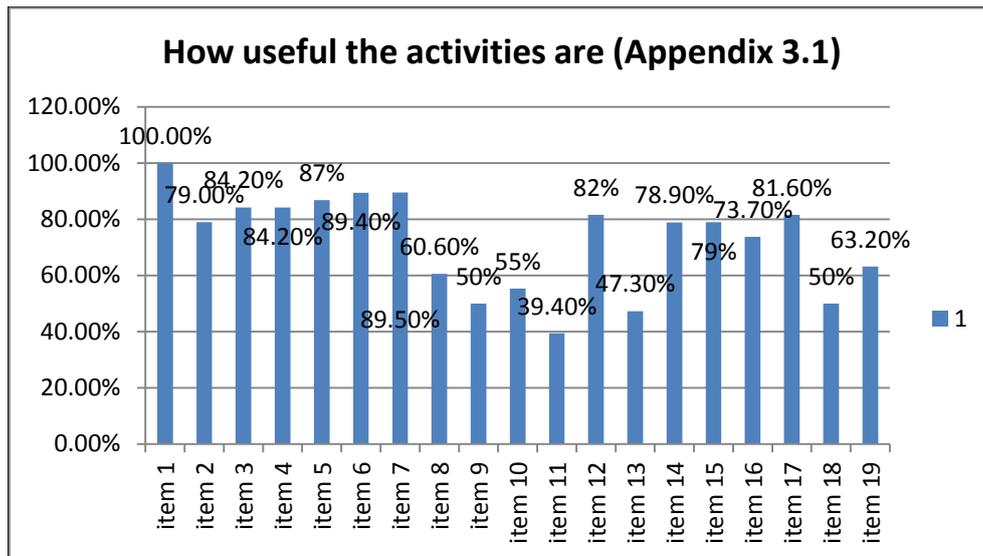
Graph 4.46 shows that children in this case believed the top “Never” done activity was drama. From the “Not often” done and “Never” done activities we can see that children in this case did not do much speaking and listening practice in their language classes which is exactly consistent with my classroom observation data.

Graph 4.47 indicates that children in Case 5 think that the most useful activities are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils) :

- a. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)
- b. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)

- c. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- d. item 3 (reading about the life in another country/cultural awareness)
- e. item 4 (writing)

**Graph 4.47 How useful the activities are (Case 5)**



The above data indicates that the activities which children believed most useful were not the same with those that they said most “often” done. And the great majority of the children thought that most of the activities were very useful.

The children in Case 5 stated in the group interview that group discussion and games were their preferred activity in language class. This is against the stereotype of the Chinese students who were thought as reluctant to participate in group discussion (Gao 2006, Edwards, Ran et al. 2007b). As shown in the teacher questionnaire that Teacher 5 held positive views about group work and she strongly agreed that group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix 4.1, item 3), in the four lessons I observed she asked her pupils to do two group works which were about

pronunciation, translation, ask/answer questions and revise words. There was not creative use of FL.

#### **4.2.5.7 Oral participation in language classes**

Children demonstrated low motivation in using English to communicating with people in their answers to the open-ended question because only 27% of the children said they enjoyed communicating with people in English. Whilst 62.2% of them said they did not like it and 8.1 of the pupils answered as “Not really.” “Sort of.” When asked in the group interview whether they were afraid of being laughed at by peers if they made mistakes when they spoke the language the children said: “No, I do not think our peers will laugh at me.” When asked if they would like to answer questions voluntarily they said they would love to, but sometimes they did not know how to express themselves. This means that children were willing to participate in oral practice. However they rarely had chance to speaking English except answering teacher’s questions and they had little chance to hear the language either because the teacher seldom taught in English except using very simple classroom English, which was the same with Teacher 4 (School B, China) as shown by classroom observation data.

#### **4.2.5.8 Teacher’s role**

The teacher questionnaire data shows that Teacher 5 accepted the changing of teacher’s role in language class as she agreed that the teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' was no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom (Appendix 4.1, item 8) and the teacher as transmitter of knowledge was only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course

of a lesson (Appendix 4.1, item 25). In the interview Teacher 5 said that she thought teacher ought to be a facilitator, but in reality she had to be the dominator because of the big pressure of the exams. And this is in line with what she did in her teaching.

#### **4.2.5.9 Teacher use of target language**

Children showed positive views towards teacher's use of FL in language classes as their answers to the open-ended question suggest that 51.4% of them liked the teacher to use FL as much as possible. While 40.5% of them did not like it and 6.6% of the children said they were not sure.

As indicated by teacher questionnaire data Teacher 5 agreed that it was very important to use English as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42). And in the interview she expressed the same idea. But she said that due to the exam-driven education system in China and the pupils' level of English it was very hard for teachers to teach in English. Therefore she used Chinese to teach most of the time. Classroom observation data shows that in the four lessons that I observed she used 120 short TL utterances and 185 short and 34 long home language utterances, which indicates that she taught mostly in Chinese. Even if she did speak English she used very simple classroom English like "Next.", "Good.", "Turn to page...". The children stated in the group interview that they liked teacher to use more English to teach because it could help them improve speaking and listening ability. However in practice they seldom had chance to hear English in class because the teacher rarely used English to teach.

#### 4.2.5.10 Pedagogy

Teacher 5 is the only teacher among the ten teachers in my research who believed that the communicative approach to language teaching produces fluent but inaccurate learners (Appendix 4.1, item 23). We speculate that her belief exerted influence on her teaching. Her teaching was typical Chinese grammar-translation approach (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Hu 2005, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). She mostly used Chinese to teach and the teaching was teacher-led and textbook-centred as well. She did most of the talking. Although she did ask pupils to do some group work, the pupils did not have any creative use of FL and unless asked to answer teacher's questions the children never used English.

To summarize, Case 5 was very similar with Case 4 in terms of teacher's pedagogy and children's perceptions about FL. The only difference was that over 60% of the children in Case 5 believed that they have often done pair works, group works and their teacher did ask them to do two group works which should be good chance for speaking practice. However as I observed those group works were not creative use of FL and children usually used Chinese.

#### 4.2.6 Analysis of Case 6 (School B, China)

Case 6 includes the teacher and 46 students. This case is the biggest class among the three cases in School B (China). The children in this class are of mixed ability.

**Table 4.30 Number of participants (Case 6)**

	Categories	Number	Percent
Sex	Boys	25	54.3%

	Girls	21	45.7%
Language	English	46	100%
Length of learning English	2 years or less	1	2.2%
	2-3 years	1	2.2%
	3-4 years	5	10.9%
	5 or more years	38	82.6%
Do you go to weekend school?	Yes	32	69.6%
	No	14	30.4%
How long have been going to weekend school?	Never	9	19.6%
	2 years or less	16	34.8%
	2-3 years	13	28.3%
	3-4 years	6	13%
	5 or more years	1	2.2%
Hours spent at weekend school per week	1 hour	9	19.6%
	2 hours	28	60.9%
	3 hours	1	2.2%
	4 hours	3	6.5%
	More than 4 hours	2	4.3%
How many hours do you work on English apart from school?	Less than 1 hour	17	37%
	1-2 hours	27	58.7%
	2-3 hours	2	4.3%
	3-4 hours		%
	More than 4 hours		%
What do you usually do on English at home?	Revise what we have learnt at school	6	13%
	Do grammar exercises	1	2.2%
	Do homework set by teacher	19	41.3%
	Do listening and speaking exercises		%
	Watch English TV programme	2	4.3%
	Read complementary English materials	3	6.5%

\* Table 4.30 indicates the number of students who were involved in this research according to gender, language, length of learning English, whether go to weekend school, length of going to weekend school, hours spent at weekend school per week, hours spent self- learning English at home and what they learn at home (Case 6)

Table 4.30 indicates that great majority of the children (82.9%) in this case have been learning English for 5 or more years and 69.6% of them went to weekend school to learn English. For those children who went to weekend school 34.8% of them have been learning English there for 2 years or less which was the lowest among the three cases in School B (China). The percentage (60.9%) of children who spent 2 hours per week at weekend school was also the lowest among the three cases. But the number of children (58.7%) who worked 1-2 hours on English apart from school was the highest among all the Chinese cases. This means that although children in Case 6 spent less time at weekend school they were willing to do more work at home. When asked what do you usually do on English at home 13% of the pupils answered as revise what they have learned at school and 41.3% of the children do homework set by teacher which is again the highest among the three cases in School B (China). Although most of the children did homework or revised what they have learned at school at home more children in this case did extra work on learning English beyond school work as indicated by Table 4.30. 4.3% of the pupils watched English TV programmes and 6.5% of the children read complementary English materials. They were the only children who did complementary English reading and none of the children in the other cases in School B (China) did this. Children in this case are the most positive among the three cases in School B (China). The following part will present the findings of this case according to the following themes.

#### **4.2.6.1 Motivation**

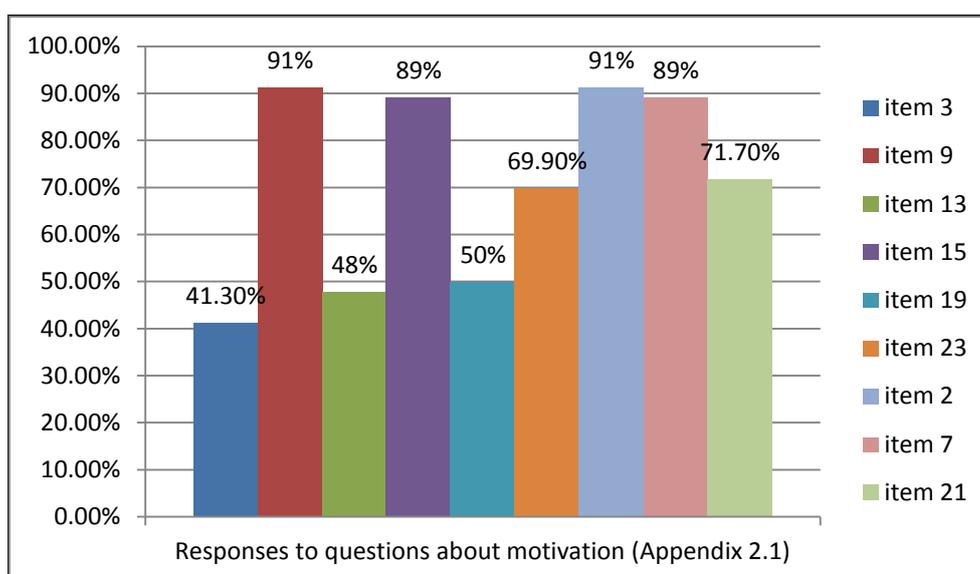
##### **Table 4.31 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 6)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	41.3%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	* 91%
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	48%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	89%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	50%
23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	69.9%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	91%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	89%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	71.7%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

**Graph 4.48 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 6)**

(representing Table 4.31 above)



As indicated in Graph 4.48 motivation in this case is the highest among the three cases in School B (China) and the great majority of the children (91.3%)

recognize the importance of learning English (Appendix 2.1, item 9). The most important motivations are: for getting a good job in the future (item 2), for travelling (item 7) and for meeting and talking to arrange of people (item 15). This is similar with children in the other two cases in School B (China). In the group interview when asked what motivated you to learn English the children answered: “It is a compulsory core subject and compulsory for exams (PI-C6-01).” “It is necessary to learn English if you want to study abroad (PI-C6-02).” “We learn English so that we can communicate with English speaking people (PI-C6-03).” “We learn English in order to understand western culture (PI-C6-04).” “It is useful for future job and English is a must skill (PI-C6-05).” They all said they liked English and it is important to learn English, which is consistent with their views in pupil questionnaire I.

#### 4.2.6.2 Effort

**Table 4.32 Responses to questions about effort (Case 6)**

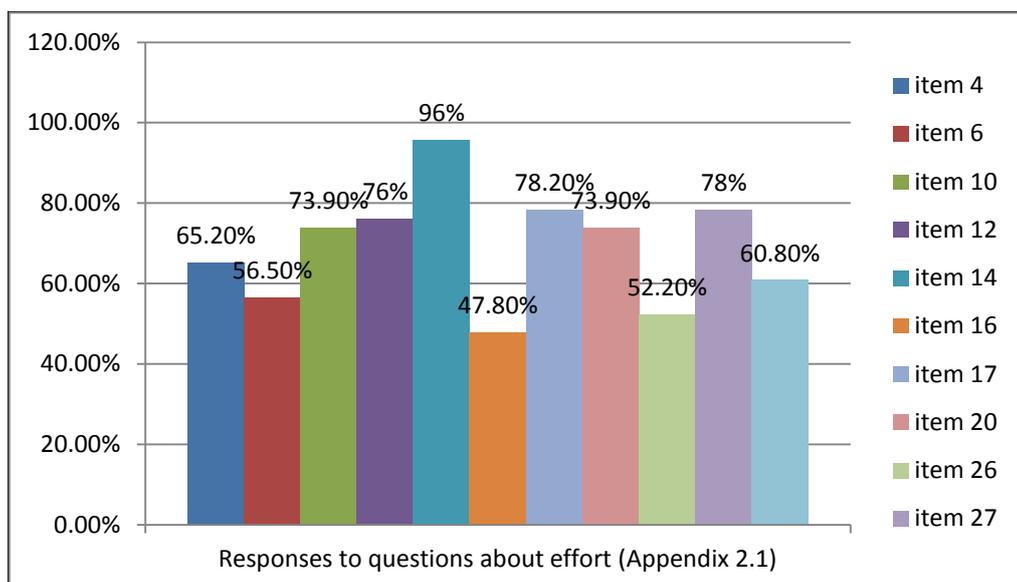
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	65.2%
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	56.5%
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	73.9%
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	76%
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I work harder.	96%
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	* 47.8%
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	* 78.2%
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	* 73.9%

26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	52.2%
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	78%
30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	60.8%

\* The responses for these items are reversed as they are negatively-phrased questions.

#### Graph 4.49 Responses to questions about effort (Case 6)

(representing Table 4.32 above)



We can see from Graph 4.49 most of the children in this case demonstrated positive attitude and effort in learning English because 73.9% them stated that they did their homework for this language class carefully (item 10) and 78.2% of the children said that they would not avoid learning the language (item 17). The great majority of the children (76%) said and they took time to review what they have learned in this language (item 12). Over half of the children (65.2%) in this case would put extra effort in learning the language beyond school work because (item 4) and 56.5% of the pupils stated that they used every opportunity they could to improve their knowledge of this language (item 6). As revealed by the group interview data the children said that they would watch English film and

English TV programs to improve their speaking and listening ability. This means some of the children would like to put extra effort in learning speaking and listening.

#### 4.2.6.3 Achievement

**Table 4.33 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 6)**

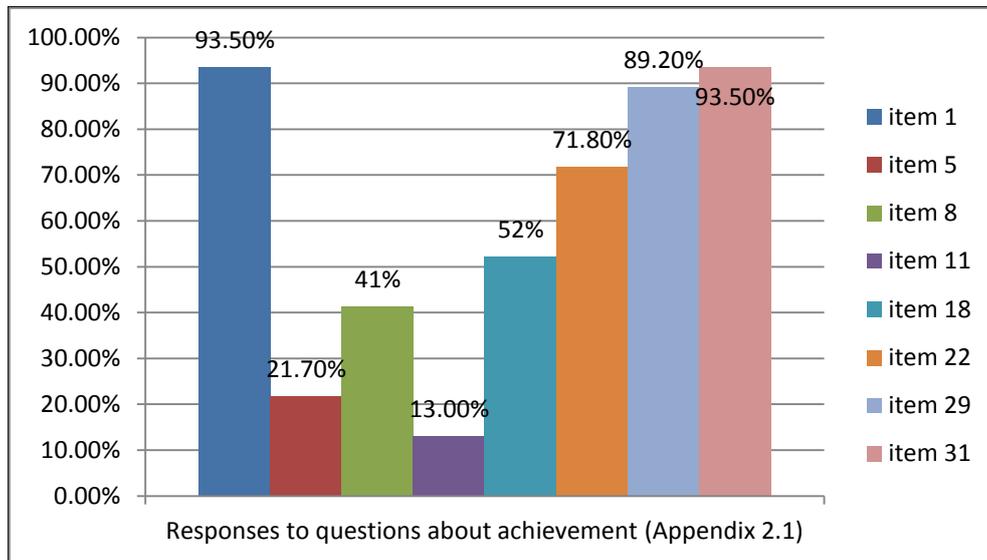
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	93.5%
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	21.7%
8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	41%
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	13%
18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	52%
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	71.8%
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	* 89.2%
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	93.5%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

From Graph 4.50 we can see that pupils' perception of achievement in this case is the most positive among the three cases in School B. Although children were not as confident as the English children because only 21.7% of them considered themselves as good language learners (item 5). However this percentage is higher than the other two Chinese cases in School B, which means children in Case 6 are more confident. Most of the children (93.5%) demonstrated very strong desire to speak English well (item 1) and to speak this language perfectly

### Graph 4.50 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 6)

(representing Table 4.33 above)



(item 31) and 95.7% of them claimed that when someone told them they spoke this language well, they worked harder (item 14). This might be the positive influence of their teacher as shown by classroom observation data Teacher 6 tried her very best to encourage her pupils to speak English. This is different from all the other Chinese cases either in School B or School C and some of the children in this case could speak very good English. The majority of the children in this case care about marks as 71.8% of them answered that they worked hard in their language class because they wanted to get a good mark (item 22).

#### 4.2.6.4 Speaking and listening

Most of the children in this case see the importance of speaking and listening in FL learning because 93.4% of the pupils thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 24) and 36.9% of the children thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 25). Pupils' answers to open-ended questions

show the same pattern as 37.8% of the children said that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing and 44.4% of them answered as speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing. Whilst 13.3% of the children thought reading and writing were more important because of the exams which echoes the literature (Dai, Gerbino et al. 2011, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). Children's views in group interview are in line with their perceptions in pupil questionnaire I as some children said in the interview that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing because they were useful for communication. Most of them thought speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing.

In the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I when asked how to improve your speaking and listening ability the children's answers demonstrates similar pattern as Case 4 and Case 5 in School B (China). The most frequently mentioned themes were: listen to tapes, talk to people or peers in English, watch English films or TV programmes, listen to English songs, music, broadcast, news, read aloud texts or after tapes. 59% of the children mentioned listening to tapes. And the pupils' answers demonstrates the positive influence of their teacher because Teacher 6 told me in the interview that she required her pupils to listen to the tape every morning after getting up and during the break time at school as mentioned in above cross case analysis that teacher 6 asked one student to look after the tape recorder and play the recording every morning before the formal class and during the break so as to create a kind of English atmosphere for the students. Teacher 6 also asked her pupils to read aloud the texts for at least 10 minutes or twenty times every day. Her requirements did work on the pupils and

has exerted positive influence on her students (Horwitz 1988, Elbaum, Berg et al. 1993, Kern 1995) as illustrated by the following students' answers to the open-ended question how could you improve your speaking and listening ability. One pupil said: "Listen to English tape every morning when I get up and listen to an English story or a composition before going to bed (OQ-Q3-C6-01)." Another student answered: "Often listen to English tapes and read aloud the texts and talk to people in English in real life (OQ-Q3-C6-02)." Still another student said: "I listen to English tape for 20 minutes every morning and read the text for 20 times every day. I often talk with peers in English (OQ-Q3-C6-03)." In the group interview when asked how to develop speaking and listening ability they said that they should listen more and speak more English, read English newspaper, listen to English broadcast and music. This is consistent with their answers to the open-ended question.

It is necessary to compare the children's views with their teacher in order to see the relationship. The teacher questionnaire data shows that Teacher 6 agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 40), but she did not agree that that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 41). In the interview Teacher 6 said that reading was the most important among the four language skills because she thought the more you read the more resources you would have in your mind and this would help you to speak and understand. When she asked the children to read something she usually asked pupils to say something related with what they had read and in this way she tried to get pupils involved and speak more English although speaking and listening were not assessed. She was

the only teacher who tried her very best to include as much as possible speaking and listening practice in her teaching and she had used all kinds of means to motivate pupils to speak more English.

#### **4.2.6.5 Grammar**

87% of the children thought grammar was very important for learning a language well (Appendix 2.1, item 28). The children's view about grammar is consistent with their teacher's perceptions. As revealed in teacher questionnaire Teacher 6 saw the importance of grammar but she did not go to extremes. She did not agree that grammatical correctness is the most important criterion by which spoken language performance should be judged (Appendix 2.1, item 1) and she agreed that grammar should be taught only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself (Appendix 4.1, item 4). The classroom observation data reveals that in her teaching she tried to teach grammar in more interesting way and tried to get the children involved and practice, which was different from the other Chinese teachers who applied direct instruction of grammar rules and terminology.

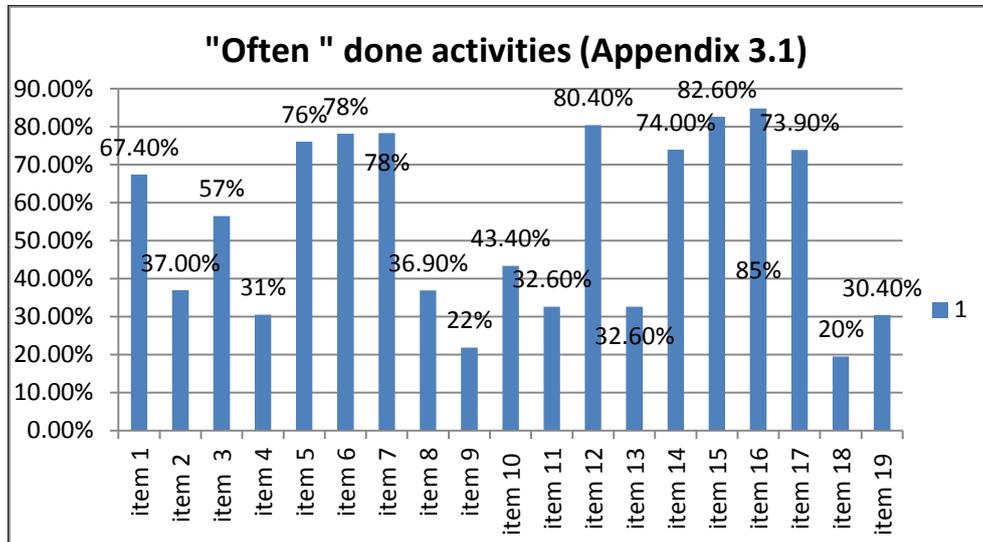
#### **4.2.6.6 Pupil preferences of activities**

Graph 4.51 shows that the activities that the pupils in Case 6 (School B, China) believed most often done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils, see Appendix 3.1):

- a. item 16 (speaking in a role with others)
- b. item 15 (talking in groups)
- c. item 12 (grammar exercises in textbooks)
- d. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)

- e. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)

**Graph 4.51 “Often” done activities (Case 6)**



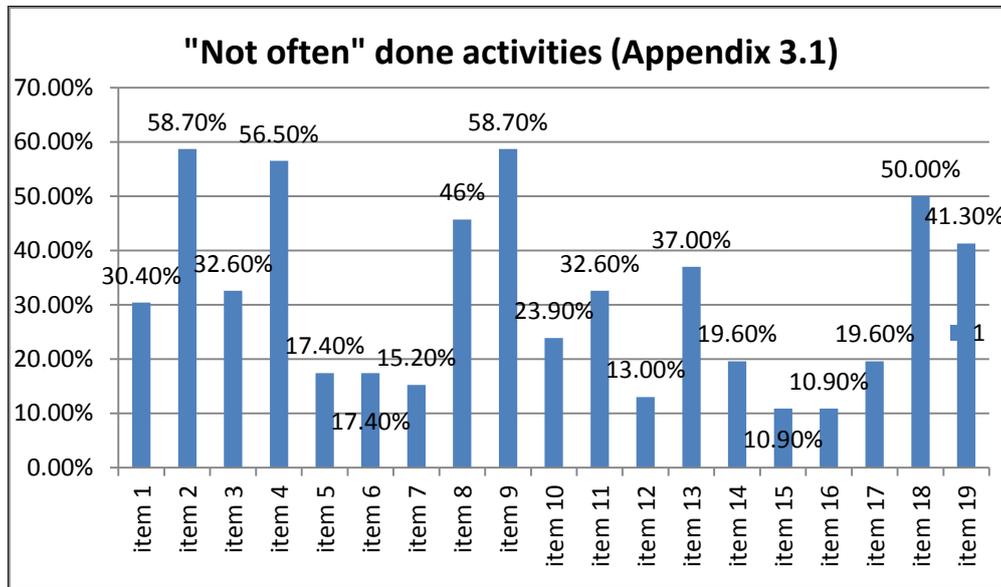
From the above most “often” done activities we see that this is really interesting and valuable because Case 6 is the only one which ranked “speaking in a role with others” and “talking in groups” as the top most often done activities, especially under the Chinese education system which does not require the assessment of speaking and listening and prioritize language skills only. This is different from even the English cases, let alone the other Chinese cases for which the most “often” done activities are: “grammar exercises in textbooks”, “reading aloud from text book” “repeating words and phrases aloud”.

