Communicative interaction in the English language classroom: a field study of a western