From Graph 4.52 we can see that the activities pupils think least “often” done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

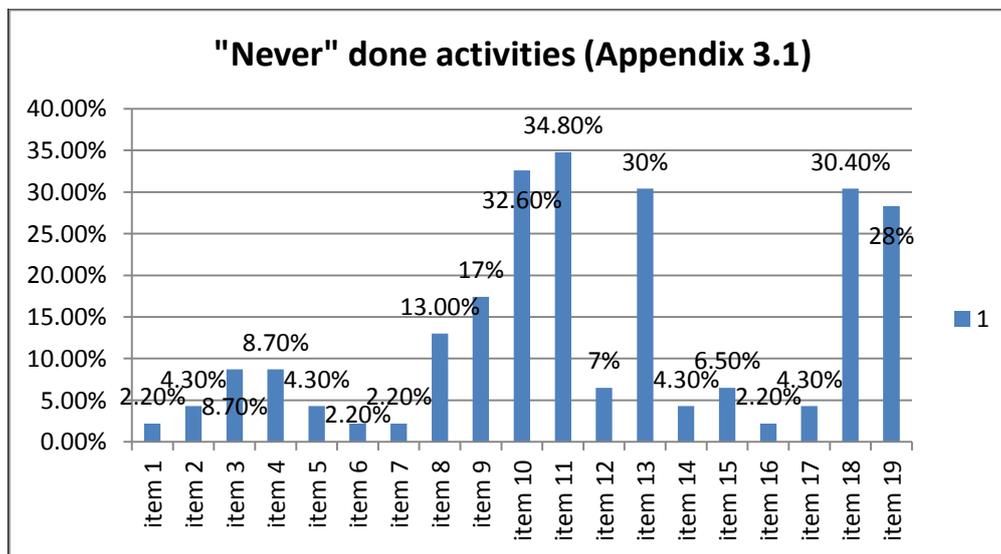
- a. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- b. item 9 (discussion of pictures)
- c. item 4 (writing)

- d. item 18 (flash cards (reading words and saying them))
- e. item 8 (answering true/false questions (speaking))

**Graph 4.52 “Not often” done activities (Case 6)**



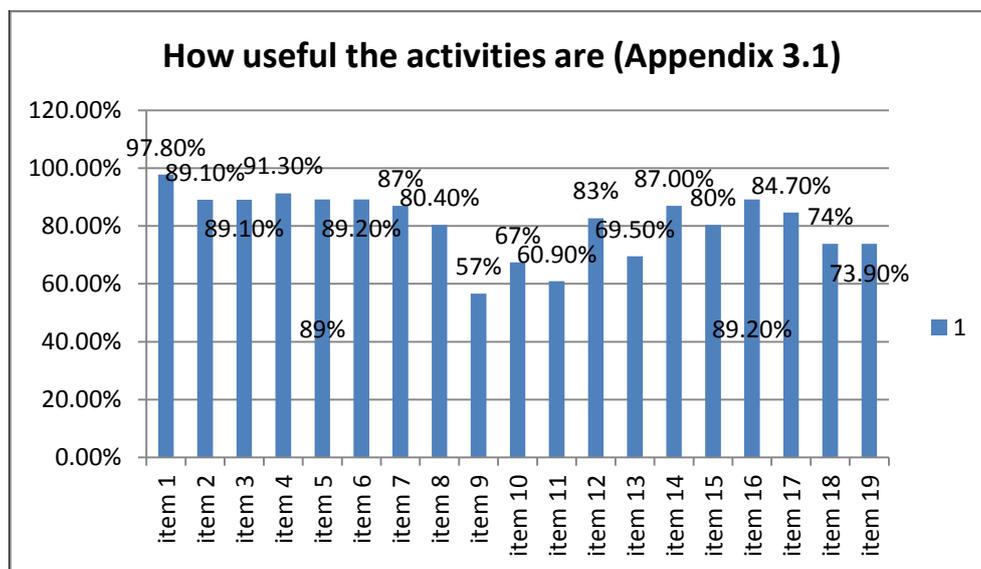
**Graph 4.53 “Never” done activities (Case 6)**



As indicated by Graph 4.53 that the pupils in this case thought the top “Never” done activity was drama (Appendix 3.1, item 11). From the graph we can see that although children in this case did consider “grammar exercises in

textbooks”, “reading aloud from text book” “repeating words and phrases aloud” as the most “Often” done activities they did often do “speaking in a role with others” and “talking in groups”. This is really good chance for pupils to develop speaking ability.

**Graph 4.54 How useful the activities are (Case 6)**



Graph 4.54 indicates that children in Case 6 thought the most useful activities are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)
- b. item 4 (writing)
- c. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language)
- d. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- e. item 16 (speaking in a role with others)

From Graph 4.54 we can see that over 57% of the children in this case thought

all the activities were useful. Although majority of the children believed most useful activities served the purpose of exams children in this case did value speaking, which is different from the other two cases in School B. In the group interview the children said that they liked to do dialogue practice which indicates that children in this class liked speaking very much. We speculate this might be the positive influence of the teacher who has been trying her very best to motivate pupils to speak English (Horwitz 1988, Kern 1995). The teacher questionnaire data shows that Teacher 6 held positive ideas about group work as she agreed that group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix IV, item 3) and group work allowed students to explore problems for themselves and thus had some measure of control over their own learning. It is therefore an invaluable means of organizing classroom experiences (Appendix IV, item 16). And her practice was in line with her belief. In her teaching she asked her pupils to do 5 group works and 2 pair works.

#### **4.2.6.7 Oral participation in language classes**

The children in this class said that they would not be laughed at by peers if they made mistake when they spoke English. Although sometimes they felt embarrassed they would not avoid speaking English because the practice helped them to improve their speaking ability.

As discussed above it was revealed in pupil questionnaire I that pupils in this case show very strong desire to speak English well (Appendix 2.1, item 1, item

31 and item 14) and in my observation I noticed that they were very motivated to participate in oral work. This is highly in line with their perceptions in the open-ended question because 58.7% of the children said they enjoyed communicating with people in English. Again I argue this might be due to the teachers' positive influence on pupils (Horwitz 1988, Karavas-Doukas 1996). Children in this case were very lucky because their teacher tried her very best to speak as much English as possible and get pupils involved as much as possible. This means that pupils in this case had more chance to hear the language and speak it as well. That is why some of the children could speak very good English as I have observed which is really not easy at such a school.

#### **4.2.6.8 Teacher's role**

Teacher 6 held positive view about the role of teacher as indicated by teacher questionnaire data she believed that the teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' was no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom (Appendix 4.1, item 8) and the teacher as transmitter of knowledge was only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson (Appendix 4.1, item 25). She said in the interview that the teacher should be a facilitator and guide children to learn language. Teacher should put learners in the centre and she did what she said.

#### **4.2.6.9 Teacher use of target language**

Children's answers to the open-ended question indicates that 59% of the children said they liked the teacher to use English as much as possible and only 20.5% of

them said they did not like it and 18% of the children answered as “Sometimes.” “Sort of”. This shows the teacher’s positive impact on the students as well (Horwitz 1988, Karavas-Doukas 1996).

As shown in the teacher questionnaire and interview Teacher 6 thought it was very important to use English as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42) and she had been doing her very best to use English to teach and encourage the pupils to speak English as much as possible. In her teaching she used the most TL among the three teachers in School B (China) as she had 189 short and 3 long TL utterances and 212 short and 20 long home language utterances. Although she still used more Chinese to teach due to the pressure of big exam and the English level of the pupils she did try her best to use as much English as possible to teach , but not only used those simple classroom language. In the group interview the children stated that they all liked teacher to use more English to teach because it could help them improve speaking and listening ability and create an English environment and they said they were very lucky to have such a good teacher.

#### **4.2.6.10 Pedagogy**

Teacher 6 was very distinctive among all the Chinese teachers as her belief and teaching reflected the principles of CLT. She accepted the changing of teacher’s role and she thought she should put learner as the centre in her teaching. She believed that it was very important to use TL to teach as much as possible and she did what she believed. Although her teaching was still teacher-led, she did try her best to include pair work, group work to get pupils involved and she tried to

use different ways to make the class more interesting under the pressure of the big exams in China, e.g. she asked pupils in turn to teach some grammar points. When the children did this they were very motivated to do a good job. They had to work very hard and tried to prepare very carefully. Even those poor pupils were keen on doing a good job. After one pupil did the teaching the teacher would make up for anything missing. Teacher 6 was very different from the other Chinese teachers because she not only focused on the textbook contents but also tried her very best to provide pupils with a lot of complementary materials. When she was teaching she herself was very motivated and enthusiastic and this exerted positive influence on her pupils. She planned every lesson very carefully and tried to use all kinds of ways and activities to motivate the pupils and make the lesson interesting. She even used different ways to make teaching of grammar more interesting, not just direct instruction of the dull grammar rules and terminology. She usually created a lot of sentence patterns for pupils to practice orally the grammar that she would teach. In this way the pupils would be motivated to use the learnt grammar because they were asked to say it, but not just remember it as grammar knowledge. This was a very good way to help the children to understand grammar and use them. She tried to create an English atmosphere and encouraged her pupils to speak English as much as possible. Before English lessons or at the break she asked a pupil to be responsible for playing the English recording of their textbook so that the pupils would have more chance to hear English. Teacher 6 is a very enthusiastic and conscientious teacher. She has been trying her very best and has put a lot of effort to help and motivate pupils to learn English and she set high expectation to her students. She told me in the interview that she required her pupils to read the text for 20 times

every day and listen to the tapes every morning when getting up and she also required them to recite the texts at home. The second day she will check if the children have done their work. For those children who could not recite the text she will ask them to read it within a certain time, eg. 17 seconds. If the pupil could not read the text within her fixed time it meant that the child had not done a good work at home. All her effort has paid off. As discussed above her pupils were the most positive among the children in School B and some of the children could speak surprisingly good English. She told me that her pupils got the best English results among all the children of the same year group in her school in the big exam in June 2012. We speculate that this might be related to Teacher 6's strong responsibility, enthusiasm and good pedagogy.

To summarize, Case 6 was a very distinctive class among the three cases in School B (China). The pupils were the most positive in terms of beliefs about FL, motivation, effort and achievement. Children in this class were the only case in School B (China) who did complementary reading at home whilst the other two cases did not do so. Although this class had the lowest number of children who went to weekend school they were the most positive and motivated cohort among the three cases in School B. I argue that it might be the positive influence, enthusiasm and good pedagogy of their teacher that made this happened (Galton 1983, Horwitz 1988).

Teacher 6 was a very experienced and excellent teacher and she has been teaching for 21 years. She was awarded as Excellent Teacher in the local area. She was a very conscientious and enthusiastic and she tried every means to help

pupils to improve their English, either written or speaking. Teacher 6 was a very conscientious teacher. Every morning 15 minutes before class she asked pupils to come to her office to read words or recite texts. She tried very hard to help those poor pupils. Nobody required her to do so. It was out of her strong responsibility for pupils. Her pupils liked her very much and they were motivated to learn English and they have more positive perception about English as indicated by my data. Teacher 6 was the only Chinese teacher who tried her very best to encourage her pupils to speak English as much as possible. This indicates that the teacher plays a very important role in pupil's learning. Good pedagogy will help the pupils to achieve good communicative competence. Even under the exam-oriented Chinese education system there is still space for teachers to do something to encourage pupils to speak English. Teacher 6 was a very successful example. Although Teacher 6 included a lot of complementary works in language classes and she asked pupils to do a lot of speaking practice in class she was even doing faster than the other two cases in School B (China). Therefore I argue that it is the teacher's responsibility, professional consciousness, enthusiasm and teacher's pedagogy that play a very important role in shaping pupils beliefs and exert a big influence on pupils' achievement, especially speaking and listening.

#### **4.2.7 Analysis of Case 7 (School C, China)**

School C is one of the best schools in the local area. The pupils were recruited through exams and the majority of the pupils are top set pupils.

**Table 4.34 Number of participants (Case 7)**

	Categories	Number	Percent
Sex	Boys	29	49.2%
	Girls	30	50.8%
Language	English	59	100%
Length of learning English	2 years or less	1	1.7%
	2-3 years	2	3.4%
	3-4 years	4	6.8%
	5 or more years	52	88.1%
Do you go to weekend school?	Yes	43	72.9%
	No	16	27.1%
How long have been going to weekend school?	Never	3	5.1%
	2 years or less	29	49.2%
	2-3 years	8	13.6%
	3-4 years	14	23.7%
	5 or more years	5	8.5%
Hours spent at weekend school per week	1 hour	4	6.8%
	2 hours	43	72.9%
	3 hours	4	6.8%
	4 hours	2	3.4%
	More than 4 hours	2	3.4%
How many hours do you work on English apart from school?	Less than 1 hour	29	49.2%
	1-2 hours	28	47.5%
	2-3 hours	2	3.4%
	3-4 hours		%
	More than 4 hours		%
What do you usually do on English at home?	Revise what we have learnt at school	9	15.3%
	Do grammar exercises	6	10.2%
	Do homework set by teacher	15	25.4%
	Do listening and speaking exercises	3	5.1%
	Watch English TV programme		%
	Read complementary English materials	1	1.7%

\* Table 4.34 indicates the number of students who were involved in this research according to gender, language, length of learning English, whether go to weekend school, length of going to weekend school, hours spent at weekend

school per week, hours spent self- learning English at home and what they learn at home (Case 7)

This case included the teacher and 60 pupils. It is the smallest class among the three cases in School C (China). 88.1% of the children have been learning English for 5 or more years. The number of pupils (72.9%) who go to weekend school to learn English is the biggest among the three cases in School C. Over half of the children (50.9%) work 1 hour or more on English apart from school. When asked what do you usually do on English at home 15.3% of them revised what they have learned at school and 25.4% of them did homework set by teacher and 10.2% of the children did grammar exercise. This means that most of the children did exam related work at home because none of the pupils watched English TV programmes whilst 5.1% of them did listening and speaking, which is the highest among the three cases in School C (China) and is very different from School B where nobody did speaking and listening exercises at home. 1.7% of the children read complementary English materials. This is different from School B where fewer children did complementary English reading. The following part will illustrate the findings of Case 7 according to the following themes.

#### 4.2.7.1 Motivation

**Table 4.35 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 7)**

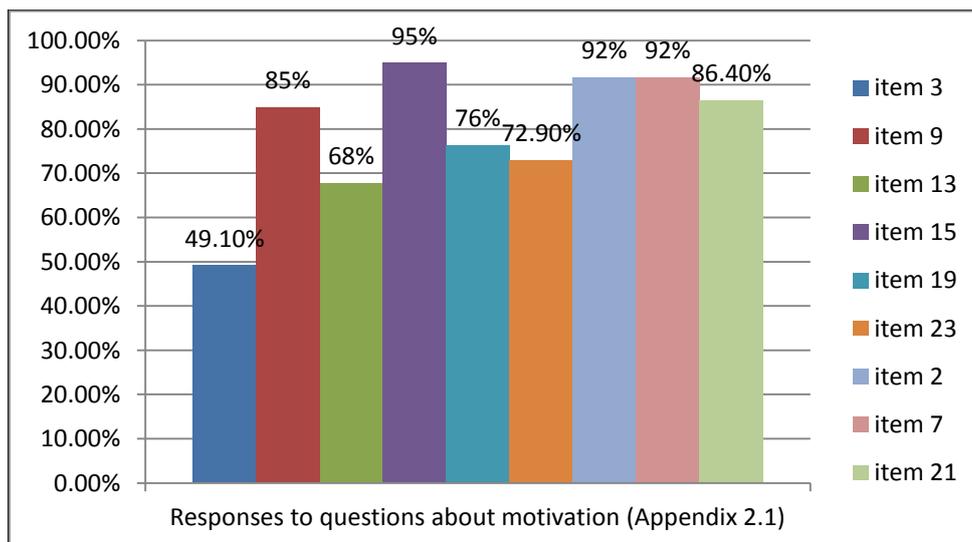
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	49.1%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	* 85%

13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	68%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	95%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	76%
23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	72.9%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	92%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	92%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	86.4%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

**Graph 4.55 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 7)**

(representing Table 4.35 above)



As shown by Graph 4.55 children’s motivation to learn language in this case is generally positive because 85% of the children recognize the importance of learning English (Appendix 2.1, item 9). The most important motivations are: for meeting and talking to arrange of people (item 15), for getting a good job in the future (item 2) and for travelling (item 7). In the group interview when asked what motivated you to learn English they answered: “It is a compulsory core subject and compulsory for exams (PI-C7-01).” “It is interesting (PI-C7-02).” “I

am interested in western culture, learning English will help me understand their culture (PI-C7-03).” “It is my Mum’s dream to learn English well (PI-C7-04).” “I would like to be a translator (PI-C7-05).” When asked if they could have a choice not to learn English would they still liked to learn they answered they would still like to learn English because learning English would help them enrich knowledge and it might be useful if they wanted to study abroad. They all thought learning English was very important which is consistent with their views in pupil questionnaire I.

#### 4.2.7.2 Effort

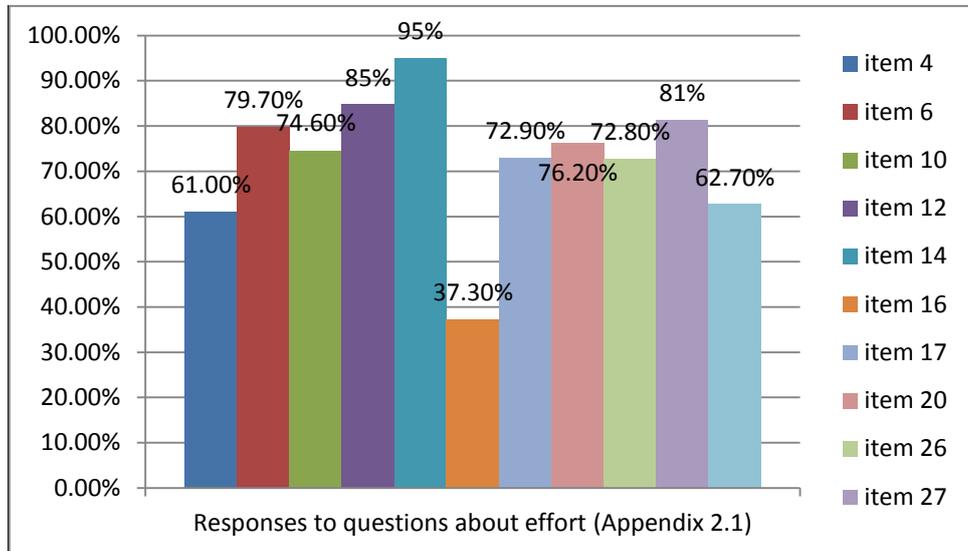
**Table 4.36 Responses to questions about effort (Case 7)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	61%
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	79.7%
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	74.6%
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	85%
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I work harder.	95%
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	* 37.3%
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	* 72.9%
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	* 76.2%
26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	72.8%
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	81%
30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	62.7%

\* The responses for these items are reversed as they are negatively-phrased questions.

### Graph 4.56 Responses to questions about effort (Case 7)

(representing Table 4.36 above)



We can see from Graph 4.56 most of the children in this case demonstrated positive attitude and effort in learning English because 74.6% them stated that they did their homework for this language class carefully (item 10) and over 70% of the children said that they would not avoid learning the language (item 17 and item 20). Great majority of the children (85%) said they took time to review what they have learned in this language (item 12). Most of the children (61%) would put extra effort in learning the language beyond school work (item 4) and 79.7% of the pupils stated that they used every opportunity they could to improve their knowledge of this language (item 6). However despite of their positive attitudes towards learning English only 37.3% of them claimed that they put as much effort as they could into their homework for this language, which means that majority of the children did not put as much effort as they could into their homework for this language. This might indicate that under the huge pressure of loads and loads of homework some of the Chinese children were bored and reluctant to do it. This might be the negative impact of the Chinese education system and negative washback effect of the National Matriculation Examination

(Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011).

#### 4.2.7.3 Achievement

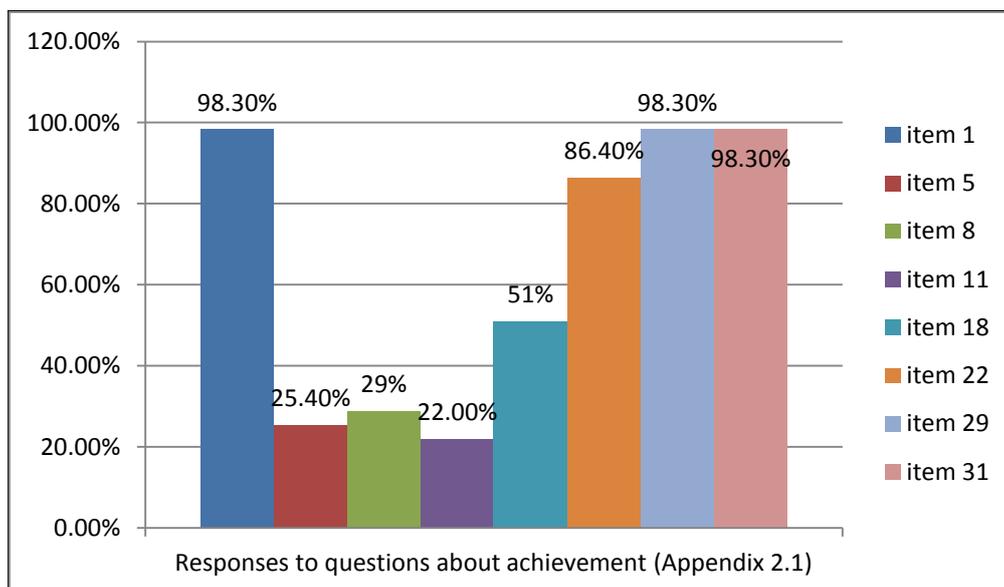
**Table 4.37 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 7)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	98.3%
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	25.4%
8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	29%
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	22%
18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	51%
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	86.4%
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	* 98.3%
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	98.3%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

**Graph 4.57 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 7)**

(representing Table 4.37 above)



Graph 4.57 indicates that although like the other Chinese cases children in this case were not confident either because only 25.4% of them considered themselves as good language learners (Item 5) great majority of the children (98.3%) demonstrated very strong desire to speak English well (item 1) and to speak this language perfectly (item 31) and 95% of them stated that when someone told them they spoke this language well, they worked harder (item 14). Most of the children (86.4%) care about marks (item 22).

#### **4.2.7.4 Speaking and listening**

Great majority of the children in this case are very positive about the importance of speaking and listening in FL learning because 94.4% of the pupils thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 24) and 59.3% of the children thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 25). This percentage is the highest among the nine cases. It is very interesting to notice that it is the Chinese children but not the English children consider speaking and listening are more important than reading and writing because English children should have thought so with the influence of the prevailing western teaching approach. As suggested by the children's answers to the open-ended question 53.4% of the pupils thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing, while 31% of them said that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing and 17.2% of the pupils answered that reading and writing were more important because of the important exams in China (Dai, Gerbino et al. 2011, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). This accords with the children's ideas in the group interview. In the interview some children

thought reading and writing were more important because of exams. But they said that if it were not for exams they thought speaking and listening were more important because they were more useful for communication and study abroad. Pupils' answers to the open-ended question how could you improve your speaking and listening ability suggest that their views were allied with what they said in the interview. The recurring themes were: listen to the tapes; talk more with peers or teacher or native speakers in English; listen to English songs, music, broadcast, news; watch English films and do not read the subtitles or TV shows; read more English books or other English materials; practice; read aloud more texts; recite more. Although the themes were similar with the other cases fewer children (32.8%) than School B mentioned listening to the tapes and their answers were full of varieties. Several pupils mentioned talking to English speaking people. They even talked about going to English corner and singing English songs to improve speaking and listening ability. This is different from children in School B, which might be due to the difference of economic background of the family. Pupils from School C are mainly from middle class families with more family support and more chances to meet English speaking people. When asked in the interview how to develop speaking and listening ability they said that they should communicate in English, listen to English recordings and use the internet.

It is necessary to compare the students' views with their teacher's to see the relationship. The teacher questionnaire data shows that Teacher 7 strongly agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 40), but he did not agree that that speaking and listening were more

important than reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 41). In the interview Teacher 7 stated that speaking and listening were very important in real life but reading and writing were more important for exams. He said that because speaking and listening were not assessed they usually focused on reading and grammar exercises. Classroom observation data shows that in his teaching he usually asked children to listen to recording of new words and texts and read aloud the text after recording to practice speaking and listening. What the teacher taught was just for pupils to get good marks in big exams.

#### **4.2.7.5 Grammar**

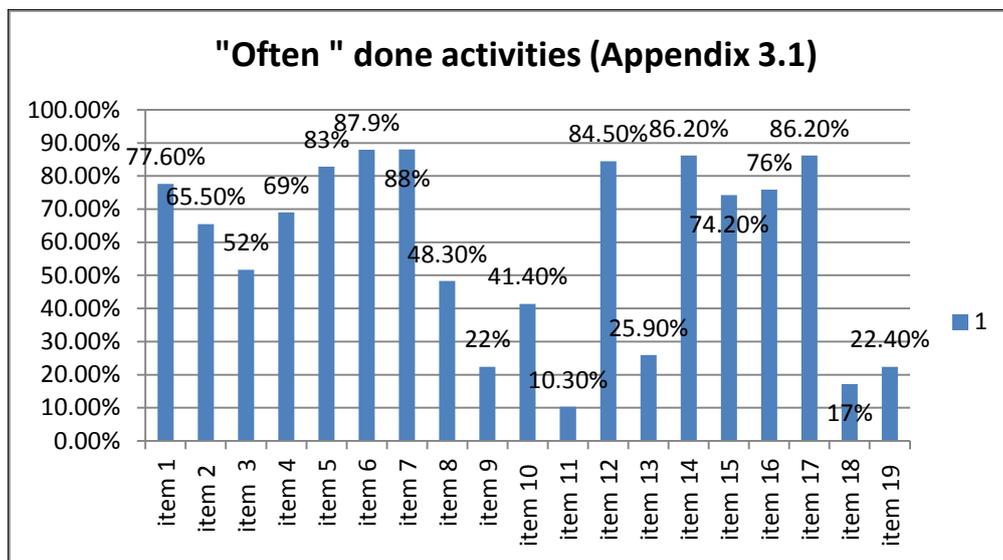
93.2% of the children thought grammar was very important for learning a language well (Appendix 2.1, item 28). The children's view about grammar is consistent with their teacher's perceptions. Teacher 7 stated in the interview that grammar was very important because of the big exams in China. He saw the importance of grammar but did not go to extremes as indicated by teacher questionnaire data that he did not agree that grammatical correctness was the most important criterion by which spoken language performance should be judged (Appendix 2.1, item 1) and he strongly agreed that grammar should be taught only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself (Appendix 4.1, item 4).

#### **4.2.7.6 Pupil preferences of activities**

Graph 4.58 indicates that the activities that the pupils in Case 7 (School C, China) believed most often done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils, see Appendix 3.1):

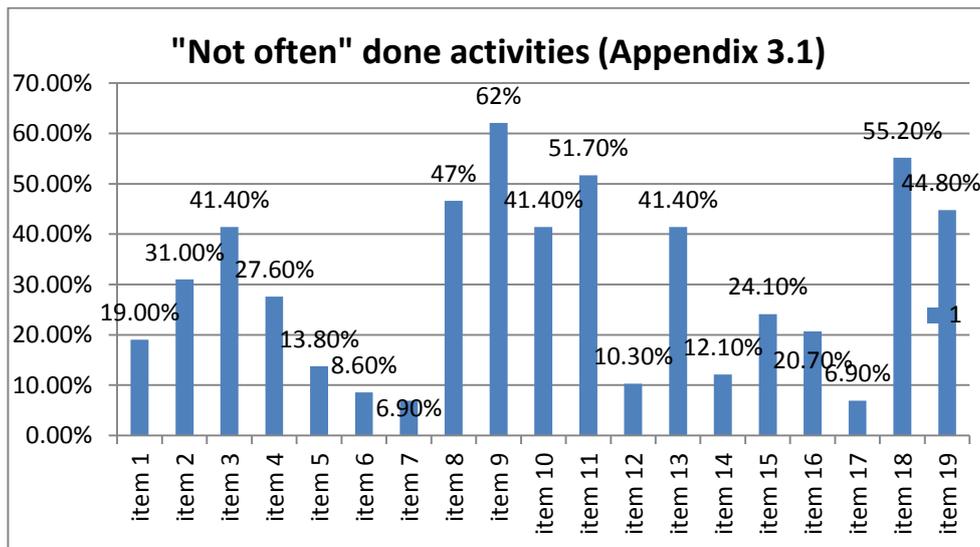
- a. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)
- b. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- c. item 14 (talking in pairs)
- d. item 17 (filling in worksheets)
- e. item 12 (grammar exercises in textbooks)

**Graph 4.58 “Often” done activities (Case 7)**



From Graph 4.58 we can see that Chinese children did a lot of reading aloud which is consistent with classroom observation data. The same with children in the other Chinese cases the activities that pupils in this case most often did were again exams related and reflect Chinese approach of language learning which is rote learning and attaches great importance to grammar (Hu 2002b). It is good that the children included “talking in pairs” in their list of “Often” done activities.

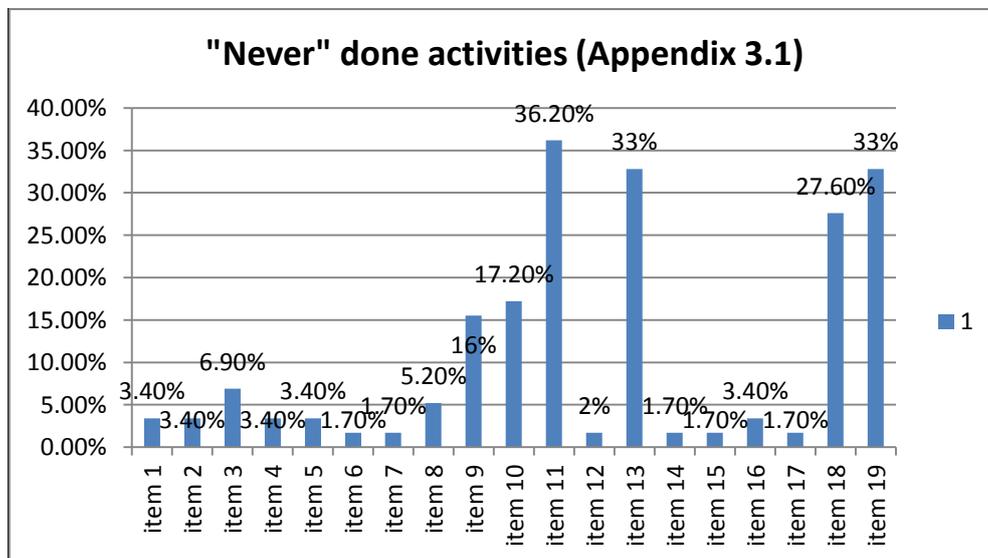
**Graph 4.59 “Not often” done activities (Case 7)**



Graph 4.59 indicates that the activities pupils think least “often” done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

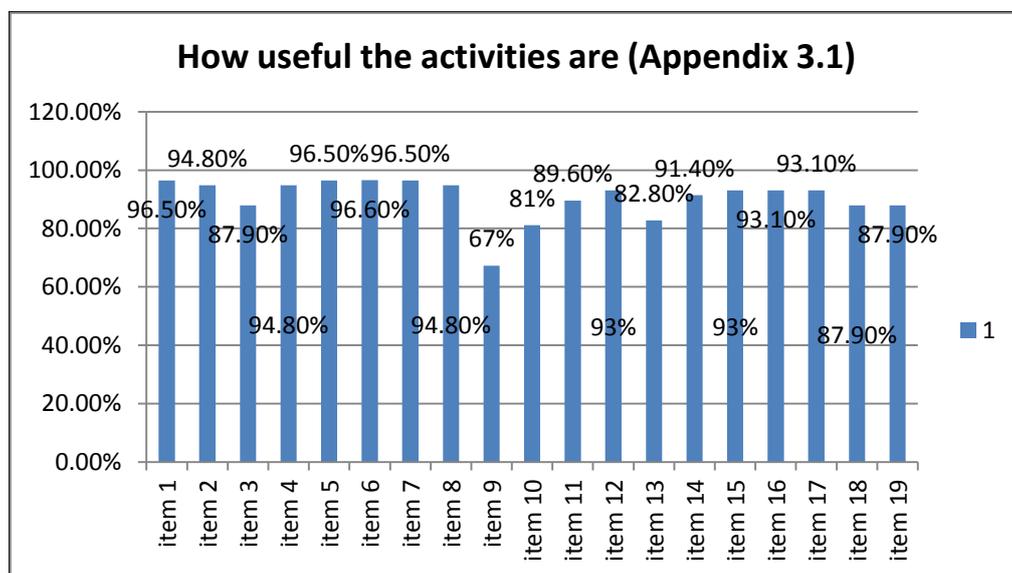
- a. item 9 (discussion of pictures)
- b. item 18 (flash cards (reading words and saying them))
- c. item 11 (drama)
- d. item 8 (answering true/false questions (speaking))
- e. item 19 (playing spoken games in class)

**Graph 4.60 “Never” done activities (Case 7)**



Graph 4.60 shows that the top “Never” done activity was drama. From the least often done and never done activities we can see that pupils in this case have not done much speaking and listening practice in language classes. What they often did were those activities which were exam related and reflects rote learning (Hu 2002b, Gao 2006).

**Graph 4.61 How useful the activities are (Case 7)**



Graph 4.61 shows that children in Case 7 thought that the most useful activities are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- b. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)
- c. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language)
- d. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)
- e. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)

From graph 4.61 we can see that most of the activities children believe to be most useful were those that served purposes for exams. This reveals the Chinese children's learning strategy under the exam-oriented Chinese education system (Hu 2002b).

The teacher questionnaire indicates that Teacher 7 held conflict views about group work because he strongly agreed that group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix 4.1, item 3) however he thought that group work activities take too long to organize and waste a lot of valuable teaching time (Appendix 4.1, item 22) and he agreed that group work activities had little use since it is very difficult for the teacher to monitor the students' performance and prevent them from using their mother tongue (Appendix 4.1, item 22) and he agreed that students do their best when taught as a whole class by the teacher. Small group work may occasionally be useful to vary the routine, but it can never replace sound formal instruction by a competent teacher (Appendix 4.1, item 36). He claimed in the interview that he advocated the learner-centred approach as he strongly agreed that the learner-centred approach to language teaching encouraged responsibility and self-discipline and allowed each student to develop his/her full potential (Appendix 4.1, item 3). And he said he had been trained to use learner-centred approach and his class was an experimental class to try out learner-centred pedagogy. However in practice the children did three pair works and 1 group work which were not spontaneous use of FL. Most of the time the teacher was talking and except answering teacher's questions the pupils were seldom

involved in the learning process. We can see the conflict between what he claimed and what he did (Lamb 1995, Karavas-Doukas 1996).

#### **4.2.7.7 Oral participation in language classes**

When asked do you enjoy communicating with people in English 53.4% of the children answered yes, whilst only 24.1% of them said no and 22.4% of the pupils answered as “Sort of” “Sometimes”. This indicates that most of the children liked using English to communicating with people. In the group interview when asked whether they were afraid of being laughed at by peers if they made mistakes when they spoke the language the children said that they would not be laughed at by peers. They would love to answer questions voluntarily in English. Pupils’ motivation to speak English well was extremely high as 98.3% of them expressed their strong desire to speak English perfectly (Appendix II, item 1 and item 31).

#### **4.2.7.8 Teacher’s role**

Although Teacher 7 said in the interview that teacher should be a director and the pupils should be actors in language learning and the teaching should be learner-centred in teacher questionnaire he expressed different views towards teacher’s role because he did not agree that that the teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' was no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom (Appendix 4.1, item 8) and the role of the teacher in the language classroom was to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing, and example. (Appendix 4.1, item 30). His beliefs was demonstrated in

his teaching as classroom observation data shows that his teaching was teacher-dominated and he did most of the talking (Hu 2005).

#### **4.2.7.9 Teacher's use of target language**

Most of the children in this case (69%) liked teacher to use English as much as possible as indicated by their answers to the open-ended question. While only 20.7% of them said they did not like it and 10.3% of them were not sure.

As indicated by teacher questionnaire Teacher 7 strongly agreed that that it is very important to use FL to teach as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42).

However in the interview he said:

Teaching in English is very important and should be encouraged but due to the reality of Chinese English language teaching it is very difficult to teach in the target language and it is a waste of time because the teaching mainly was about reading and grammar (TI-T7).

His beliefs were reflected in his teaching. As demonstrated in Graph 4.10 in cross case analysis Teacher 7 used home language to teach most of the time. In total he used only 68 short TL utterances and 320 short and 57 long home language utterances. He used a lot more home language than TL in his teaching and the TL he used was simple classroom English. What made Teacher 7 distinctive was that he almost translated every English sentence he said into Chinese. In the group interview the children said that they all liked the teacher to use more English to teach because if they listened more English they would get used to it. They would like to answer questions in English. If the teacher could use more English

to teach the pupils would benefit from it and have their listening ability improved.

#### **4.2.7.10 Pedagogy**

Teacher 7's teaching was typical Chinese ELT pedagogy which focused on teaching of vocabulary, text, translation, grammar and explaining test papers and grammar exercises. His teaching was teacher-led and he did most of the talking. Except answering questions the pupils were not involved. The pupils were passive learners in Jin and Cortazzi's (2003) terms.

To summarize, pupils in Case 7 were motivated to learn English and they were extremely interested in speaking English well and most of the children demonstrated positive perceptions about effort and achievement in language learning. However despite of the children's strong desire to speak the language perfectly the teacher seldom gave them chance to speak English spontaneously except answering teacher's questions. Children seldom heard English in classes as the teacher spoke Chinese most of the time. Although Teacher 7 claimed that he advocated learner-centred approach the children were seldom involved in creative language use in language class.

#### **4.2.8 Analysis of Case 8 (School C, China)**

Case 8 includes the teacher and 63 students.

**Table 4.38 Number of participants (Case 8)**

	Categories	Number	Percent
Sex	Boys	27	45%
	Girls	33	55%
Language	English	60	100%
Length of learning English	2 years or less		%
	2-3 years		%
	3-4 years		%
	5 or more years	60	100%
Do you go to weekend school?	Yes	39	65%
	No	21	35%
How long have been going to weekend school?	Never	5	8.3%
	2 years or less	25	41.7%
	2-3 years	16	26.7%
	3-4 years	8	13.3%
	5 or more years	6	10%
Hours spent at weekend school per week	1 hour	5	8.3%
	2 hours	39	65%
	3 hours	6	10%
	4 hours	7	11.7%
	More than 4 hours		%
How many hours do you work on English apart from school?	Less than 1 hour	21	35%
	1-2 hours	35	58.3%
	2-3 hours	2	3.3%
	3-4 hours	1	1.7%
	More than 4 hours		%
What do you usually do on English at home?	Revise what we have learnt at school	17	28.3%
	Do grammar exercises	3	5%
	Do homework set by teacher	23	38.3%
	Do listening and speaking exercises	2	3.3%
	Watch English TV programme		%
	Read complementary English materials	2	3.3%

\* Table 4.38 shows the number of students involved in this research according to gender, language, length of learning English, whether go to weekend school,

length of going to weekend school, hours spent at weekend school per week, hours spent self- learning English at home and what they learn at home (Case 8)

As Table 4.38 indicates that 100% of the children in Case 8 have been learning English for 5 or more years which is the highest among the three cases in School C (China) and 65% of them went to weekend school to learn English. 58.3% of the pupils worked 1-2 hours apart from school. When asked what do you usually do on English at home 28.3% of the pupils answered as revised what they have learnt at school and 38.3% of the children did homework set by teacher and 5% of the children did grammar exercise. This indicates that most of the children did school work at home. However some children did do extra curriculum work at home as 3.3% of them did listening and speaking and 3.3% of the children read complementary English materials. The following part will present the findings of Case 8 according to the following themes.

#### 4.2.8.1 Motivation

**Table 4.39 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 8)**

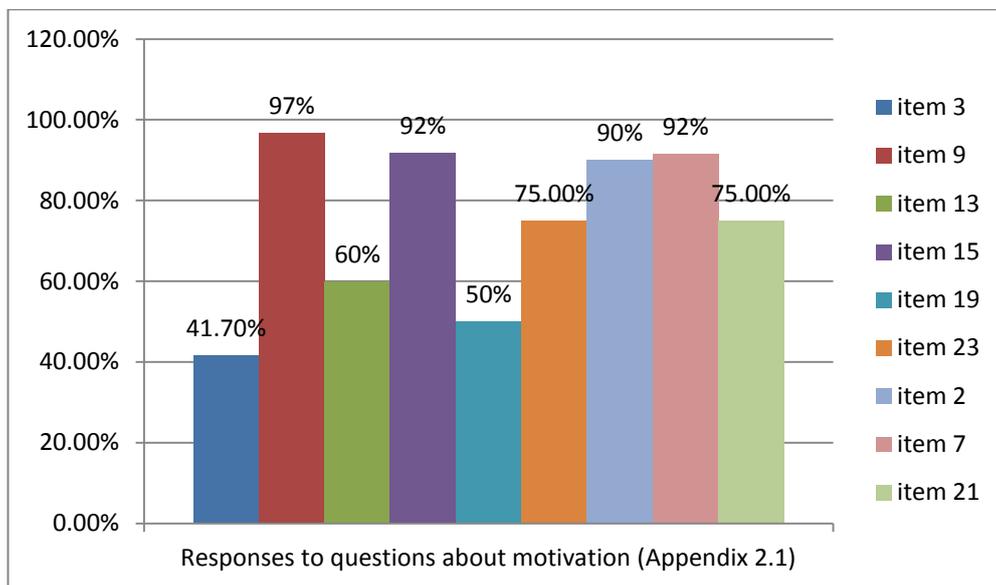
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	41.7%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	* 97%
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	60%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	92%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	50%

23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	75%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	90%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	92%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	75%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

### Graph 4.62 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 8)

(representing Table 4.39 above)



As shown in Graph 4.62 children's instrumental motivations were much higher than integrative motivation. The great majority of the pupils (96.7%) in this case saw the importance of learning English (item 9). The most important motivations are: for meeting and talking to arrange of people (item 15), for travelling (item 7) and for getting a good job in the future (item 2). In the group interview when asked what motivated you to learn English the children answered: "It is a compulsory for the big exam at the end of Year 9 and the National Matriculation Exam (case 8)." "It is my dream to become a simultaneous interpreter." "I hope to be able to communicate with English speaking people if I have a chance to go abroad." "I would like to learn English well so as to be accepted by one of the

best senior schools.” Their motivation falls into instrumental category. They all thought that it is very important to learn English which was in line with pupil questionnaire I data.

#### 4.2.8.2 Effort

**Table 4.40 Responses to questions about effort (Case 8)**

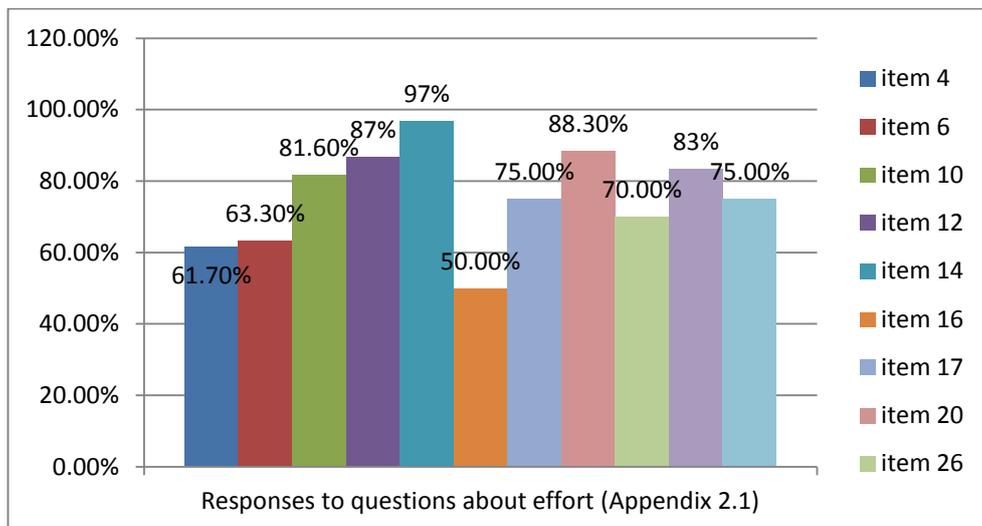
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	61.7%
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	63.3%
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	81.6%
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	87%
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I work harder.	97%
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	* 50%
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	* 75%
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	* 88.3%
26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	70%
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	83%
30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	75%

\* The responses for these items are reversed as they are negatively-phrased questions.

From Graph 4.63 we can see most of the children in this case showed positive attitude and effort in learning English because 81.6% them stated that they did their homework for this language class carefully (item 10) and 75% of the

**Graph 4.63 Responses to questions about effort (Case 8)**

(representing Table 4.40 above)



children said that they would not avoid learning the language (item 17) and 88.3% of them stated that they would like to put effort in learning the language (item 20). Great majority of the children (87%) said they took time to review what they have learned in this language (item 12). Most of the children (61.7%) would put extra effort in learning the language beyond school work (item 4) and 63.3% of the pupils stated that they used every opportunity they could to improve their knowledge of this language (item 6). However despite of their positive attitudes towards learning English half of the children claimed that they put as much effort as they could into their homework for this language (Item 16). As discussed above again this might be the negative impact of the Chinese education system and washback effect of the National Matriculation Examination (Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011).

#### **4.2.8.3 Achievement**

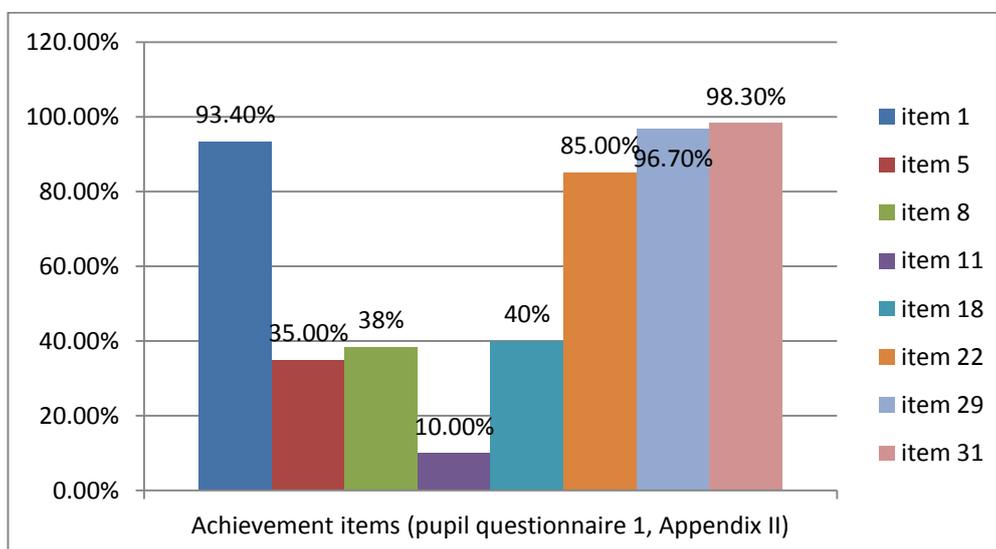
**Table 4.41 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 8)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	93.4%
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	35%
8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	38%
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	10%
18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	40%
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	85%
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	* 96.7%
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	98.3%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

#### Graph 4.64 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 8)

(representing Table 4.41 above)



Graph 4.64 indicates that although children Case 8 were not as confident as the English children because only 35% of them considered themselves as good language learners (Item 5) this percentage was the highest among all the Chinese cases. Moreover great majority of the children (93.4%) demonstrated very strong

desire to speak English well (item 1) and 98.3% of the children stated that they would like to be able to speak this language perfectly (item 31) and 96.7% of them agreed that when someone told them they spoke this language well, they worked harder (item 14). 85% of the children answered that they worked hard in their language class because they wanted to get a good mark (item 22).

#### **4.2.8.4 Speaking and listening**

90% of the pupils thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 24). However the pattern in the open-ended question is different from this. 47.4% of the children thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing and 43.9% of them thought that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing. Only 8.8% of the children answered that reading and writing were more important because of exams. Most of the children interviewed thought speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing. While pupil questionnaire I data shows that only 45% of them thought that speaking and listening are more important than reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 25).

Children's answers to question how you could improve your speaking and listening ability were consistent with their views in the interview. The most often mentioned themes were: listen to tapes; talk with peers or teacher or English speaking people and use English in real life; listen to English songs or music, news broadcast, like BBC; watch English films or TV programmes; practice; read aloud texts or after tapes; read more English journals, articles. Fewer children (33.9%) talked about listening to tapes which means children in School

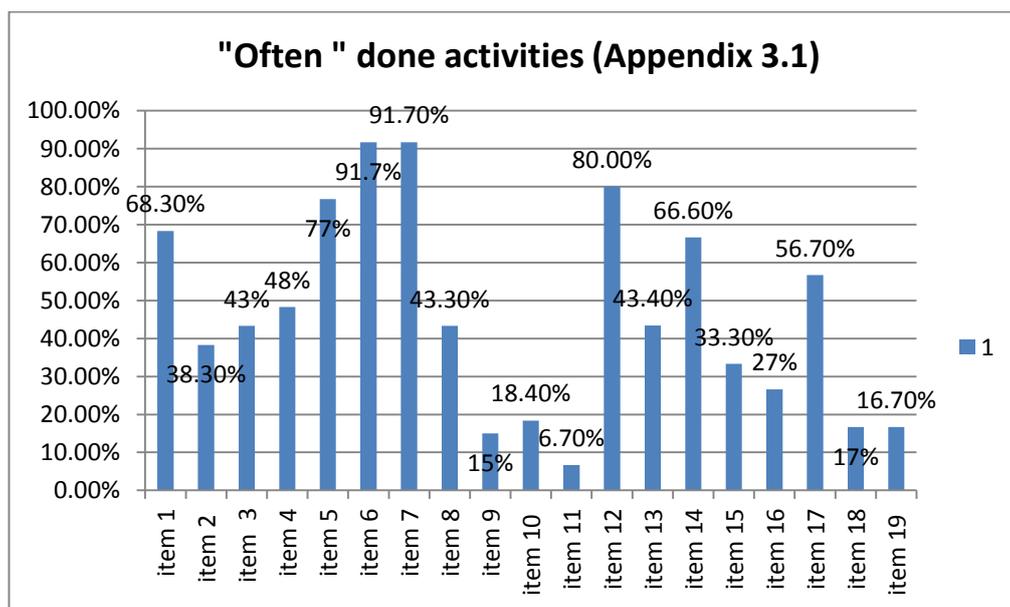
C have more chances and more English materials to use besides textbook attached tapes. They even mentioned BBC, read aloud English newspaper, going to English salons and English summer camp which is very popular in China big cities. In the group interview when asked how to develop speaking and listening ability the children said that they should listen more to English recordings and watch English programs. Some of the children said in the group interview that they watched English TV programs at home and listened to some English CD. The pupils' view about speaking and listening was in parallel with their teacher's view because teacher 8 agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 40), however she did not agree that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 41). In the interview Teacher 8 thought that speaking was the most important among the four language skills because language was a tool for people to communicate. But because of the exams she had to focus on reading, grammar and writing. And this was reflected in her teaching. Teacher 8 said that in each module (textbook) there were three units. The first unit focuses on speaking and listening. The pupils usually listened to recordings of the words and texts. Then pupils would do some work according to what they had heard, e.g. true/false questions, blank filling or told the gist of the passage. For speaking teacher would give a topic and the pupils would make a dialogue in pairs or groups. But when I was doing the observation it was the end of the term they did not do speaking and only did a little listening. They put more effort in reading and doing grammar exercises.

#### 4.2.8.5 Grammar

90% of the children Case 8 thought grammar was very important for learning a language well (Appendix 2.1, item 28). The children's view about grammar is consistent with their teacher's perceptions. Teacher 8 stated in the interview that grammar was very important because of the big exams in China. She saw the importance of grammar but did not go to extremes as indicated by teacher questionnaire data. She did not agree that grammatical correctness was the most important criterion by which spoken language performance should be judged (Appendix 4.1, item 1) and she agreed that grammar should be taught only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself (Appendix 4.1, item 4) and she disagreed that direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar was essential if students are to learn to communicate effectively (Appendix 4.1, item 33). In the interview she said grammar was very important because of the exams.

#### 4.2.8.6 Pupil preferences of activities

Graph 4.65 "Often" done activities (Case 8)

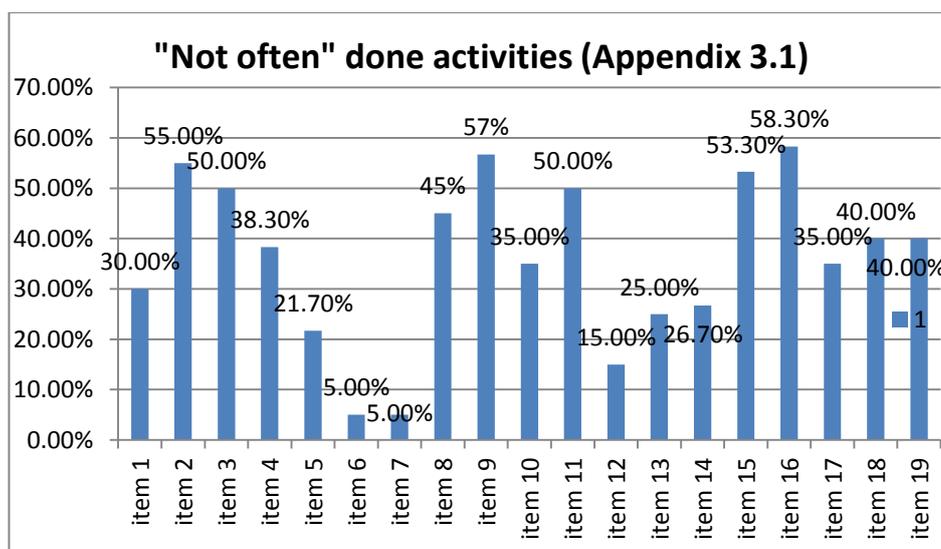


Graph 4.65 shows that the activities that the pupils in Case 8 (School C, China) believed most often done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils, see Appendix III):

- a. item 6 ( repeating words and phrases aloud)
- b. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)
- c. item 12 (grammar exercises in textbooks)
- d. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language)
- e. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)

From the above “Often” done activities we can see that they reflected exactly what the Chinese pupils usually did in language classes and they serve the purposes for exams.

**Graph 4.66 “Not often” done activities (Case 8)**

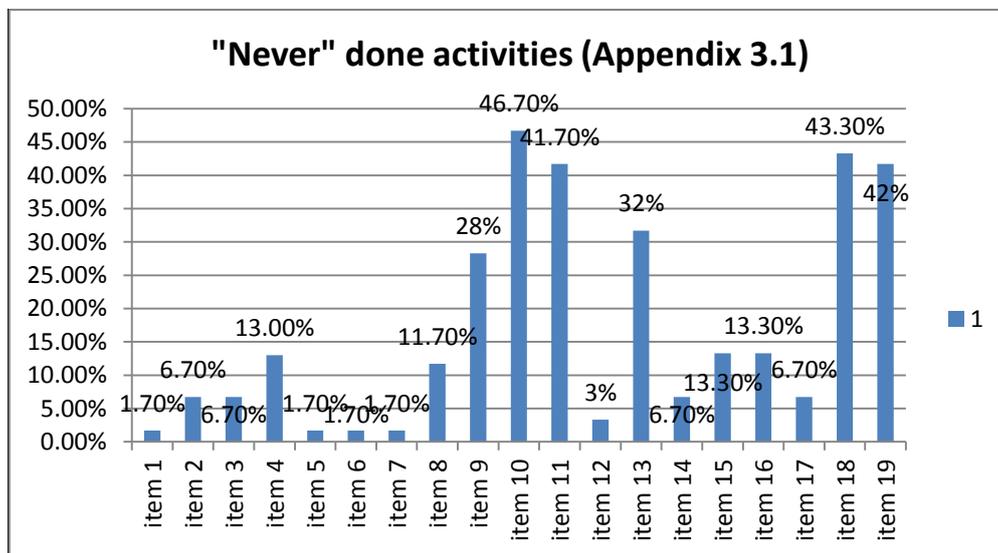


Graph 4.66 indicates that the activities pupils think least “often” done are (in

descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

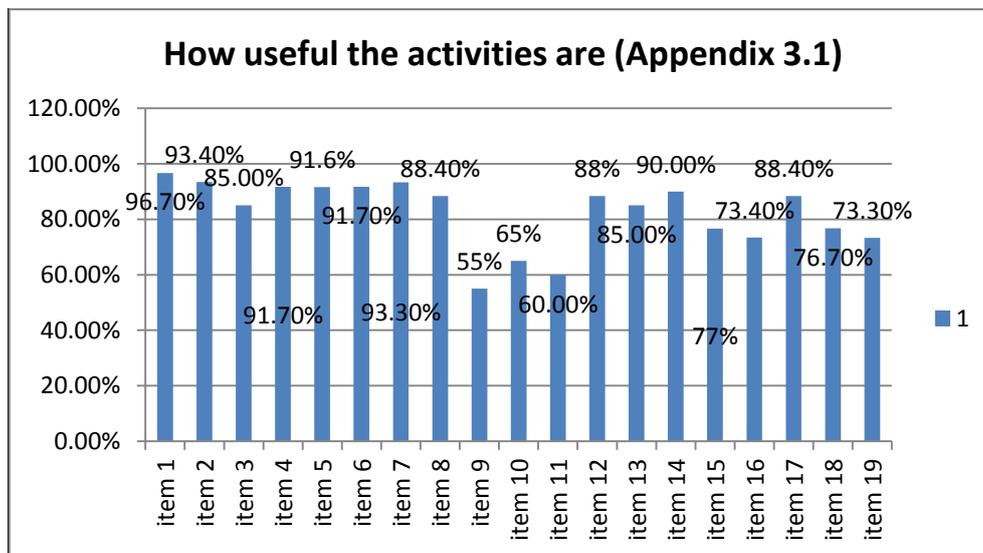
- a. item 16 (speaking in a role with others)
- b. item 9 (discussion of pictures)
- c. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- d. item 15 (talking in groups)
- e. item 3 (reading about the life in another country/cultural awareness)

**Graph 4.67 “Never” done activities (Case 8)**



Graph 4.67 indicates that it is interesting to notice that this is the only case regarded the top “Never” done activity was talking about things that really happen in life (Appendix 3.1, item 10) instead of drama (Appendix 3.1, item 11). From the “Not often” done and “Never” done activities we can see that pupils in this case do not do much speaking and listening and cultural awareness in their language classes.

**Graph 4.68 How useful the activities are (Case 8)**



Graph 4.68 shows that children in Case 8 thought that the most useful activities are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)
- b. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- c. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)
- d. item 4 (writing)
- e. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)

From the above data we can see that most of the activities children believe to be most useful were those that served the purposes for exams. This reveals the Chinese children's language learning strategy under the exam-oriented Chinese education system (Hu 2002b) and what they value in language lessons. However it is good for them to mention listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard as the second useful activity. This

is consistent with their views in pupil questionnaire and interview. In the group interview the children stated that they liked listening practice, plays and speaking English with peers. This is very valuable because although speaking and listening are not tested in the big exams in China (Cheng 2008, MOE 2011) Chinese children still recognize the importance of speaking and listening.

Teacher questionnaire data shows that Teacher 8 valued the importance of group work because she agreed that group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix 4.1, item 3) and group work allowed students to explore problems for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their own learning. It was therefore an invaluable means of organizing classroom experiences (Appendix 4.1, item 16), but she also agreed that students do their best when taught as a whole class by the teacher. Small group work may occasionally be useful to vary the routine, but it could never replace sound formal instruction by a competent teacher (Appendix 4.1, item 16). This was in parallel with her teaching. I noticed that in her teaching she did not ask her pupils to do any group work and most of the time she did the talking and the children listened passively except answering her questions, most of the time with the whole class answering in unison, occasionally with individual pupil called upon to answer.

#### **4.2.8.7 Oral participation in language classes**

When asked in the open-ended question “Do you enjoy communicating with people in English?” most of the children show positive attitudes because (63.6%)

answered as yes, while only 21.8% of them said no and 14.5% of the pupils answered as “Sort of.” “Sometimes.” or “A little.” In the interview the children in this class said that they would not be laughed at by peers if they made mistake when they spoke English. They would love to speak more English although sometimes they did feel shy. Children in this case showed very strong desire to speak English well because 98.3% of them stated that they would like to be able to speak English perfectly (Appendix II, item 31). However they seldom had chance to speak English in language classes except answering teacher’s questions. This is very sad situation in China (Liu and Littlewood 1997).

#### **4.2.8.8 Teacher’s role**

Teacher 8 said in the interview that teacher should be an organizer and tried to guide and inspire pupils and put learners in the centre. But in reality they could not do this because of the exams. As indicated by teacher questionnaire data Teacher 8 held positive ideas towards the changing of teacher’s role in language teaching because she agreed that the teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' was no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom (Appendix 4.1, item 8) and the teacher as transmitter of knowledge was only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson (Appendix 4.1, item 25). In the interview Teacher 8 said that teacher should be an organizer and tried to guide and inspire pupils and put learners in the centre. But in reality they could not do this because of the exams. This was consistent with what she did. In the lessons I observed she was still the dominator of the class (Hu 2005) and she did most of the talking. It might be due to the fact that it was end of the term and she needed to focus on finishing the curriculum content

soon and leave time for children to revise as shown in the teacher interview data.

#### **4.2.8.9 Teacher use of target language**

Children's answers to the open-ended questions suggest that majority of the pupils liked teacher to use English as much as possible and only 14.5% of them said they did not like it while 9.1% of the children were not sure. This is consistent with the group interview data. In the interview the children said that they liked the teacher to use more English to teach because it could help them to improve speaking and listening ability and their view was consistent with their teacher's view about the use of TL. As indicated by teacher questionnaire and interview data Teacher 8 thought it was very important to use English as much as possible in teaching (Appendix 4.1, item 42). But in practice she used English more in teaching speaking and listening and in other lessons she usually used Chinese to teach. Classroom observation data indicates that in the four lessons I observed in total Teacher 8 used 194 short TL utterances and 362 short and 77 long home language utterances. Although she used the most TL among the three teachers in School C (China) she only used very simple classroom English, like "Good." "Next." "Sit down." which would not be helpful to develop children's speaking and listening ability. She used 77 long home language utterances, which shows that she used Chinese to teach most of the time.

#### **4.2.8.10 Pedagogy**

In the interview Teacher 8 said that she believed teacher should use more English to teach and teaching should be learner-centred. Teacher should facilitate

learning. She said when she taught grammar she would use power point and showed children some example sentences and ask the pupils to find out rules first. Then she would talk about the rules and summarize. But in reality her teaching was quite similar with Teacher 7's teaching style -- typical Chinese ELT pedagogy which was "teacher-dominated, textbook-based, transmission-oriented" (Hu 2005; p. 19) and grammar-centred approach.

In summary, pupils in this case demonstrated very positive motivation, effort and commitment towards learning English. Great majority of the children (98.3%) showed very strong desire to be able to speak English perfectly (Appendix 2.1, item 31). However they seldom had chances to hear or speak FL in language classes. Teacher 8 is a very enthusiastic teacher. She is very kind to pupils and I noticed that she has put a lot of effort in her teaching. She demonstrated positive perceptions towards FL learning and teaching as discussed above. However, there was a gap between what she believed and what she did in her teaching, which was common in most of the Chinese teachers who were involved in this research. Her teaching was typical Chinese traditional ELT pedagogy (Hu 2005).

#### 4.2.9 Analysis of Case 9 (School C, China)

Case 9 includes the teacher and 63 students.

**Table 4.42 Number of participants (Case 9)**

	Categories	Number	Percent
Sex	Boys	27	42.9%
	Girls	36	57.1%
Language	English	63	100%
Length of	2 years or less		%

learning English	2-3 years		%
	3-4 years	4	6.3%
	5 or more years	58	92.1%
Do you go to weekend school?	Yes	38	60.3%
	No	24	38.1%
How long have been going to weekend school?	Never	10	15.9%
	2 years or less	25	39.7%
	2-3 years	7	11.1%
	3-4 years	8	12.7%
	5 or more years	10	15.9%
Hours spent at weekend school per week	1 hour	3	4.8%
	2 hours	44	69.8%
	3 hours	1	1.6%
	4 hours	4	6.3%
	More than 4 hours		%
How many hours do you work on English apart from school?	Less than 1 hour	28	44.4%
	1-2 hours	31	49.2%
	2-3 hours	3	4.8%
	3-4 hours		%
	More than 4 hours	1	1.6%
What do you usually do on English at home?	Revise what we have learnt at school	24	38.1 %
	Do grammar exercises	3	4.8%
	Do homework set by teacher	25	39.7%
	Do listening and speaking exercises	2	3.2%
	Watch English TV programme	5	7.9%
	Read complementary English materials	3	4.8%

\* Table 4.42 Number of students involved in this research according to gender, language, length of learning English, whether go to weekend school, length of going to weekend school, hours spent at weekend school per week, hours spent self- learning English at home and what they learn at home (Case 9)

The great majority of the children in this Case (92.1%) have been learning English for 5 or more years and 60.3% of them went to weekend school to learn English. Around half of the children (55.6%) worked 1 hour or more on English

apart from school. When asked “What do you usually do on English at home?” 38.1% of the children answered as revise what they have learnt at school and 39.7% of them did homework set by teacher. 4.8% of the children did grammar exercises. 7.9% of the pupils watch English TV programmes and 3.2% of them do listening and speaking. This means that most of the children did school work at home while some of them did speaking and listening practice. The following part will illustrate the findings of this case according to the following themes.

#### 4.2.9.1 Motivation

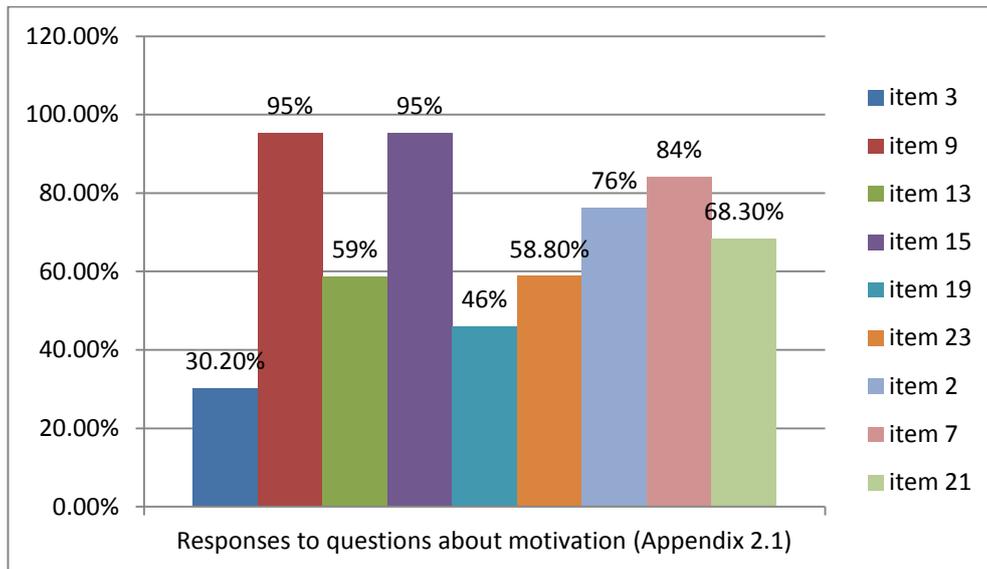
**Table 4.43 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 9)**

Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	30.2%
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	* 95%
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	59%
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	95%
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	46%
23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	58.8%
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the future.	76%
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	84%
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	68.3%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

### Graph 4.69 Responses to questions about motivation (Case 9)

(representing Table 4.43 above)



From Graph 4.69 we can see that in general motivation in this case was lower than the other two cases in School C (China). Majority of the children (95%) recognize the importance of learning English (item 9). Children's instrumental motivation was higher than integrative motivation. The most important motivations were: for meeting and talking to arrange of people (item 15), for travelling (item 7) and for getting a good job in the future (item 2).

In the group interview when asked what motivated you to learn English they answered: "It is a compulsory for exams (PI-C9-01)." "English is very important in a global world (PI-C9-02)." "It is very important to learn English if you want to study abroad (PI-C9-03)." "It is convenient to communicate with people from the world if you can speak English (PI-C9-04)." "It is important for finding a good job (PI-C9-05)." Their motivation falls into instrumental category. They all thought learning English is very important which was consistent with the pupil questionnaire I data.

#### 4.2.9.2 Effort

**Table 4.44 Responses to questions about effort (Case 9)**

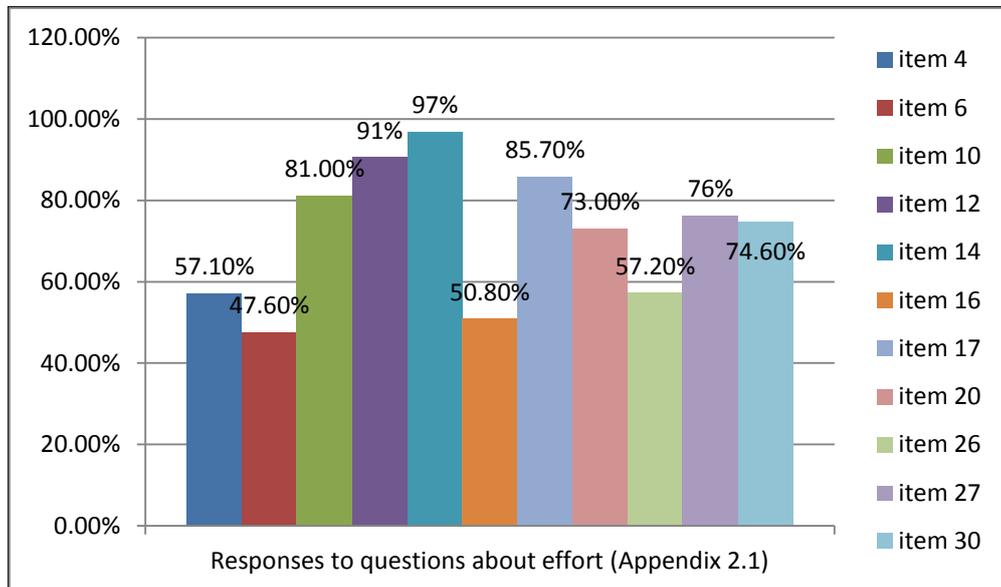
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	57.1%
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	47.6%
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	81%
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	91%
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I work harder.	97%
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	* 50.8%
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	* 85.7%
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	* 73%
26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	57.2%
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	76%
30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	74.6%

\* The responses for these items are reversed as they are negatively-phrased questions.

Graph 4.70 indicates that most of the children in this case showed positive attitude and effort in learning English because 81% them stated that they did their homework for this language class carefully (item 10) and 85.7% of the children said that they would not avoid learning the language (item 17) and 73% of them said that they would like to put effort in learning the language (item 20). Great majority of the children (90.5%) said they took time to review what they have learned in this language (item 12). However not as many children as in the

**Graph 4.70 Responses to questions about effort (Case 9)**

(representing Table 4.44 above)



other two cases in School C (China) would put extra effort in learning the language beyond school work because only 57.1% of them said that they regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework (item 4) and 47.6% of the pupils stated that they used every opportunity they could to improve their knowledge of this language (item 6) and only 50.8% of the children claimed that they put as much effort as they could into their homework for this language (item 16). As discussed above again this might be due to the negative impact of the Chinese education system and washback effect of the National Matriculation Examination (Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011).

#### 4.2.9.3 Achievement

**Table 4.45 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 9)**

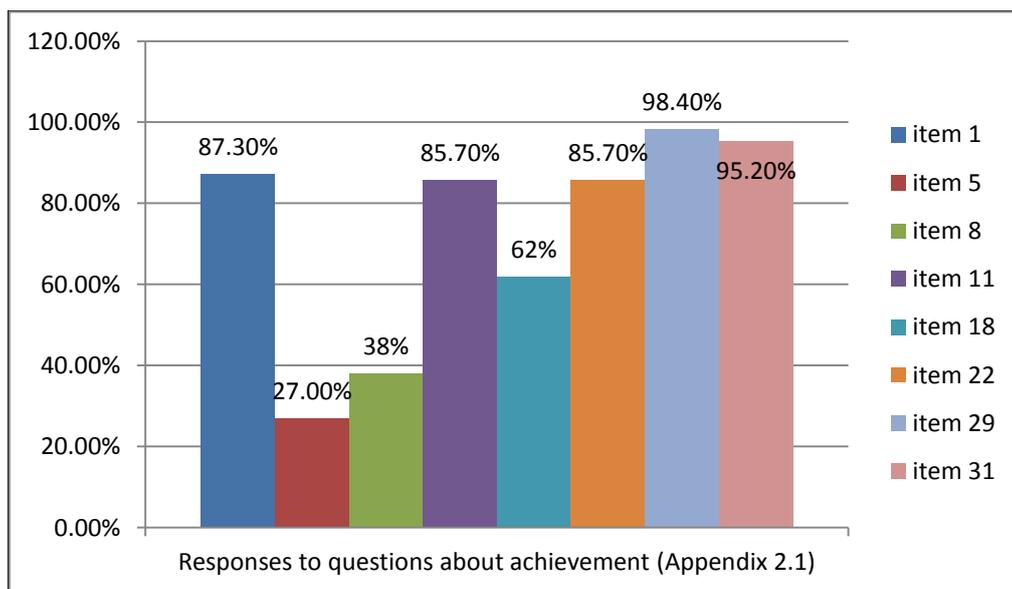
Questionnaire item	% of pupils responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
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1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	87.3%
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	27%
8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	38%
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	85.7%
18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	62%
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	85.7%
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	*98.4 %
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	95.2%

\* The responses for this item are reversed as it is a negatively-phrased question.

#### Graph 4.71 Responses to questions about achievement (Case 9)

(representing Table 4.45 above)



From Graph 4.71 we can see that children in this case were not as confident as the English children because only 27% of them considered themselves as good language learners (Item 5). However most of the children (87.3%) demonstrated very strong desire to speak English well (item 1) and 95.2% of the children stated that they would like to be able to speak this language perfectly (item 31) and 96.8% of them agreed that when someone told them they spoke this language

well, they worked harder (item 14). 85.7% of the pupils answered that they worked hard in their language class because they wanted to get a good mark (item 22).

#### **4.2.9.4 Speaking and listening**

The great majority of the children in this case recognized the importance of speaking and listening in foreign language learning because 88.9% of the pupils thought that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 24) and 36.5% of them thought speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 25). Their views were consistent with what they said in the group interview. However open-ended question data suggest different pattern as 47.6% of them thought speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing and 41.3% of them thought speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing and 9.5% of the children considered reading and writing as more important because of the exams. This again shows the washback effect of the big Chinese exams (Dai, Gerbino et al. 2011, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). As indicated by open-ended question data when asked how you could improve speaking and listening ability the children's answers were similar with the other two cases in School C (China). The recurring themes were: listen to the tapes; talk more with peers or teacher or native speakers in English and use English in real life; listen to English songs, music, broadcast, news; watch English films and TV shows; read more English complementary materials or English journals; practice; read aloud more texts and read after tapes; imitate pronunciation and intonation. Among the pupils 41.3% of them talked about listening to the tapes, which means children in this case

have more other English materials to use beyond textbook tapes. What is different from the children in the other Chinese cases is that they talked about reading complementary English materials and English journals because not many children mentioned this. Several children mentioned listening to English every day. This means that they would like to put constant effort into learning speaking and listening. When asked how to develop speaking and listening ability they said in the interview that they should do more practice, like talking with peers in English on their way home.

The pupils' view about speaking and listening was in line with their teacher's view because teacher 9 agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 40) and she also agreed that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing (Appendix 4.1, item 41). In the interview she said that the four language skills were equally important, but in reality they focused on reading, grammar and writing because of exams.

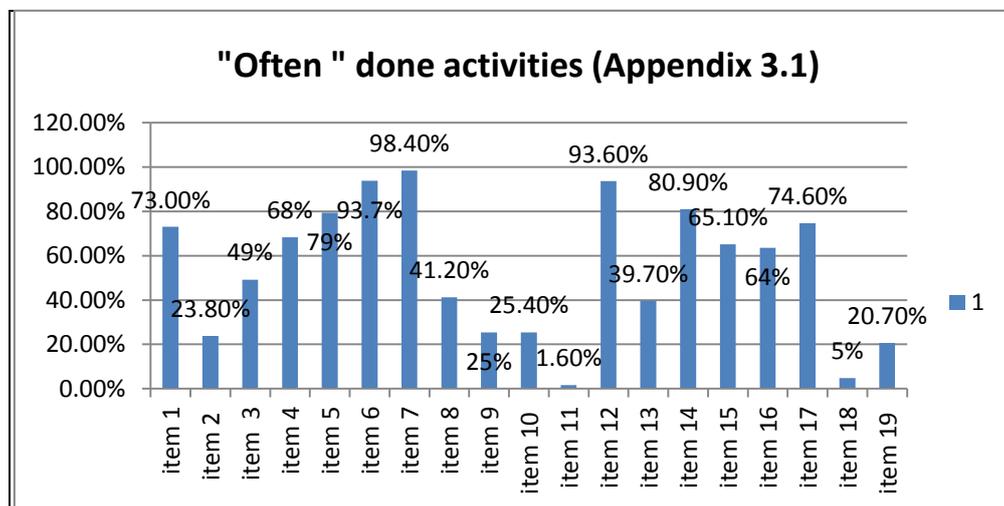
#### **4.2.9.5 Grammar**

90.5% of the children in Case 9 thought grammar was very important for learning a language well (Appendix 2.1, item 28). The children's view about grammar is consistent with their teacher's perceptions. Teacher 9 stated in the interview that grammar was very important because of the big exams in China. She saw the importance of grammar but did not go to extremes as indicated by teacher questionnaire data that she did not agree that grammatical correctness was the most important criterion by which spoken language performance should be judged (Appendix 4.1, item 1) and she agreed that grammar should be taught

only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself (Appendix 4.1, item 4), however she did agree that direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar was essential if students are to learn to communicate effectively (Appendix 4.1, item 33). This was in parallel with her teaching. As the observation data revealed that Teacher 9 used direct instruction of grammar rules and terminology in her teaching.

#### 4.2.9.6 Pupil preferences of activities

**Graph 4.72 “Often” done activities (Case 9)**

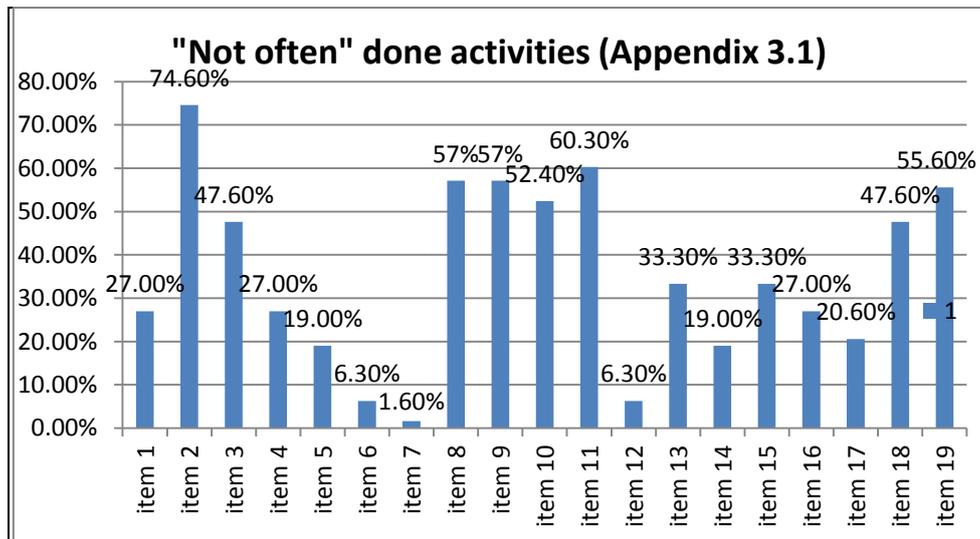


Graph 4.72 shows that the activities that the pupils in Case 9 (School C, China) believed most often done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils, see Appendix 3.1):

- a. item 7 (reading aloud from text book)
- b. item 6 (repeating words and phrases aloud)
- c. item 12 (grammar exercises in textbooks)
- d. item 14 (talking in pairs)
- e. item 17 (filling in worksheets)

From Graph 4.72 we can see that Chinese children did a lot of reading aloud and repeating words and phrases which is consistent with my classroom observation data. The activities that pupils in this case most often did were exactly the same with children in Case 7, although in different order. Those often done activities were exams related and reflect Chinese approach of language learning which is rote learning and attaches great importance to grammar (Hu 2002b). It is good that the children included “talking in pairs” in their list of “Often” done activities.

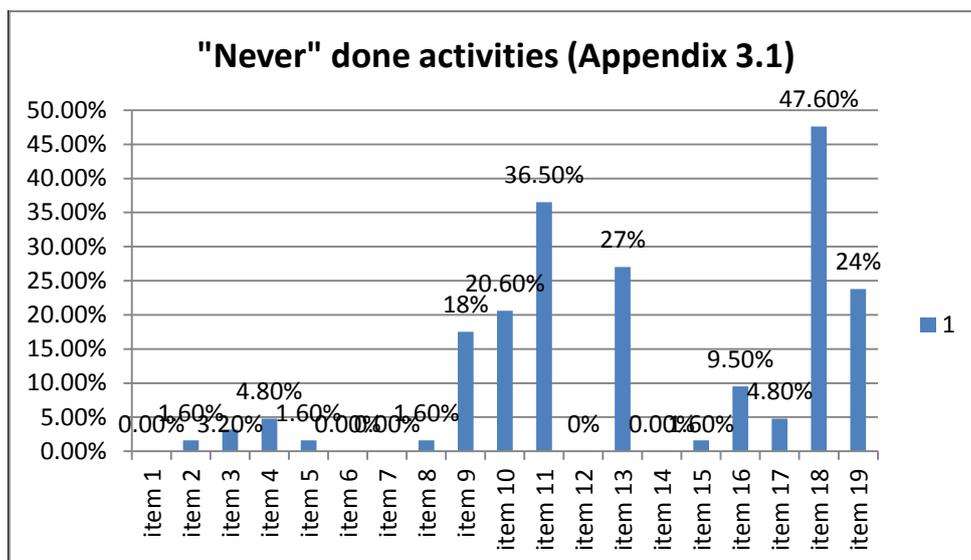
**Graph 4.73 “Not often” done activities (Case 9)**



Graph 4.73 shows that the activities pupils think least “often” done are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- b. item 11 (drama)
- c. item 8 (answering true/false questions (speaking))
- d. item 9 (discussion of pictures)
- e. item 19 (playing spoken games in class)

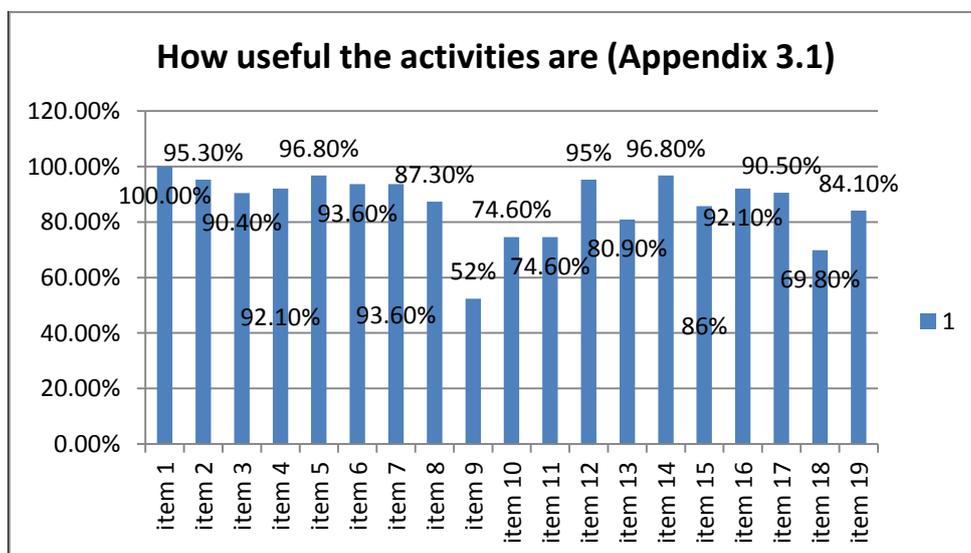
**Graph 4.74 “Never” done activities (Case 9)**



As Graph 4.74 indicates that the top “Never” done activity pupils believed was “flash cards” (item 18). This is different from all the other cases in my study.

From the “Not often” done and “Never” done activities we can see that pupils in this case did not often do speaking and listening practice which was consistent with some literature about EFL teaching in China (Hu 2002b) and the data of my classroom observation.

**Graph 4.75 How useful the activities are (Case 9)**



Graph 4.75 shows that children in Case 9 thought that the most useful activities are (in descending order according to percentage of agreement from the pupils):

- a. item 1 (reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage)
- b. item 5 (translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language)
- c. item 14 (talking in pairs)
- d. item 2 (listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard)
- e. item 12 (grammar exercises in textbooks)

The above data indicates that those activities pupils in this case thought most useful mostly served exams purposes. Again this reveals the Chinese children's language learning strategy under the exam-oriented Chinese education system (Gao 2006, Edwards, Ran et al. 2007b) and what they value in language lessons. However it is good for them to include speaking and listening in the most useful activities list. Most of the children considered all the listed activities were useful, which was very different from the English children.

Teacher questionnaire data shows that Teacher 9 valued the importance of group work because she agreed that that group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix 4.1, item 3) and group work allowed students to explore problems for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their own learning. It was therefore an

invaluable means of organizing classroom experiences (Appendix 4.1, item 16). However in her teaching I noticed that she only asked her pupils to do one group work which was different from the group work with spontaneous use of FL and she did most of the talking and the children listened passively except answering her questions.

#### **4.2.9.7 Oral participation in language classes**

When asked in the group interview whether they were afraid of being laughed at if they made mistakes when they spoke English the children in this class said that although sometimes peers laughed at them when they made mistakes they were not afraid and they would love to speak more English. Their positive attitudes towards using English to communicate with people was reflected in their answers to the open-ended question as 57.1% of them said they enjoyed communicating with people in English and only 28.6% of them said they did not like it and 12.7% of them answered as “Sometimes” “Sort of”. Children in this case showed very strong desire to speak English well because 95.2% of them stated that they would like to be able to speak English perfectly (Appendix 2.1, item 31). However they seldom had chance to speak English in language classes except answering teacher’s questions. This does not help the children to develop speaking and listening skills.

#### **4.2.9.8 The Teacher’s role**

The teacher questionnaire data indicates that Teacher 9 held positive ideas about the changing of teacher’s role as she agreed that the teacher as 'authority' and

'instructor' was no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom (Appendix 4.1, item 8) and the teacher as transmitter of knowledge was only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson (Appendix 4.1, item 25). However in the interview she said that teachers' role in language class depended on what you taught. She thought when she taught grammar and words she was a controller. When she was teaching reading and speaking the teacher should guide pupils and get them involved. But in her teaching I noticed that she did most of the talking and she was the dominator in the class.

#### **4.2.9.9 Teacher use of target language**

Pupils show positive attitudes about teacher use of English in language lessons as most of them (63.5%) said they liked teacher to use English to teach as much as possible and only 20.6% of the children said they did not like it and 19% of them were not sure. This is in line with their perceptions in the group interview. In the interview the children said that they liked the teacher to use more English to teach because it could help them to improve speaking and listening ability and create an English environment. As indicated by teacher questionnaire data Teacher 9 agreed that it was very important to use English as much as possible in teaching (Appendix 4.1, item 42). In the interview she expressed the same idea and she said that in practice she used more English when she taught speaking and listening. When she taught reading, grammar and writing she usually used Chinese. In the four lessons I observed in total she only used 62 short TL utterances and 276 short and 72 long home language utterances. This indicates that Teacher 9 used much more home language than TL to teach. And even if she

did say some English it was the simple classroom English which would not help pupils with their speaking and listening ability.

#### **4.2.9.10 Pedagogy**

Her teaching was quite similar to that of Teacher 8. Although she showed positive ideas towards FL teaching and learning as demonstrated in her answers to teacher questionnaire she agreed that direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar was essential if students were to learn to communicate effectively (Appendix 4.1, item 33). Her teaching was in line with her beliefs.

Her teaching was the typical Chinese ELT pedagogy which was “teacher-dominated, textbook-based and transmission-oriented” (Hu 2005; p. 15).

To summarize, children in Case 9 were very motivated and showed positive commitment and effort to learning English and they recognized the importance of learning FL. And 95.2% of the children demonstrated strong desire to speak English perfectly (Appendix 2.1, item 31). However in their language classes they seldom had the chance to hear or speak English. Their teacher’s teaching style was typical Chinese traditional grammar-translation method (Hu 2005, Dai, Gerbino et al. 2011).

## **Conclusion**

From the above cross case analysis and case by case analysis we can see that both Chinese and English teachers share similar perceptions about speaking and

listening, pedagogy and the nature of FL learning as indicated in the teacher questionnaire and interview data. However the pedagogical difference was obvious between the Chinese and English teachers. Moreover there seemed to be more differentiation among the English teachers than the Chinese teachers. Like the teachers both Chinese and English children share similar beliefs about speaking and listening and the nature of FL learning as shown in the pupil questionnaire I. However they are very different in terms of motivation, effort and commitment in language learning. In the pupil data, as with the teachers, there seemed to be more difference among the English children than the Chinese children. We speculate that this might be related to the cultural and educational differences between China and England. The next chapter will address this issue and see how these findings answer my research questions.

## **Chapter Five Discussion**

### **Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the findings of my data which indicates that teachers' beliefs not only determine their own practice (Johnson 1992, Pajares 1992, 2011) but also exerts influence on their students (Horwitz 1988, Elbaum, Berg et al. 1993, Kern 1995). Although both the Chinese and English teachers in this study demonstrated positive beliefs toward CLT approaches, characterized by their views, in practice they still applied more traditional approaches which are rather closer to a didactic, grammar translation method than expected, especially most of the Chinese teachers.

The case study approach of this research allowed the researcher to examine each case individually and this revealed the uniqueness of each case. Speaking and listening were different in each class. Whilst there were similarities across cases, the case study approach meant that the important features of each class were explored.

Among the Chinese teachers, Teacher 6 demonstrated distinctive enthusiasm and professional consciousness in her teaching, which exerted positive impact on her pupils in terms of motivation, attitude, effort and commitment. I believe this is compelling evidence that even under the present Chinese exam-oriented education system there is still space for teachers to apply communicative principles in the language classroom and encourage pupils to use FL as much as

possible. Teacher 6 made particular efforts to present a wide range of examples and use the TL and showed high levels of enthusiasm in her teaching. This was reflected in the class results for motivation and participation. The children in this class showed high levels of commitment and positive views about talking in FL. I argue that this is evidence that teachers' professional consciousness and beliefs play a very important role in the teaching and learning process (Yung 2002).

Both the teachers and children in Chinese and English schools share similar beliefs about the learning and teaching of FL, especially speaking and listening, as discussed in Chapter Four. However there are differences between their practice and there was more variation in practice between the English teachers and children than between the Chinese teachers and pupils. Except Teacher 6 (Chinese) the other five Chinese teachers taught in ways which were substantially similar, but the English teachers taught in very different ways. I believe my results show that this is related to the cultural and educational difference in the two countries, in terms of time, practices of teaching and expectations about pupil activity as discussed in Chapter Four. This chapter will address these issues raised from the findings and see how they answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers and students about the role of the speaking and listening component of MFL teaching in schools in China and England?
2. How do these perceptions relate to the theoretical principles nominally underpinning this element of the MFL curriculum in both countries?
3. How do these perceptions inform the delivery of the teaching of speaking

and listening in schools in both countries?

4. What are students' motivations for language study and how might this be related to their perceptions of speaking and listening?

In answering my research questions, I also want to discuss questions which arise, such as: why do some teachers seem to have aligned their practice and beliefs, but others do not? The case study approach of this research has revealed very different relationships between the beliefs and practices of each teacher.

## **5.1 What are the perceptions of teachers and students about the role of the speaking and listening component of modern foreign language teaching in schools in China and England?**

### **5.1.1 Chinese and English teacher's views about speaking and listening as part of the curriculum**

Participants' perceptions about speaking and listening are the real focus of this study and these results are of particular interest. Teacher questionnaires and interview findings reveal that both Chinese and English teachers thought speaking and listening should be an integral part of FL and they all recognize the importance of speaking and listening. This might be expected of the English teachers as the English National Curriculum for MFL specifies the same importance of speaking and listening with reading and writing in MFL teaching and learning (DfES 2007) and the assessment test all four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. However it is very surprising that the Chinese teachers also recognized the importance of speaking and listening because they

are not assessed in China and under the big pressure of the big exam the teachers rarely have the chance to teach speaking and listening in language lessons.

Although the English Language Curriculum Standards (Chinese National Curriculum for English) (MOE 2011) specifies that the four skills of language should be included in MFL teaching and suggested that speaking and listening should be assessed, it did not make the assessment of speaking and listening compulsory (MOE 2011). Although the new Chinese curriculum mandates teaching of speaking and listening and the Chinese teachers believe it is as important as literacy, my findings show that the Chinese teachers did not spend much time on speaking and listening, because getting higher marks in the big exams rather than communicative competence meant more to the Chinese teachers, students and parents (Dai, Gerbino et al. 2011, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). This finding conforms to the literature about EFL teaching and learning in China (Sun and Cheng 2002, Hu 2002b, Halstead and Zhu 2009, Li 2010, Pan and Block 2011, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011).

However, this finding about the role of speaking and listening teaching in schools should be considered in the context of very different expectations in England and China of pupils and beliefs about what helps pupils to become good speakers and listeners. For instance, Teacher 6 was strongly committed to developing the speaking and listening of her pupils but could not give it much class time. However, she did get her children to read the text aloud to themselves 20 times at home every day so that they could hear themselves reading English and practice speaking- an approach which was not used by any of the English teachers in this way! Teacher 6 was trying to engage pupils in speaking and

listening practice at home, rather than school. This teacher, who was not required to teach in a certain way by her school, was able to align her beliefs and practice. She was so committed to speaking and listening that she pursued it, despite the need to concentrate on reading and writing for the exams. It would be very interesting to find out what enables some teachers, like Teacher 6, to do this, when most teachers in this study believed one thing but did another.

### **5.1.2 Students' beliefs about the balance between speaking and listening, reading and writing**

Most of both the Chinese and English children agreed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (as demonstrated in pupil questionnaire I). In their answers to the open-ended questions of pupil questionnaire I more students agreed that speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing and they expressed in the group interview that in real life speaking and listening were more important than reading and writing. This is not surprising of the English children because both the assessment include equal part of speaking, listening, reading and writing. However the Chinese students still see the importance of speaking and listening although they might not be tested in the Chinese MFL exams (Cheng 2008, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). More Chinese children (92.2%) than English children (86.1%) expressed very strong desire to speak FL perfectly (Appendix 2.1, item 31,) as discussed in Chapter Four (section 4.1.3.3). The Chinese children were very positively motivated (below) to learn English, and the English pupils less so. Therefore it is rather shocking to realize that, despite shared beliefs about the importance of speaking and listening, they did not use FL in class (discussed below in section 5.3.1).

### **5.1.3 Chinese and English teacher's views about the use of target language in foreign language classes**

Teacher questionnaire findings indicate that all teachers agreed that it was very important to use TL to teach as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42.). In the interview three English teachers expressed similar ideas, but Teacher 2a stated that if she used too much TL in her teaching it might hinder a good relationship between her and the pupils which she thought very important. Polio and Duff (1994) and Levine's (2003) research findings suggest that extensive use of TL may cause greater anxiety for some learners. Macaro's (1997) and Littlewood & Yu's (2011) studies support this view. These findings might explain Teacher 2a's worries about too much use of TL. All the Chinese teachers agreed that it was very important to use TL as much as possible, but due to the Chinese education system it was very difficult for them to teach in TL, especially when they taught grammar, because the teachers felt that it might slow down or complicate the teaching of complex grammatical points necessary to pass the examination. Littlewood and Yu (2011) asked 50 second-year tertiary students from Mainland China to recall their teachers' use of L1 in language classes. The results show that average overall percentage of L1 use was 64%. This is consistent with my findings although I did not calculate the exact percentage of teachers' use of L1.

Lesson content and objectives were included in Duff and Polio's (1990) suggested factors which they believed affected the amount of teacher TL use in FL classes. Some researchers (Cook 2001b, Littlewood and Yu 2011) argue that L1 was more effective for different purposes like explaining grammar, organizing tasks and giving direction and checking meanings of words. In the

observation of teaching in this study, the amount of the teachers' TL use was so different in each case. Guthrie's (1984b) findings that even in a multi-section course within a single institution the amount and purpose of TL use among the teachers were different, let alone teachers from two countries were confirmed by Littlewood and Yu (2011). In general English teachers used more TL than Chinese teachers. This might be the effect of language policy which was another factor which might determine the amount of TL used by teachers (Duff and Polio 1990). In China speaking and listening might not be tested in the big exams, therefore teachers did not put much effort into speaking and listening. Among the Chinese teachers only Teacher 6 tried to use TL to teach as much as possible. All the other Chinese teachers only used very simple classroom language like "Good morning", "Turn to page...", "Very good", "Silent". Chinese teachers used more translation than the English teachers. Teacher 7 (School C, China) translated nearly every English sentence into Chinese. All the English teachers did register in the TL and the pupils answered in FL as well.

Although all the teachers believed that it was very important to teach in TL as much as possible as revealed by teacher questionnaires and interviews there is a gap between what teachers believed and what they actually did in practice (Galton, Simon et al. 1980, Desforjes and Cockburn 1987, Karavas-Doukas 1996). This result is in line with Duff and Polio's (1990) findings of a qualitative study of the instructors' use of TL in 13 different university-level language classes. We can speculate that as Pajares (1992) says, the teachers' own beliefs of language learning and teaching affect their practice.

#### **5.1.4 Chinese and English students' views about teachers' use of target language in foreign language classes?**

As discussed in Chapter Four there is difference between Chinese and English children's perceptions about teachers' use of TL in language lessons. In general, as indicated by the answers to the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I more Chinese children showed interest in teacher's use of TL than English children. And all the Chinese interviewees said they love teacher to speak more English in language classes whilst some of the English children said they hated teacher to use TL all the time and some of them preferred teacher to use half English and half TL. This might be because the Chinese children in this study rarely had chance to listen to and speak the language in language classes because as shown by the classroom data, except for Teacher 6 (Chinese) the other Chinese teachers used much less TL and seldom got the children involved in language lessons. Children in Case 1 (England) Stand out among the English children and pupils in Case 6 (China) were distinctive among children in School B (China) and they showed very positive views about teachers' use of TL in language classes. This phenomenon suggests the positive impact of the teacher's beliefs and their practice upon the students in language learning (Horwitz 1988, Kern 1995) because Teacher 1 and Teacher 6 used the most TL in their teaching among the teachers in their belonged school. Whilst this reflects the common finding in TL research that teachers feel they "ought to use TL" (Littlewood and Yu 2011). The question is why do not they? This research cannot answer this new question except to speculate that TL use may be undermined by teachers' poor language ability, lack of confidence or beliefs that it slows down understanding.

In China, teachers are under pressure to complete contents of the textbook and prepare for (written) exams. We can speculate that this may be an issue. If so, it is a stronger influence than beliefs. These issues were certainly identified in Hobbs' (2010) study of TL use.

## **5.2 How do these perceptions relate to the theoretical principles nominally underpinning this element of the modern foreign language curriculum in both countries?**

### **5.2.1 Chinese and English teacher's perceptions about the key principles of communicative language teaching approach**

The findings of teacher questionnaires and interviews indicates that both Chinese and English teachers demonstrated positive attitudes towards CLT as most of the teachers agreed that for students to become effective communicators in the FL, the teachers' feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students' responses (Appendix 4.1, item 11). They all agreed that the learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allowed each student to develop his/her full potential (Appendix 4.1, item 14). The teachers all said they were tolerant with pupils' errors in language learning (Appendix 4.1, item 18). The teachers all believed that it was very important to encourage pupils to speak in the FL as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 19). They did not think that the communicative approach to language teaching produced fluent but inaccurate learners (Appendix 4.1, item 23), they thought that teachers should encourage pupils to guess if they did not know a word (Appendix 4.1, item 35), speaking

and listening were an integral part of language ability (Appendix 4.1, item 40) and it was very important to use FL to teach as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42). The above teachers' views conform with the key principles of CLT as suggested by Richards (2006). However, as discussed above, my study suggests that their beliefs were individual, for instance Teacher 1's views about grammar, and shaped by their own experiences and learning (Zahorik 1987, Pajares 1992). Despite the teachers' positive beliefs about the key principles of CLT, in practice most of the teachers in my study still employed more traditional approaches. Except for Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 all the other teachers used more home language than TL in their teaching and they did most of the talking. Except for Teacher 3 (England) and Teacher 6 (China) tried to get pupils involved in the learning process all the other teachers' teaching were teacher-dominated. This conforms with the literature in CLT that communicative classrooms were rare and most teachers still follow more traditional approach despite their claimed commitment to CLT (Long and Sato 1983, Guthrie 1984a, Nunan 1987, Mitchell 1988, Walz 1989, Kamaravadivelu 1993). The question arising is why some teachers (Teacher 6, Teacher 1 and Teacher 3) were able to teach according to their beliefs, but the others did not?

### **5.2.2 Chinese and English teachers' perceptions about their role in language teaching**

The findings in the teacher questionnaire indicate that all the teachers agreed that the teacher as transmitter of knowledge was only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson (Appendix 4.1, item 25) and the learner-centred approach to language teaching encouraged responsibility and

self-discipline and allowed each student to develop his/her full potential (Appendix 4.1, item 14). However some of them disagreed that the teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' was no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom (Appendix 4.1, item 8), whereas some of them agreed that the role of the teacher in the language classroom was to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing, and example (Appendix 4.1, item 30). This might indicate that some of the teachers were not sure about the changing of the teacher's role in MFL teaching.

Interviews with teachers revealed that except Teacher 2b (School A, England) was very certain that teacher should be facilitator in language class the other three English teachers were either not certain whether teachers should be facilitators in language class or stated that it depended. However all the Chinese teachers thought that teacher should be facilitator or director in language class. This is a surprising finding because under the western culture and education system which encourage CLT and advocate learner-centred approach some of the English teacher seemed reluctant to accept the changing of teacher's role in language teaching. It is very surprising that it is the Chinese teachers that seemed to accept the changing of teacher's role because as discussed in the review of literature the Chinese education system and other factors do not support CLT (Rao 1996, Leng 1997). This might be the result of the education reform in curriculum, textbook and pedagogy in China since 1978 and the most recent version of English Language Curriculum Standards (MOE 2011) advocate the changing of teacher's role and more communicative pedagogy in FL teaching (Hu 2002b, Hu 2005, Halstead and Zhu 2009, Xu 2009, Dai, Gerbino et al. 2011,

MOE 2011, Xu and Wong 2011), suggesting these beliefs are either undeveloped, nor strongly held or, perhaps expedient. Teachers, we can speculate, may well say what they think they should say, not what they believe. However despite the different beliefs of the Chinese and English teachers in practice all the teachers did most of the talking (see Section 4.1.3.10) and their teaching were teacher-led. The classroom observation data shows that there is a gap between what the teachers believed and what they actually did (Lamb 1995, Karavas-Doukas 1996).

### **5.2.3 Chinese and English teacher's perceptions about dealing with children's language errors in modern foreign language classes**

The teacher questionnaire data indicates that both the Chinese and English teachers said they were tolerant with pupils' errors in language learning (Appendix 4.1, item 18). All the teachers said in the interview that they thought it was very important to encourage students to speak and they would not stop them if the children made mistakes in their speaking because confidence was very important for pupils. However they would correct the pupils' writing mistakes in order to stress the accuracy of written language. This was confirmed in the observations, which showed that the teachers all tolerated errors and did not stop pupils when they were talking, so the teachers in both countries were consistent. The teachers' tolerance with students' errors was consistent with the main principles of CLT which sees errors as part of the natural learning process and advocates teachers' tolerance with students' errors (Richards 2006). The teachers' attitudes towards students' language errors were in accord with the literature of FL or L2 learning. The researchers' comments about language errors shed light

on language teaching and learning. Littlewood (1984; p.24) said: “errors themselves are the product of learning.” Pit Corder (1967; cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2006) puts it that learners’ production of different sentences from the TL may indicate that they understand the rules and patterns of the language they are learning. Keith Johnson (2008; p. 65) states: “Errors can hold vital clues about the processes of FL learning. It is rather like the pain that tells the doctor more about what is wrong with you than all the parts that do not hurt.” From the above and some other researchers’ (Richards 1974, James 1980, Krashen and Terrell 1983, Odlin 1990, Ellis 1994, Williams and Burden 1997, Brown 2006) views about language errors we can see the importance of errors in FL or L2 learning and teachers should be tolerant with learners’ errors and encourage them to build up confidence to speak the FL as much as possible.

#### **5.2.4 Chinese and English teacher’s views about the role of grammar in language learning**

It is generally accepted notion that grammar is an essential resource in making meaning (Halliday 1994, Hammond and Derewianka 2001, Nunan 2004). This is supported by my research results. The findings of teacher questionnaire and interviews show that all the teachers thought that grammar was very important in language learning. But among them Teacher 1 (English) attached extreme importance to grammar as she even strongly agreed learning a FL is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules (Appendix 4.1, Item 31) and by mastering the rules of grammar, students became fully capable of communicating with a native speaker (Appendix 4.1, Item 26) and she strongly disagreed that grammar should be taught only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself (Appendix 4.1,

Item 4) and she did not agree that knowledge of the rules of a language did not guarantee ability to speak the language (Appendix 4.1, Item 10). This is a very surprising finding because it is the English teacher not the Chinese teacher who attached so much importance to grammar. However, it is notable that Teacher 1 was educated in France and is a French national. Pajares (1992) has suggested that teacher beliefs do not change readily and that one's learning experience affects beliefs profoundly. The distinctiveness of this teacher's view (shared by the children) seems to support this idea.

The Chinese test system stresses the importance of grammar (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a) because the majority of the English exams are testing learners' grammar and reading ability instead of communicative competence as speaking and listening might not be tested in the big English exams (Cheng 2008, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011). The Chinese teachers naturally saw grammar as more important, although they indicated that this was because of the examination. However, again, this would have been a huge part of their own experience of language learning and Pajares' (1992) point pertains.

### **5.3 How do these perceptions inform the delivery of the teaching of speaking and listening in schools in both countries?**

#### **5.3.1 Chinese and English student's beliefs about oral participation in language learning**

As illustrated in pupil questionnaire I and interview data most of the Chinese children (92.2%) and English pupils (86.1%) demonstrated a strong desire to

speak the language they were learning perfectly (Appendix 2.1, item 31) and they would like to communicate with people in FL. Most of the children said in the group interview they were not afraid to be laughed at by peers if they made mistakes in speaking. This indicates that the children might be motivated to speak the language and be able to develop communicative competence in their language lessons. But there is a gap between what they claim and what they do in their language learning (Liu and Jackson 2011) because my classroom observation data shows that both Chinese and English children almost never speak FL when they speak to the teacher or to peers, unless in answer to a specific direction. This finding supports the research of other authors (Meiring and Norman 2002, Jackson 2002a, Carless 2008, Littlewood and Yu 2011, Liu and Jackson 2011) and it is consistent with Dobson's (1998) description about Ofsted inspection 1998 that many pupils are reluctant to use TL. Moreover most of the children in this study did not have much chance to speak or hear the language they were learning in class, although Chinese children had tapes from their text book. As suggested by the classroom observation data in reality Teacher 1 (English) used a lot of TL and this means that her pupils did have a lot of chance to hear the language. Teacher 3 (English) not only used a lot of TL to teach but also tried her very best to get the students involved as much as possible. Teacher 6 (Chinese) tried every means to use English to teach and get the pupils involved as much as possible. The rest of the teachers in my study used more home language to teach and the pupils were not involved much in speaking or listening to TL in the language lessons. This means that children not only have less chance to hear the language but also seldom speak the language. This is a sad situation both in China and England.

English children seem more confident about themselves than the Chinese children because 84.9% of the English children consider themselves to be good language learners (Appendix 2.1, item 5) while only 25.2% of the Chinese children thought so. However this study did not seek to examine whether this confidence was well-founded. However it was notable that Teacher 6 had more confident children and this might be related to the teacher's pedagogy and beliefs.

### **5.3.2 The relationship between teachers beliefs and their pedagogy**

As discussed above both the Chinese and English teachers demonstrated positive perceptions about the key principles of CLT and they share similar views about the teaching and learning of FL, especially speaking and listening. However their pedagogy was not consistent with their beliefs about FL teaching and learning. There is a gap between what they believe and what they do in practice (Galton, Simon et al. 1980, Galton 1983, Desforges and Cockburn 1987, Karavas-Doukas 1996). There were similarities and differences between the Chinese and English teachers' pedagogy. Moreover there was more variation in practice between the English teachers than between the Chinese teachers. Except Teacher 6 (Chinese) the other five Chinese teachers taught in ways which were substantially similar and most of them serve as class enquirers as classified by John Willcocks (1983) in the ORACLE results, but the English teachers taught in very different ways.

The Chinese and English teachers were different in the following aspects:

- a. In general the English teacher used more TL to teach than Chinese teachers.

- b. Chinese teachers did a lot of translation from TL to home language. When they taught a text they translated every English sentence into Chinese. Teacher 7 (School C, China) translated nearly every English sentence that he said into Chinese.
- c. Except Teacher 6 (School B, China) all the other Chinese teachers' pedagogy were quite similar. Their teaching was "textbook-based, teacher-dominated, transmission-oriented" (Hu 2005; p.19), teacher-fronted, and exam-driven. This was consistent with my review of literature about the Chinese pedagogy. The Chinese teachers followed exactly the content of the textbook. They did use some complementary materials, but they were all about reading and grammar exercises which were used to help pupils to get high marks in big exams. As indicated by my observation data and my teaching experience that the format of Chinese teachers' teaching was first introduced the new words. Then they led the pupils to read aloud the words. Then they introduced the text, translated each sentence into Chinese, talked about phrases, analyzed sentence structure, talked about grammar. Then students did reading aloud and exercises related to the text. However the English teachers have more freedom in choosing what materials to use in their teaching. They did use textbooks, but not much. They used a lot of complementary materials to teach like youtube, short videos, recordings, work sheets, tables and pictures to facilitate teaching.
- d. When the teacher was teaching, the Chinese children listened quietly, but the English children were noisy in class. Therefore the English teachers had to constantly keep order in their teaching while Chinese teachers

never did so. Even if some of the Chinese pupils did not listen to the teacher or did not do any work they were very quiet and they never disturb others.

- e. The English teacher asked pupils to do research work at home, e.g. Teacher 1 asked her pupils to do some research work on opinions about food, reasons for opinions. Chinese teacher never did this. What the Chinese teachers asked the students to do was memorization of words and texts, grammar and reading exercises and test papers.
- f. The English and Chinese teachers teach vocabulary differently. Most of the Chinese teachers talked about the Chinese meaning of words, showed pupils some example sentences and led students to read aloud the words and they spent time to tell pupils how to remember the new words according to the pronunciation rules. The English teacher usually show pupils some pictures from computer of the vocabulary that the children were supposed to learn and asked the pupils to say the words in sentences. The Chinese teachers did a lot of dictation of new words and the English teachers did not do so according to my classroom observation.
- g. The Chinese teachers attach great importance to reading aloud vocabulary and texts and memorizing texts. The teacher interview data show that all the Chinese teacher required their pupils to memorize the vocabulary and the texts from the textbook and the children did reading aloud or recited new words or texts in the early morning lessons before the normal lessons started from around 8 am. Some Chinese teachers even asked their students to read aloud or memorize texts in their office

in the early morning lessons or during break time.

Despite their positive beliefs about the key principles of CLT and the different aspects of pedagogy between the Chinese and English teacher most of the teachers' teaching (both Chinese and English) were teacher-fronted and teacher-dominated (Jin and Cortazzi 2002, Hu 2005) and teachers did most of the talk as illustrated in Chapter 4 (Section 4.1.3.10). The most often used technique in language lessons for both Chinese and English teachers is questions/answers which is consistent with Naiman and Fröhlich's (1978) research. In most of both Chinese and English classes there was very little creative and simultaneous language use in language lessons. This echoes Huang's findings in detailed observations of nine Chinese teachers teaching grammar where 85% of the time was taken by teacher talk and students only answered questions (Huang 1992; cited in Cortazzi and Jin, 1996) and similar findings in Hu (2003), Tsui (1996), (Chaudron 1988) and (Cook 2008). This is not surprising of the Chinese teachers because the Chinese culture of learning sees the process of learning as accumulation of knowledge and the Chinese children are taught from kindergarten and primary school to learn through memorization, imitation and repetitive practice. Textbook and teacher are seen as models and authority. Moreover the special features of Chinese characters make rote-learning an unavoidable approach in early education and throughout the school years, in order to become literate. The Chinese learning strategy is transferred into FL learning. This deep-rooted culture of learning may not be easily changed in the teachers' pedagogy (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b). It is not hard to understand why most of the Chinese teachers still apply the traditional teaching approach (Leng

1997, Zhou 2002, Hu 2002a). However it is very surprising to find that some of the English teachers' still use more traditional pedagogy after more than half a century's innovation in FL teaching and L2 teaching and UK as one of the pioneer in the innovation, particularly where it results in the lack of speaking practice for students discussed above and is a very different situation from the communicative pedagogy which the teachers espouse.

### **5.3.3 The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practice and the student's beliefs and learning outcomes**

The contrast between teachers expressing commitment to speaking and listening but giving it less class time, exemplifies the complex nature of relationship between beliefs and practices. What actually happens in classes is affected by more than the teachers' beliefs (Pajares 1992). There is a gap between what they believe and what they did in practice (Galton 1983, Lamb 1995, Karavas-Doukas 1996). Both the teachers' beliefs and their practice did exert influence on their students (Galton 1983, Horwitz 1988, Kern 1995). The results section (4.1.3.5) suggests that there is a relationship between the teacher's beliefs about the importance of speaking and listening and grammar, and the beliefs of the children in their classes which is not based just on what the teachers do in the classes. For instance, where Teacher 1 (English teacher of French nationality) showed an unexpected emphasis on the importance of grammar, so did her children, although the observations did not show she did more grammar teaching. This indicates that the relationship between beliefs and practice is complex as illustrated in Figure 3.1. Teacher's beliefs do influence their own practice and the children's beliefs and practice and teacher's beliefs are also affected by the wider

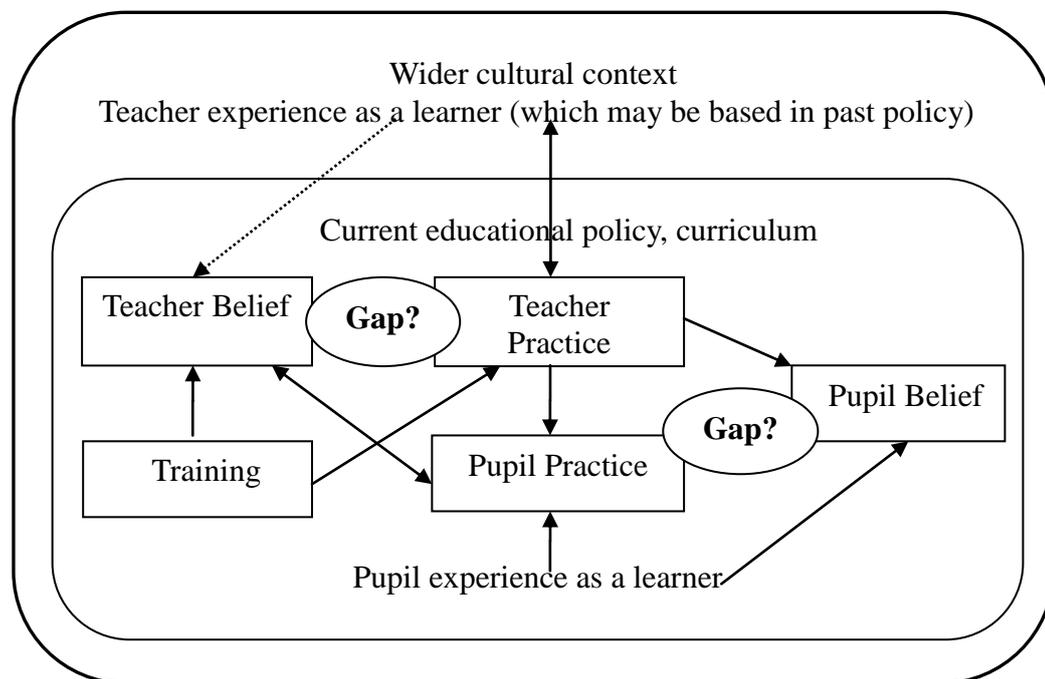
cultural context within which educational policy and practice operates. The relationship is not simple. Why there is a gap between what the teachers believe and what they do and between what the pupils believe and what they do in practice?

However, I argue that my cases demonstrate that the relationship between culture and teachers' beliefs and practices is not as simple or stereotypical as the literature might suggest. Jin and Cortazzi (1998a) discuss the relationship between language and culture, contrasting Confucius heritage cultures (CHC) and western cultures. Their models of the relationship between culture and learning in China and the west suggest that learning in China is a book- focused, teacher-centred and exam-orientated experience, because of the differences between CHC and western culture. In the west, they suggest, education is more student centric and skills orientated. However, whilst there are some features of this characterization in my study, such as the use of textbooks in Chinese classes, this characterization is not exemplified by my cases. The teachers in schools were concerned about the learning of their students, in both China and England, and it was in China that examples such as the use of tapes and DVDs and teachers' provision of additional practice sessions were found. Teachers in both China and England showed great exam – orientation. Indeed, exam preparation for speaking in England was particularly formulaic and children and teachers commented that speaking exams necessitated learning passages by heart (Case 1), where the Chinese cases did not have exams in speaking. Moreover, except for Case 1 (a French educated teacher) and Case 3, neither the Chinese nor English cases concentrated on use of TL by children or teachers which might support

development of speaking skills. Therefore, I argue that the relationship between culture, educational policy and practices and beliefs transcends national stereotypes and, even, some local policy constraints. In my cases, I can suggest the model below.

**Figure 3.1 Complex links between cultural context, beliefs and practice**

(created by Min Song)



I argue that although what the teachers say (in China and England) is sometimes not what they do, they still influence the children with their beliefs and there are many indirect ways which might lead to this. For instance, a teacher who believes speaking is very important may not emphasize speaking in class, because the examination does not focus on it, but might offer pupils a powerful model as a good speaker, which might shape the pupils' beliefs. Although Teacher 6 did not allocate additional time to speaking or listening, (discussed above) her pupils still believed strongly in the importance of speaking and

listening and were very highly motivated. Her beliefs and commitment may have been evident in small things, like the provision of a tape recorder to use in break times, which could not be said to offer the children much additional experience of speaking and listening but communicated her beliefs to them- in this case, the importance of speaking and listening. Teacher 6 was a very good example of the positive influence of a teacher's beliefs and practice on children's belief and their outcomes. As discussed in Chapter Four (Section 4.2.6.10) her pupils achieved the best results among the same year group in the big English exam at the end of Year 9 in June 2012 although the children were not among the best when they first entered the junior high school. This successful example echoes the findings of ORACLE study as Galton puts it: "...what teachers do in the classroom, especially the way they interact with children, is the most important determinant of the pupil's progress, particularly in basic skills" (Galton 1983; p. 175). Some literature suggests that the changing of a teacher's pedagogy would bring a change of learning outcomes from the students (Xie 2010, Zhang and Head 2010). In England some of the schools which adopted the MFL - Implementing the Group Talk Initiative and Other Strategies programme did help the children improve greatly in their GCSE speaking test and the children's motivation was enhanced and they enjoyed the language lessons very much as the children said: "It makes it easier. We help each other, not work yourself when you got stuck." "It is more enjoyable. We are more confident." "I think we learn better because it is more active and more enjoyable." The teachers thought that by employing Group Talk Initiative the children were more motivated and they were using language spontaneously (tfvideo 2009). Therefore I argue that it is the teacher's responsibility, professional consciousness, enthusiasm and teacher's pedagogy

that play a very important role in shaping pupils' beliefs and exerting a big influence on pupils' achievement, especially speaking and listening and learning outcomes. Teacher 6 (Chinese) and her pupils' success in the big exams (at the end of Year 9) in June 2012 was a very good example. Although this is not data for the study, it does suggest that her success is not limited to speaking and listening and that her attention to speaking and listening does not undermine work in literacy. Therefore I argue that even under the exam-driven Chinese education system (Jin and Cortazzi 2002, Hu 2005, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011) there is still space for teachers to include more speaking and listening in their teaching.

#### **5.3.4 A gap between what teachers and students believe and what they do in practice**

All the teachers in my study agreed that group work allowed students to explore problems for themselves and thus had some measure of control over their own learning. It was therefore an invaluable means of organizing classroom experiences (Appendix 4.1, item 16) and group work activities were essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students (Appendix 4.1, item 24). However my classroom observation data shows that the pupils had done very little group work and the little group work they have done is more often sequential rather than simultaneous (Jin and Cortazzi 1998b). Except answering teachers' questions they were seldom involved in the teaching and learning process. This does echo the findings of Jin and Cortazzi (1998b) and emphasizes that beliefs do not translate directly into actions. It could be argued that my study

should have explored this difference between rhetoric and practice directly with the teachers. However access and good relationships were the basis of these cases and direct discussion of this issue would have been difficult, even had this issue been identified through early analysis.

The teachers in my study all agreed that the learner-centred approach to language teaching encouraged responsibility and self-discipline and allowed each student to develop his/her full potential (Appendix 4.1, item 14). However in their teaching they did most of the talk and their teaching was teacher-led. This traditional pattern is discussed in the wider literature (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Hu 2002a, Hu 2003, Hu 2005). The teachers all believed that it was very important to encourage pupils to speak in the FL as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 19) and it was very important to use FL to teach as much as possible (Appendix 4.1, item 42). However the classroom observation data indicates that, although Teacher 1 (English) used TL to teach nearly throughout her teaching, and Teacher 3 (English) used more TL to teach and Teacher 6 (China) tried her best to use as much TL as possible all the other teachers, especially Chinese teachers, used very simple classroom TL like “Good morning”, “Turn to page...”, “Very good”, “Silent”, most of their teaching was done in home language. Whilst this is recognized as a common issue for Chinese teachers in the TL literature (Littlewood and Yu 2011), it is surprising to see this gap between beliefs and practices so widespread, in different educational systems, with different assessments.

These are the examples of the gap between what the teachers believe and what

they do in practice (Lamb 1995, Karavas-Doukas 1996). And this is true of both the Chinese and English children. The results of pupil questionnaire I and group interview with the children illustrate that both a majority of the Chinese and English children believed that speaking and listening were as important as reading and writing (Appendix 2.1, item 24) and they demonstrated high interest in being able to speak the language they were learning perfectly (Appendix 2.1, item 31). However the findings of classroom observation indicates that both the Chinese and English children never used FL to speak to their teacher or peers unless asked to answer questions or did some work. There is also a gap between what the children believed and what they did in practice which mirrors the gap between what the teachers do and what they believe.

## **5.4 What is pupils' motivation for language study and how might this be related to their perceptions of language learning and delivery?**

### **5.4.1 Chinese and English students' perceptions about motivation in foreign language learning**

The most important motivation for most of the Chinese pupils is to meet and talk to a range of people (Appendix 2.1, item 15, 88.7%), to get a good job in the future (Appendix 2.1, item 2, 85.8%) and talk to people when travel to a country where this language is spoken (Appendix 2.1, item 7, 85.5%).

Whilst the highest motivation for the English children is talk to people when travel to a country where this language is spoken (Appendix 2.1, item 7, 93.1%), to meet and talk to a range of people (Appendix 2.1, item 15, 80.2%), and I want

to learn this language in case I want to live abroad (Appendix 2.1, item 21, 75.5%), among which item 7 stands out among the motivation items, the agreement percentage is much higher than the other items.

The findings from pupil questionnaire I and interview data indicate that in relation to motivation Chinese children attach great importance to getting a good job. In interview all Chinese pupils mentioned learning English for getting a good job, but only one English child mentioned this. The most important motivation for the English children is to travel. The difference might be due to the cultural, especially culture of learning and economic difference between China and England (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b, Edwards, Ran et al. 2007b), the international dominance of English and the well documented complacency of English speakers in learning languages (Chang 2006, Graddol 2006, Pan and Block 2011).

Chinese children are educated about the value of education for a good future (Francis and Archer 2005) when they are very little and the deep-rooted beliefs that ‘everything is low, but education is high’ (*wanban jie xiapin weiyou dushu gao*) (Hu 2002a) motivates the Chinese parents to sacrifice everything to support their child to go to university because in China people with higher academic degree get the better salary (Francis and Archer 2005). That creates the situation described by the Chinese saying “An army crossing a one-log bridge” (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b) which means Chinese parents all want their child to go to university. The booming economic development in China since the 1990s promoted the huge need for fluent English speakers. As Cortazzi (1996b; p.179)

asserts: “This societal recognition, together with a general awareness of job opportunities available to those who speak English, has impinged heavily on students’ motivations to learn.” In China such a huge country with about 80% of the rural people most of the parents believe that good education is the only means to facilitate their children to get good jobs and be successful in life in the future (Han and Yang 2001, Cheng 2008). The Chinese parents’ and children’s beliefs about the value of education is consistent with Francis and Archer’s (2005) findings in their research of British–Chinese pupils’ and parents’ constructions of the value of education. The parents’ strong beliefs about the importance of education helps to shape the children’s beliefs and motivation, which conforms with Strand and Winston (2008) large scale study about inner city school children’s educational aspirations. They suggested that “Home educational aspirations”, the level of expectation among parents and extended family groupings exerted the strongest impact on children’s aspiration to continue in full time education after age 16. Other authors have made similar observations (Wentzel 1998, Khattab 2003, Francis and Archer 2005). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the outstanding status of English is seen by the Chinese parents as a very important means to realize mobility. That may explain why the Chinese parents see it as a good social status if their child is learning English (Jin and Cortazzi 2002) and they would be very proud if their child can speak good English, therefore the Chinese parents would monitor and push their child very hard to learn English in order to prepare the child with outstanding English skills, especially speaking, in the severe competition of job hunting (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b). The children’s views in this study about motivation to learn English in order to get good jobs is consistent with other research. Zhu and Chen’s (1991)

findings suggest that 33.7% of the university students in their study claimed that “finding a good job” as their chief motive to study English. Cortazzi (1993) stated in the study about 244 Chinese university students in the students’ answers to the open-end question “Why are you learning English?” 55.7% of them specifically mentioned that learning English would help them in their future jobs. The above factors may have contributed to the Chinese children’s good motivation to learn English and explain the Chinese children’s choice of getting good job as the most important motivation. It may also explain why the Chinese children in my study were less likely to see themselves as good language users and have less confidence than the English pupils. They may have so much more experience of language learning and see it as more important than English pupils. This may lead them to be very self critical.

The English children’s perceptions about education are different. Strand and Winston’s (2008) findings in their study about inner city school children’s educational aspirations indicates that educational aspirations were lowest among the White British pupils and their parents tended to see education as a less significant factor in achieving the children’s vocational goals. Moreover the English children are diversified from Year 12 with some children go to colleges if they would not like to be in the academic profession. Some of the children who would like to go to university will choose to study A-Levels. This helps to avoid the Chinese situation of “An army crossing a one-log bridge” (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b). The English education and society does encourage individual development and even people without tertiary degree can be respected and get good salary so long as they achieve well. Moreover the good welfare system in

England guarantees people with basic living and medical care from the government. Therefore the English children do not have to worry about their future and they do not need to struggle like the Chinese children who have to work themselves to death to get university degree or over in order to get a good job and be successful in life. The English job market does not require good qualification in MFL as a must. The above factors may have contributed to shape the English children beliefs about motivation to learn MFL and their own performance.

#### **5.4.2 Chinese and English student's perceptions about the importance of learning foreign language**

Echoing the comment above many more English children (32.6%) thought that they did not need to learn FL because they would always live near people who spoke their language (Appendix 2.1, item 9.). Only 10% of the Chinese children held this idea. This confirms that the Chinese children see the importance to learn FL. Only 9% of the Chinese children thought that it was not important for them to do well in FL because there were other subjects they were good at (Appendix 2.1, item 29) whilst more than two times (18.7%) of the English children agreed to this item. All the Chinese interviewee said that learning English was very important. This is not a surprising finding which is consistent with the literature about EFL in China (Anderson 1993, Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Adamson and Morris 1997, Gao and Watkins 2001, Wu 2001, Hu 2002a, Hu 2002b, Hu 2005, Xiao, Sharpling et al. 2011) and MFL in England (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007, Coleman 2009). China has a favourable climate for learning FL. The Chinese government sees FL, especially English as a key element in

opening up to the outside world, economic development and realization of the four modernization (Xu 1990, Jin and Cortazzi 2002). English is a compulsory core subject from the third year of primary school until tertiary level, even postgraduate level (Cortazzi and Jin 1996a, Jin and Cortazzi 2002, Hu 2002b, Hu 2005, Cheng 2008). Good command of English, especially speaking ability provides the prospect of good job opportunities, entering universities and academic promotion (Chang 2006). Chinese parents consider learning English as a point of proud social status for their child (Cortazzi and Jin 1996b, Jin and Cortazzi 2002). This explains why great majority of the Chinese children consider learning English as very important and necessary. Some of the English interviewees stated that learning FL was not necessary because they could find people speak English everywhere in the world. The English children's views about the importance of learning MFL reflects the de-motivation of learning MFL in England as the literature suggested (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007, Ofsted 2008, Coleman 2009, Ofsted 2011). As discussed in my review of literature the English language policy and curriculum, medium and parents' attitude towards learning MFL may not encourage the English children to learn MFL (Coleman, Galaczi et al. 2007). The status of English as a global or international language does not help to motivate the English children to learn FL. The removal of MFL as compulsory subject from Key Stage 4 (DfES 2007) might have contributed to the decline of the number of children who opt for MFLs at GCSE (Ofsted 2008, Ofsted 2011). All the above factors may have played a role in the de-motivation of MFL learning in England.

### **5.4.3 Chinese and English students' perceptions about their own effort and commitment in learning foreign language**

As discussed in my review of literature (Chapter Two) and results (Chapter Four) Chinese children spent much more time in learning FL than English children because the great majority of Chinese children (89%) have been learning English for 5 or more years whilst only 3.5% of the English children have been learning a MFL for 5 or more years. Chinese children's curriculum FL learning time is more than English children. Chinese pupils have 5 or 6 hours formal English lessons each week and on top of these they have early morning classes and evening lessons as well. However the English children only spend 2.5 hours learning FL each week. Moreover beyond schooling 64.1% of the Chinese children go to weekend school to learn English, whereas none of the English children did any extra FL learning beyond schooling. The above findings indicate that Chinese children spent much more time learning FL than the English children, which may suggest that Chinese pupils have more chance to do speaking and listening. As the Chinese teachers suggested that the Chinese children did grammar and reading exercises or test papers or revise what they have learned at school every day at school evening lessons or at home. The English teachers told me that the English children spent only about 30 minutes to do homework. Chinese children have much more chance to be exposed to FL than the English children and do much more additional study in extra classes. This is partly to do with the higher availability of extra classes in China but also to do with pupils' attitudes to work. More English children avoid doing extra work on the language they are learning than Chinese children because 38.4% of the English children state that when they study this language, they do just enough work to get by (Appendix 2.1, item 20)

whereas only 25.3% of the Chinese pupils work to get by. More Chinese children (61.5%) use every opportunity they can to improve their listening and speaking of this language (Appendix 2.1, item 26) than the English children (48.8%).

Despite the fact that the Chinese children are stereotyped as hard working interestingly, more English children (84.9%) think they try as hard as they can to learn FL (Appendix 2.1, item 30) whilst much fewer Chinese children (54.4%) think so despite of the very long hours, additional classes and homework Chinese children do. This may reflect the passive learning of the Chinese pupils (Light and Works 1984, Oatey 1984, Cortazzi and Jin 1996a), but it is also possible this reflects different cultural expectations about work levels. The Chinese children expect to do more, despite similar expressed levels of motivation. Different cultural ways of dealing with issues were evident in the questionnaires in my study.

For the open-ended questions in pupil questionnaire I no English children returned empty sheet of answers whilst in all 14 Chinese children returned empty sheet of answers. More English children answered the questions more carefully than Chinese children. This indicates the cultural difference between the two countries. The exam-driven educational system and teacher-dominated pedagogy put Chinese children into a passive role (Light and Works 1984, Oatey 1984, Cortazzi and Jin 1996a). They would not like to disobey the teachers openly and refuse to answer and they mind both their own 'face' and teacher's 'face' (mianzi in Chinese) which is a special feature of the Chinese culture (Gao 1998) as discussed in Chapter Four. Whilst the English children do not have to hide their

true feeling if they do not want to do the work. If they do it they will do it carefully and well. From my data, my teaching experience in England and observation of English classes I found that the English pupils do their work very conscientiously even if they appear to be less focused in class.

#### **5.4.4 Chinese and English students' perceptions about classroom activities in learning foreign languages**

The expected huge difference in classroom practices and attitudes to learning speaking and listening in China and England were more interesting than expected. Practice and repetition emerge as important for pupils and teachers in both countries and all my cases. Both Chinese and English children think repeating words and phrases aloud (Appendix 3.1, item 6) as the second most often done activities, which means that they have done a lot of repetition of words and phrases in language lessons. Moreover all the teachers agreed that it was very important that students repeat and practise a lot (Appendix 4.1, item 24). Practice is still valued by teachers and children. However except for practice (item 6), the other common activities were different between the Chinese and English children, and their views about the usefulness of these activities were very different as well. From the pattern of those activities which English children thought to be useful we find that the children usually considered those activities that they often did as useful. This is another example that a teacher's belief and practice did exert influence on pupils' belief (Galton 1983, Rennie 1989). This phenomenon indicates that the teacher's pedagogy plays a very important role in children's learning and determines the outcome, especially speaking and listening. If teacher could include more speaking and listening activities in language classes

the children's interest and motivation would be enhanced and outcome changed. Teacher 6's teaching experiences was a good example of this and it was in line with some literature which suggested that the changing of teacher's pedagogy would bring change of learning outcomes from the students (Xie 2010, Zhang and Head 2010). For the English children the most useful activities were exactly the same and in the same order with the most often done activities. For the Chinese children over half of the most useful activities were the same with the most often done activities. This is another case of the influence of the teacher's practice on pupils. Pupils consider what they often did as most useful. This reflects that teacher's belief and practice did exert influence on children (Horwitz 1988, Kern 1995).

It is an interesting finding that although the Chinese children did not do a lot of the listed activities they held more positive perceptions towards most of the activities than the English children because more than 70% of the Chinese pupils thought 16 out of 19 of the listed activities were useful whilst 70% of the English children thought only 9 out of 19 of the listed activities are useful.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the key findings of this research and talked about how these findings answer my research questions. The key findings suggest that teacher's beliefs and practice did exert influence on students' beliefs and progress in learning, especially speaking and listening. Despite the different culture, educational system, curriculum both the Chinese and English teachers and children share similar views about the teaching and learning of FL, especially

speaking and listening. However despite the variations in their pedagogy, especially among the English teachers both Chinese and English teachers' teaching are teacher-fronted and teacher-dominated and teachers did most of the talk in language classes. This indicates that CLT principles are rare in language classrooms and there is a gap between what the teachers and children believe and what they did in practice. Despite this, my cases show that teacher's beliefs, enthusiasm, professional conscientiousness and pedagogy play very important role in shaping children's beliefs and determine their progress in learning, especially in learning speaking and listening.

## **Chapter Six Conclusion**

### **6.1 The significance and implications of this research**

When I began this research I reviewed the extensive literature about teaching EFL (especially in China) and teaching MFL in the UK. I was amazed at how little of the actual research was about speaking and listening, as opposed to professional books which told the reader what “should” happen. Comparatively, little was actually known about what went on in speaking and listening classes or how this related to the perceptions of the teachers. Having undertaken this study, I can now draw some cautious conclusions about not only the perceptions of nine teachers about speaking and listening in their teaching, but also what they do and what their children believe. This, in itself, is a contribution to the field.

My study suggests these teachers do believe speaking and listening is important. Despite the different educational systems in China and England both the teachers and children in the Chinese and English schools in my study share similar beliefs about the learning and teaching of FL, especially speaking and listening, as discussed in Chapter 4. There are relatively “progressive” views about the importance of speaking and listening in the world and the language curriculum. Given the research background discussed in Chapter 2, and the well documented difficulties with communicative teaching in China, this finding was surprising. However, my study has also shown how great the gap between beliefs and actions can be. Despite substantially similar beliefs about the importance of the teaching of speaking and listening, there are differences between the teaching

practices of teachers in China and England. My study is one of very few to actually look closely at the ways teachers teach speaking and listening and I have not found other studies which compared practices in England and China. The way the teachers taught speaking and listening was different in each class and especially between the two countries. I believe this is an area where there is an important need for more research

My study found that there was much more variation in England between teaching practices attempted by teachers and experienced by children than between the Chinese teachers and pupils. Most of the Chinese teachers taught speaking and listening in ways which were substantially similar, but the English teachers taught in very different ways. I suggest that it is important to discover why there is so much diversity in the practice of the English teachers and yet less difference between that of the Chinese teachers. I have offered some possible explanations for this in my study, but additional research which tracks through the effects of policy on teachers' beliefs and practices, rather than what those beliefs are, would illuminate this.

I believe my results underline the cultural and educational difference in the two countries, in terms of time, practices of teaching and expectations about pupil activity and link this to the beliefs of the teachers. I have not explored the training background of the teachers, but this is also something which I suspect may be implicated. This would be an interesting area for future research. It is unclear how teachers' beliefs are shaped by their training and, given that many of

the teachers shared beliefs in this study, it may be that the theoretical content of training courses about language learning and teaching is somewhat similar. This was outside the scope of my study, as was the duration, intensity and method of such training. However, my study showed that, whilst holding substantially similar beliefs, teachers operated in totally different ways. This may relate to the way training content was delivered, as well as to policy and assessment constraints. It would be very interesting to explore the training of teachers about speaking and listening, to see how training shapes beliefs and practices.

Although both Chinese and English teachers demonstrate similar beliefs about MFL teaching and learning, especially speaking and listening, their practices are very different. Some research (Noom-ura 2008, Xie 2010, Zhang and Head 2010) suggest that changing teachers' pedagogy plays a very important role in changing pupils beliefs and their learning outcomes but my study suggests that changing pedagogy may change pupil outcomes but may also not be the key influence on beliefs. The case study approach of this research has revealed very different relationships between the beliefs and practices of each teacher and their impact on the children. It seems that the teachers communicate their beliefs about the importance of speaking and listening (and other aspects of teaching, such as grammar) in ways which do not directly rely on their teaching activities and methods. Thus, both teachers and children (in both countries) are able to hold positive beliefs about speaking and listening which are at odds with their actual experiences. I suspect this may be something to do with classroom culture and the relationships between teacher and pupils, as well as the shared goals and understandings which are so hard to explore in any setting. This would be a very

interesting ethnographic study.

## **6.2 The contributions of this research**

Speaking and listening is a fundamental part of FL learning. However, I was surprised to find that the teaching and learning of speaking and listening is not a well researched area in either China or England, especially at secondary level. I explored research in this area, but was surprised to find that in the wide literature about MFL only a few sources concentrate on speaking and listening (Blanco Guisado (2012); Sripathum Noom-ura (2008); Jing-mei Chung (1999); Zhang & Head (2010), in addition to the very wide professional literature, which is not clearly research based. These studies are about students at tertiary level and none of them give a holistic investigation into the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL. My research is unique in that it investigates thoroughly and holistically the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL in secondary level classes and offers readers insights into the beliefs about speaking and listening of pupils and teachers as well as the teaching and learning practices. In this way, my study adds new cases to the body of evidence about the teaching of speaking and listening. It also contributes a unique, in-depth examination of beliefs and practices about speaking and listening in secondary MFL teaching. I hope this study will “cast a brick to attract jade” and more research will be conducted to explore the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL, which is certainly an important integral part of FL learning and teaching and remains surprisingly under researched. I have made some suggestions below.

### **6.3 The limitations of this research**

This research is two groups of case studies of speaking and listening in Chinese and English classes. It is, therefore, relatively small in scale and I do not make claims for the generalizability of findings. Rather I hope to offer illustrative cases and present both my conclusions and the ways I have reached them transparently. By doing this, I hope readers can see the limitations (and strengths) of the work and evaluate the conclusions.

One limitation of this research is that it is based on limited empirical study about the teaching and learning of MFL within the Chinese context, as such research as far as I know does not exist and is not made public.

A further limitation, which has the potential to affect the validity of the conclusions, is the issue of translation. Although I have done my best to ensure the fidelity of the translation, and to have this cross checked, sometimes there is not true synonymy in languages and direct translation is extremely delicate because of the possible political and social connotations of words, especially in a professional domain.

### **6.4 Prospective studies which might be done on the basis of this research**

As the findings in this study suggest that some teachers in this research align their beliefs with their practice and others do not. For instance, in the respect of TL use, Teacher 1, 3 and 6 believed that it is very important for teachers to use

TL as much as possible in language classes and they did use TL to teach as much as possible and this has resulted in a positive influence on their pupils. Whilst other teachers claimed the same, but they used home language to teach most of the time. I hope future research will answer this question: why do some teachers align their beliefs with their practice and others do not? Indeed, this also raises the issues about what it is that prevents teachers acting on their beliefs and, so, points to a huge range of possible research topics about policy, resources, training and support for teachers. However, I believe that my study points out that teachers in both countries seem to act and believe relatively independently. It may be that we should not expect a direct line between beliefs and actions. Beliefs may act in a more subtly way, providing a “pull” in decision making but not entirely re-shaping actions. A further step would need to be made in research to investigate this thought.

Under the Chinese exam-driven educational system the majority of the Chinese teachers ( most of the teachers in this study) have to concentrate on teaching reading, vocabulary and grammar in order to help students to get high marks for the big exams (Hu 2005). However Teacher 6 stands out from the Chinese teachers in this study. She tried to use TL to teach as much as possible and get her pupils involved in the learning process as much as possible. Her pupils demonstrate more positive motivation, commitment and better achievement in language learning than the other children in the same school, and the evidence of this study suggests that these two findings are connected. I believe that further research should investigate why teachers like Teacher 6 can achieve this level of independent activity, innovation and focus within a system which does not

permit or support others to do the same. What has driven her to teach this way and to put what she believes into action for the benefit of her pupils? Other teachers in the study seem no less committed but do not achieve this. Why not? This sort of research is, by its nature, hard to undertake. It demands that certain teachers be identified for achieving something different from their colleagues, which may be hard to do and difficult to gain teacher cooperation in doing, and that these teachers should then be explored in depth. However, I think that only qualitative study will illuminate this phenomenon.

The findings of my research indicate that most of the children in this study both in China and England demonstrate strong wish to speak the language that they are learning perfectly and they agree that speaking and listening are important. This finding in itself is heartening for language teachers and not something there is a great deal of other evidence for. In England, indeed, it is somewhat surprising, given the discussion in the review of literature of the length of time children spend (or do not spend) doing language learning, and the dubious levels of success. This finding alone is worth following up.

However, the finding that none of the children in this research ever used L2 to talk either to their teacher or to peers in the lessons except when asked to answer questions, is shocking and unexpected. The studies about TL suggested that levels were high but, of course, most of them concentrated on the teacher-not the children. The first area for more research might be just why children do not use the language they are learning, and how they can do so. Although the reticence of Chinese children is recognized (Liu and Littlewood 1997, Xie 2010, Zhang and

Head 2010) the complete lack of pupil use of L2 in classes is stunning. This needs further study and the practical implications of research into this phenomenon could be very important in both countries. If comprehensible input is so important in language learning (Krashen and Terrell 1983), then we aim to surround children with it. If output is so important for children in language learning (Swain 1995), and they have limited opportunity to practice it, especially in England, then children should be talking in L2 in their classes. The fact that children are not doing this is too important to ignore. Further research to discover why and how this situation can be changed should be considered. Such research might suggest activities and practices which fit into teachers' understandings and their existing practices, in ways which could change the experiences of pupils. Another area for research is the existing gap between the children's beliefs (that they want to use the language) and their practices (they do not use the language in class).

This research has investigated the relationships between participants beliefs about the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL classes and their practice. There raised from this research some unanswerable questions as discussed above. I hope later research will provide answers to these questions and more research will contribute to the development of the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in MFL.

The findings of my study have been somewhat surprising and less predictable than I anticipated when I began my study. I have learned that beliefs are more complicated than they might seem and the relationships with action may

sometimes be partial, obscured or non-existent. However, I have enjoyed working with teachers and children who show enthusiasm for language learning. My personal commitment to teaching speaking and listening remains strong and I believe that it is through research that we will improve practices.

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# Appendices





















36	Pupil answers question in target language.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√								
37	Pupil answers question voluntarily in home language.																								
38	Pupil answers question voluntarily in target language.																								
39	A group answers question in home language.	√																							
40	A group answers question in target language.																								
41	Pupil talks to peer in home language.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√							
42	Pupil talks to																								







√ stands for one utterance. \_ stands for long utterance which is longer than one sentence.

## Appendix 2.1

### Language learning questionnaire for pupils I

All your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will not have any effect on your grade or on anyone's opinion of you.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to see what you think about learning foreign languages. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the items on the questionnaire. Please answer as honestly as you can based on how you really feel, not on how you think most people feel or how you think you ought to feel. Please put an 'X' in the appropriate box.

#### Section 1

##### About you

Please answer the questions below by putting an 'X' in the appropriate box.

Gender:  male       female

How long have you been learning a foreign language:  2 years or less

2-3 years       3- 4 years       5 or more years

#### Section 2

Which foreign language have you been studying the longest at school?

French   German   Spanish   Italian   Russian   Mandarin   Other   Write  
language below:

                    \_\_\_\_\_

Please think of only this language when you answer the questions below.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I want to take the time to study this language so that I will be able to speak it well.	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
2. I want to learn this language because I think it will be useful for getting a good job in the	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹

future.				
3. I want to learn this language because I like people who speak this language.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
4. I regularly set aside some time to find material in this language apart from homework.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
6. I use every opportunity I can to improve my knowledge of this language.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
7. I want to learn this language so I can talk to people when I travel to a country where this language is spoken.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
8. My classmates often describe me as someone who is good at languages.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
9. I do not need to learn this language because I will always live near people who speak my language.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
10. I do my homework for this language class carefully.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
11. It does not really matter to me if I make a lot of mistakes in this language, as long as people can understand me.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
12. I take time to review what I have learned in this language.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
13. I want to learn this language because I want to make friends with people who speak it as their native language.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
14. When someone tells me I speak this language well, I work harder.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
15. I want to learn this language because it will allow me to meet and talk to a range of people.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
16. I do not put as much effort as I could into my homework for this language.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
17. I usually find all kinds of excuses for not studying this language.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞

18. It is important for me to be known as someone who is good at languages.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
19. I want to learn this language because I want to be accepted by people who speak this language.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
20. When I study this language, I do just enough work to get by.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
21. I want to learn this language in case I want to live abroad.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
22. I work hard in my language class because I want to get a good mark.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
23. I want to learn this language because I want to know more about the countries where this language is spoken.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
24. I think speaking and listening are as important as reading and writing.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
25. I think speaking and listening are more important than reading and writing.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
26. I use every opportunity I can to improve my listening and speaking of this language.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
27. I try to find out what mistakes I make in this language so that I can correct them.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
28. I think grammar is very important for learning a language well.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
29. It is not important for me to do well in this language because there are other subjects I am good at.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
30. I try as hard as I can to learn this language.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
31. I would like to be able to speak this language perfectly.	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞

**Section 3:**

1. What do you think makes a good language learner? Why do you think so?

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2. Do you think speaking and listening are more important or reading and writing are more important in learning a foreign language? Why do you think so?

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3. How could you improve your speaking and listening ability?

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4. Do you like teachers to use the language you are learning as much as possible? Why?

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5. Do you enjoy communicating with people in the language you are learning?

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6. What do you think a good language teacher should do?

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7. What help from outside school have you had with this language?

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**Thank you very much for your kind help!**

## Appendix 2.2

### Language learning questionnaire for pupils I (Chinese)

#### 学生调查问卷 (1)

亲爱的同学你好！

感谢你参与我们的研究问卷。

此调查问卷的目的是想了解你对学习外语的看法。问卷中的问题没有正确或者错误的答案。请你根据自己的真实感觉和经验如实填写你个人认为合适的答案，你的意见对我们的工作会有很大的帮助和贡献。我们会对你的答案严格保密。

#### 第一部分

你的信息

性别： 男  女

#### 第二部分

你学英语多长时间了？

2 年或 2 年以下  2-3 年  3- 4 年  5 年或 5 年以上

你在课外补习英语吗？  是  不是

你参加课外补习英语多长时间了？

从来没有  2 年或 2 年以下  2-3 年  3- 4 年  
 5 年或 5 年以上

如果你参加课外补习英语，你每周上几个小时的课？

1 个小时  2 个小时  3 个小时  4 个小时  
 4 个小时以上

除了上课，你每天花几个小时学习英语？

1 个小时以下  1-2 个小时  2-3 个小时  3-4 个小时  
 4 个小时以上

你自己在家学习英语通常学什么？

- 复习上课内容       做语法练习       做老师留的作业  
 做听力和口语练习       看英语电视节目       阅读英语课外读物

### 第三部分

请在你认为合适的答案画圈。

观点	非常同意 1	同意 2	不同意 3	非常不同意 4
1. 我愿意花时间学习英语，以便我将来可以说漂亮的英语。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
2. 我想学英语是因为我认为学好英语将来有助于找到好的工作。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
3. 我学英语是因为我喜欢说英语的人。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
4. 除了作业，我还经常找时间读一些课外英语读物。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
5. 我认为自己英语学得很好。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
6. 我利用一切机会丰富我的英语知识。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
7. 我学英语以便将来到说英语的国家旅游，可以用英语和人沟通。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
8. 我的同学认为我英语学得好。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
9. 我没有必要学英语，因为我总是住在会说汉语的人周围。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
10. 我非常认真做英语作业。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
11. 只要别人能听懂，我说英语出现很多错误也无所谓。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
12. 我会花时间复习英语。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
13. 我学英语是因为我想跟英语作为母语的人交朋友。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
14. 如果有人说我英语说得好，我会更加努力。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
15. 我学英语因为它可以让我跟更多的人交朋友、谈话。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹
16. 我没有花足够的精力学习英语。	☺☺	☺	☹	☹☹

17. 我通常找各种理由不学英语。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
18. 被认为具有语言天赋对我很重要。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
19. 我学英语是因为我想让说英语的人接受我。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
20. 我学英语只要能应付考试就行了。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
21. 我学英语以备万一我将来要到国外居住。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
22. 我学英语很努力，因为我想考好的成绩。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
23. 我学英语是因为我想更多地了解说英语的国家。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
24. 我认为听力、口语同阅读、写作一样重要。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
25. 我学英语是因为学校要求必须学。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
26. 我学英语是因为考高中和大学都必须考英语。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
27. 我认为阅读、写作比听力、口语更重要。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
28. 我每天花时间做语法练习。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
29. 我认为听力、口语比阅读、写作更重要。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
30. 我利用一切机会提高我的口语和听力水平。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
31. 我设法找出自己所犯的语言错误，以便可以改正。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
32. 我认为语法对学好英语非常重要。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
33. 学好英语对我来说不重要，因为我其它课程学得好。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
34. 我学英语非常努力。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞
35. 我想学会说地道的英语。	😊😊	😊	😞	😞😞

#### 第四部分

1. 你认为什么是好的语言学习者？为什么？

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2. 你认为听力和口语更重要，还是阅读和写作更重要？为什么？

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3. 你如何提高你的听力和口语水平？

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4. 你喜欢老师用英语讲课吗？为什么？

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5. 你喜欢用英语和别人谈话吗？

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6. 你认为好的英语老师是什么样的？

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**非常感谢你的合作！**

## Appendix 3.1

### Language learning questionnaire for pupils II

All your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will not have any effect on your grade or on anyone's opinion of you. There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions.

Please read each statement and put an 'X' in the appropriate box.

<b>How often do you do these activities in your language class?</b>	Very often 1	Often 2	Not often 3	Never 4
1. reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage				
2. listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard				
3. reading about the life in another country/cultural awareness				
4. writing				
5. translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language				
6. repeating words and phrases aloud				
7. reading aloud from text book				
8. answering true/false questions (speaking)				
9. discussion of pictures				
10. talking about things that really happen in life				
11. drama				
12. grammar exercises in textbooks				
13. going up to write on the electronic whiteboard				
14. talking in pairs				
15. talking in groups				
16. speaking in a role with others				
17. filling in worksheets				

18. flash cards (reading words and saying them)				
19. playing spoken games in class				
<b>How much do these activities help you to learn the language better?</b>	Very useful 1	Useful 2	Very useless 3	Useless 4
1. reading passage and answer questions/doing work on the passage				
2. listening to tapes or recordings and answer questions/ or do work on what you have heard				
3. reading about the life in another country/cultural awareness				
4. writing				
5. translation from home language to foreign language or from foreign language to home language				
6. repeating words and phrases aloud				
7. reading aloud from text book				
8. answering true/false questions (speaking)				
9. discussion of pictures				
10. talking about things that really happen in life				
11. drama				
12. grammar exercises in textbooks				
13. going up to write on the electronic whiteboard				
14. talking in pairs				
15. talking in groups				
16. speaking in a role with others				
17. filling in worksheets				
18. flash cards (reading words and saying them)				
19. playing spoken games in class				

**Thank you very much for your kind help.**

## Appendix 3.2

### Language learning questionnaire for pupils II (Chinese)

#### 学生调查问卷 (2)

我们会对你的答案严格保密，此调查问卷的目的是想了解你对学习外语的看法。问卷中的问题没有正确或者错误的答案。

请阅读以下观点，在选项中画 ✓

你们在英语课上多长时间做一次以下活动？	很频繁 1	经常 2	不经常 3	从来没有 4
1. 阅读文章，根据文章回答问题/做有关文章的练习				
2. 听录音，回答问题/做有关所听录音的练习				
3. 阅读有关英语国家生活的文章/文化知识				
4. 写作练习				
5. 中译英，英译中练习(翻译练习)				
6. 朗读生词或词组				
7. 朗读课本上的课文				
8. 做口语正确/错误选择练习				
9. 讨论图片				
10. 讨论生活中发生的真实事件				
11. 排演话剧				
12. 做课本上的语法练习				
13. 在电子白板上做练习				
14. 两人对话练习				
15. 小组讨论				
16. 扮演角色对话练习				
17. 做活页英语练习上的填空练习				
18. 用卡片练习生词，朗读生词				
19. 做英语口语游戏				

你认为以上的课堂活动对你学习英语有多大帮助?	非常有用 1	有用 2	非常无用 3	无用 4
1. 阅读文章, 根据文章回答问题/ 做有关文章的练习				
2. 听录音, 回答问题/做有关所听 录音的练习				
3. 阅读有关英语国家生活的文章/ 文化知识				
4. 写作练习				
5. 中译英, 英译中练习(翻译练习)				
6. 朗读生词或词组				
7. 朗读课本上的课文				
8. 做口语正确/错误选择练习				
9. 讨论图片				
10. 讨论生活中发生的真实事件				
11. 排演话剧				
12. 做课本上的语法练习				
13. 在电子白板上做练习				
14. 两人对话练习				
15. 小组讨论				
16. 扮演角色对话练习				
17. 做活页英语练习上的填空练习				
18. 用卡片练习生词, 朗读生词				
19. 做英语口语游戏				

非常感谢你的合作!

## Appendix 4.1

### Questionnaire for teachers

Please read each statement and then decide if you: (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Disagree, (4) Strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions.

#### PLEASE REMEMBER:

(1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Disagree, (4) Strongly disagree

Statements	Strongly agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly disagree 4
1. Grammatical correctness is the most important criterion by which spoken language performance should be judged.				
2. Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a foreign language.				
3. Group work activities are essential in providing opportunities for co-operative relationships to emerge and in promoting genuine interaction speaking among students.				
4. Grammar should be taught only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself.				
5. Since the learner comes to the language classroom with little or no knowledge of the language, he/she is in no position to suggest what the content of the lesson should be or what activities are useful for him/her.				
6. It is important to speak a foreign language with an				

excellent accent.				
7. Training learners to take responsibility for their own learning is futile as learners are not used to such an approach.				
8. The teacher as 'authority' and 'instructor' is no longer adequate to describe the teacher's role in the language classroom.				
9. It is important to learn about the foreign culture in order to speak a foreign language.				
10. Knowledge of the rules of a language does not guarantee ability to speak the language.				
11. For students to become effective communicators in the foreign language, the teachers' feedback must be focused on the appropriateness and not the linguistic form of the students' responses.				
12. The students should not say anything in the language until they can say it correctly.				
13. It is important to encourage pupils to use dictionaries and other reference books.				
14. The learner-centred approach to language teaching encourages responsibility and self-discipline and allows each student to develop his/her full potential.				
15. Since errors are a normal part of learning, frequent correction is wasteful of time.				
16. Group work allows students to explore problems for themselves and thus have some measure of control over their own learning. It is therefore an invaluable means of organizing classroom experiences.				
17. It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.				
18. The teacher should correct all the spoken grammatical errors students make. If errors are				

ignored, this will result in imperfect learning.				
19. It is very important to encourage pupils to speak in the foreign language as much as possible.				
20. Learning a foreign language is a matter of translating from home language.				
21. It is impossible in a large class of students to organize your teaching so as to suit the needs of all.				
22. Group work activities take too long to organize and waste a lot of valuable teaching time.				
23. The communicative approach to language teaching produces fluent but inaccurate learners.				
24. It is important that students repeat and practise a lot.				
25. The teacher as transmitter of knowledge is only one of the many different roles he/she must perform during the course of a lesson.				
26. By mastering the rules of grammar, students become fully capable of communicating with a native speaker.				
27. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.				
28. For most students language is acquired most effectively when it is used as a vehicle for doing something else and not when it is studied in a direct or explicit way.				
29. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary.				
30. The role of the teacher in the language classroom is to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing, and example.				
31. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.				

32. Tasks and activities should be negotiated and adapted to suit the students' needs rather than imposed on them.				
33. Direct instruction in the rules and terminology of grammar is essential if students are to learn to communicate effectively.				
34. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.				
35. Students should be encouraged to guess if they do not know a word in the foreign language.				
36. Students do their best when taught as a whole class by the teacher. Small group work may occasionally be useful to vary the routine, but it can never replace sound formal instruction by a competent teacher.				
37. Group work activities have little use since it is very difficult for the teacher to monitor the students' performance and prevent them from using their mother tongue.				
38. It is easier to read and understand a language than to speak and write it.				
39. A textbook alone is not able to cater for all the needs and interests of the students. The teacher must supplement the textbook with other materials and tasks so as to satisfy the widely differing needs of the students				
40. Speaking and listening are as important as reading and writing.				
41. Speaking and listening are more important than reading and writing.				
42. It is very important to use foreign language to teach as much as possible.				

43. Do you have any other opinions regarding foreign language learning and teaching?

**Thank you very much for your kind help!**

## Appendix 4.2

### Questionnaire for teachers (Chinese)

#### 教师调查问卷

请您阅读以下观点，请选择：(1) 非常同意，(2) 同意，(3) 不同意，(4) 非常不同意。没有正确或错误的答案。我们只是对您的意见感兴趣。

观点	非常同意 1	同意 2	不同意 3	非常不同意 4
1. 语法正确是衡量口语表达最重要的标准。				
2. 有些人具有语言天赋，此天赋有助于外语学习。				
3. 小组活动是帮助学生建立合作关系，促进学生真实口语互动的重要手段。				
4. 语法应该是外语学习的手段，而不应该是终极目的。				
5. 因为学生没有学过英语，或学过一点英语，所以让学生建议教学内容，或者判断什么教学活动有用，什么教学活动没用，是不现实的。				
6. 标准的发音对学习口语非常重要。				
7. 培养学生自主学习的能力是徒劳的，因为学生不习惯这样的学习方法。				
8. 在外语课堂中教师的角色再也不是‘权威’或者‘导师’。				
9. 了解英语文化对学习英语口语很重要。				
10. 了解英语语法知识并不意味着你就能说英语。				
11. 要想让学生流利地用英语交流，教师对学生语言学习的反馈应该注重语言表达是否恰当，而不是语言形式本身。				
12. 学生在学会用英语正确表达之前，不应该说英语。				

13. 鼓励学生使用字典和其它辅助资料很重要。				
14. 以学生为中心的语言教学方法可以鼓励学生更具有责任感、自我约束，使每一个学生的潜能得到充分发挥。				
15. 因为错误是学习过程不可分割的一部分，经常更正学生的错误是浪费时间。				
16. 小组活动给学生提供自己发现问题、解决问题的机会，从而使学生可以控制自己的学习。因此这种方法对组织课堂体验很有价值。				
17. 最好到说英语的国家学习英语。				
18. 老师应该更正学生所有口语中的语法错误。因为忽略这些错误会导致学生不准确的语言学习。				
19. 鼓励学生尽量说英语非常重要。				
20. 学习英语就是把汉语翻译成英语。				
21. 大班上课，老师不可能做到使教学适合每一个学生的需求。				
22. 小组活动组织起来花费的时间太长，会浪费很多宝贵的教学时间。				
23. 交际教学法培养的学生语言流畅，但是不准确。				
24. 学生重复，做大量练习非常重要。				
25. 老师作为知识传授者的角色只是教学中老师所必需扮演的多种角色之一。				
26. 只要掌握语法规则，学生就完全可以和英语作为母语使用者沟通。				
27. 每一个人都可以学会说英语。				
28. 对大多数学生来说，当语言作为工具学习其它东西的时候，语言学习最有效，而不是直接学习语言。				
29. 学英语就是学会很多生词。				
30. 老师在语言教室的角色是通过讲解、书写和例子等教学活动传递知识。				
31. 学英语主要就是学会语法规则。				
32. 老师应该与学生协商、调整学习任务和活动，以适合学生的需要，而不应该直接把学习任务和活动灌输给学生。				

33. 直接讲授语法规则和术语对学生学习用英语有效沟通至关重要。				
34. 说英语比听懂英语更容易。				
35. 在学生遇到生词的时候应该鼓励他们猜想词义。				
36. 当老师对全班教学的时候学生学得最好。偶尔使用小组活动可以给日常教学增添一些色彩，但是永远代替不了称职教师的正规讲授。				
37. 小组活动作用不大，因为老师很难监控学生的学习行为，无法阻止他们使用母语。				
38. 阅读和听力要比口语和写作容易。				
39. 一本课本不能满足所有学生的需求和兴趣。老师必须补充其它的材料和学习任务，以此来满足广大学生的不同需要。				
40. 口语和听力同阅读和写作一样重要。				
41. 口语和听力比阅读和写作更重要。				
42. 教师在教学中尽量说英语非常重要。				

43. 关于英语教学，您还有其它看法或意见吗？

**谢谢您的合作与帮助！**

## Appendix 5.1

### Interview Schedule for pupils

Points to be discussed before the interview:

- purpose of the interview
- confidentiality
- format and length of interview
- recording--asking for permission to use recorder

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#### Warm up questions:

1. How long have you been learning French/Spanish?
  2. Do you enjoy learning French/Spanish?
- 
1. Why do you choose to learn French/Spanish? What motivates you to learn this language?
  2. Do you think it is important to learn a foreign language? Why?
  3. English is your native language and many people in the world are learning English. Do you think it is necessary for you to learn a foreign language? Why?
  4. Do you think speaking and listening are important?
  5. What do you think is the best way to develop speaking and listening?
  6. What do you do to develop speaking and listening ability?
  7. What do you think about the teacher using French/Spanish during your lessons?
  8. Would you like your teacher to speak French/Spanish more or less? When? Why?
  9. What makes you feel good about learning speaking and listening?
  10. What do you think is important in language speaking and listening?
  11. What do you think is the most important to do in language class?
  12. What do you think your teacher thinks is the most important in language class?
  13. When you speak French/Spanish I expect you make mistakes. How do you feel about that? Are you afraid of making mistakes?
  14. Do you avoid talking if you feel you will make mistakes?
  15. What do you think other children think if you make mistakes when you speak?
  16. What do you think your teacher think if you make mistakes when you speak?

17. How do you like your teacher to teach you French/Spanish? How do you like your teacher to teach you grammar/vocabulary?
18. What do you like best in your language classes? What activities do you like best?

## Appendix 5.2

### Interview Schedule for pupils (Chinese)

#### 学生访谈计划

访谈之前需要说明的问题：

- 访谈的目的
  - 保密性
  - 访谈的形式和时间
  - 录音（征求对方同意）
- 

导入问题：

1. 你学英语多长时间了？
  2. 你喜欢学英语吗？
- 

1. 你为什么要学英语？是什么因素促使你学习英语？
2. 你认为学习英语重要吗？为什么？
3. 你认为学习英语有必要吗？为什么？
4. 你认为听力和口语更重要，还是阅读和写作更重要？为什么？
5. 你认为怎样是提高你的听力和口语水平的最好办法？
6. 你认为学习听力和口语什么最重要？
7. 你喜欢老师多用英语讲课还是少用英语？你喜欢老师在什么时候用英语讲课？为什么？
8. 在语言学习中什么使你感觉最好？
9. 你认为学习英语什么最重要？
10. 你认为在英语课上做什么是最重要的？
11. 你认为在英语课上什么是老师认为最重要的？
12. 当你在说英语的时候我想你会出错。当你出错的时候，你感觉怎么样？你害怕出错吗？
13. 你是否会因为害怕出错，就不说英语？
14. 你愿意主动用英语回答问题吗？为什么？
15. 你认为当你说英语出错的时候，其他同学会怎么看你？

16. 你认为当你说英语出错的时候，老师会怎么看你？
17. 你喜欢老师怎样讲英语课？你喜欢老师怎样讲语法/生词？
18. 你上英语课最喜欢什么？

## Appendix 6.1

### Interview Schedule for teachers

Points to be discussed before the interview:

- purpose of the interview
- confidentiality
- format and length of interview
- recording--asking for permission to use recorder

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#### Warm up questions:

1. How long have you taught languages? Which language do you teach?
2. Tell me about your teaching experience so far.

- 
1. Do you teach all four modes of language, speaking, listening, reading and writing?
  2. Which of the four modes of language do you consider most important? Why?
  3. What would you estimate in the balance of time spent on speaking and listening and reading and writing in your class?
  4. How do you include speaking, listening reading, and writing in your teaching? Which are your priorities among the four skills? Why? How does this affect the way you teach?
  5. How do you get the children to develop fluency and accuracy in your lessons?
  6. How do you deal with pupil language errors in your classes?
  7. What are your views about teaching in the target language? How much target language do you use in your class? (Examples?)
  8. As MFL teacher how do you see your role in children learning?
  9. What do you expect your children to do to be good language learners?
  10. What do you feel you do to be a good language teacher?

11. How do you teach grammar to this class?
12. How do you use IT in your language teaching?

## Appendix 6.2

### Interview Schedule for teachers (Chinese)

#### 老师访谈计划

访谈之前需要说明的问题：

- 访谈的目的
- 保密性
- 访谈的形式和时间
- 录音（征求对方同意）

---

导入问题：

1. 您从事英语教学多长时间了？您还会其它语言吗？
2. 请您谈谈您的教学经历。

- 
1. 您在教学中如何进行听、说、读、写四项技能的教学？
  2. 您在教学中怎样平衡听、说、读、写，四项技能的教学时间？您怎样教听力和口语？
  3. 您认为听、说、读、写，四项技能哪个更重要？为什么？这会影响到您的教学吗？
  4. 您怎样在课堂上训练学生准确并且流利地运用英语的能力？
  5. 您认为培养学生使用英语的准确性重要还是流利地用英语交流的能力更重要？
  6. 您如何处理学生的语言错误（口语和写作）？
  7. 您怎样看待用英语教学？您在教学中使用多少英语教学？例如？
  8. 作为外语教师您认为自己在教学中的角色是什么？

9. 您认为在外语学习中什么样的学生是好学生？
10. 您认为什么是好的外语教师？
11. 请谈谈您怎样教语法/单词？
12. 您在教学中使用现代技术吗？使用什么？

## **Appendix 7.1**

### **Letter to Head teacher**

#### **About my research**

My name: Min Song

I am a university teacher who has been teaching English for 25 years. At present I am a PhD student at the Institute of Education of the University of Warwick.

The topic of my research: Participant perceptions about speaking and listening in modern foreign language classes in China and England, and their relationship to classroom practice

My research will include the collection of the following data:

- Teacher questionnaire
- Pupil questionnaire
- Teacher interview
- Pupil interview
- Classroom observation

**Thank you very much for your kind help and cooperation!**

## Appendix 7.2

### Letter to head teacher (Chinese)

#### 我的科研介绍

我的名字是：宋敏，我是大学英语教师，从事英语教学 25 年了。目前我在英国华威大学 (University of Warwick) 教育学院攻读博士学位。

我的论文题目：中国和英国参与者对于外语课堂中听力和口语教学和学习理念以及其对外语教学和学习的影响

该研究课题将包括以下内容：

- 教师调查问卷
- 学生调查问卷
- 教师访谈
- 学生访谈
- 听课

非常感谢您的帮助与合作！

## Appendix 8.1

### Invitation Letter

Dear friends:

My name is Min Song. I am a university teacher who has been teaching English for 25 years. At present I am a PhD student at the Institute of Education of the University of Warwick.

The topic of my research: Participant perceptions about speaking and listening in modern foreign language classes in China and England, and their relationship to classroom practice

My research will include the collection of the following data:

- Teacher questionnaire
- Pupil questionnaire
- Teacher interview
- Pupil interview
- Classroom observation

**Thank you very much for your kind help and cooperation!**

Min Song  
Institute of Education  
University of Warwick  
Coventry, United Kingdom  
CV4 7AL  
[cathy\\_song@126.com](mailto:cathy_song@126.com)  
Tel: 0044-07876234554

## Appendix 8.2

### Invitation Letter (Chinese)

亲爱的朋友：

我的名字是宋敏。我是大学英语教师，从事英语教学 25 年了。目前我在英国华威大学(University of Warwick)教育学院攻读博士。

我的论文题目：中国和英国参与者对于外语课堂中听力和口语教学和学习理念以及其对外语教学和学习的影响

该研究课题将包括以下内容：

- 教师调查问卷
- 学生调查问卷
- 教师访谈
- 学生访谈
- 听课

非常感谢您的帮助与合作！

Min Song  
Institute of Education  
University of Warwick  
Coventry, United Kingdom  
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[cathy\\_song@126.com](mailto:cathy_song@126.com)  
Tel: 0044-07876234554

## Appendix 9.1

### Informed Consent Form for Interview

The topic of my research: **Participant perceptions about speaking and listening in modern foreign language classes in China and England, and their relationship to classroom practice**

**Name of the researcher:** Min Song

**Organization:** The University of Warwick

**Email:** [cathy\\_song@126.com](mailto:cathy_song@126.com)

**Mobile:** 07876234554

**Name of the interviewee:**

Dear friend:

I am a PhD student from the University of Warwick. I am doing a research about *Participant perceptions about speaking and listening in modern foreign language classes in China and England, and their relationship to classroom practice*.

The purpose of this interview is to understand what you think about the teaching and learning of speaking and listening in modern foreign language classes. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used in research publication with your consent.

**Thank you very much for your kind help and support!**

## Appendix 9.2

### Informed Consent Form for Interview (Chinese)

我的论文题目：中国和英国参与者对于外语课堂中听力和口语教学和学习  
的理念以及其对外语教学和学习的影响

姓名：宋敏

科研机构：英国华威大学 (The University of Warwick)

电子邮箱：[cathy\\_song@126.com](mailto:cathy_song@126.com)

手机号码：0044-07876234554

接受采访者姓名：

亲爱的朋友：

我在英国华威大学教育学院攻读博士。此次访谈的目的是了解您对外语  
教学中听力、口语学习和教学的情况。您的回答仅用于我的博士论文，我将  
严格保守秘密。

非常感谢您的帮助与合作！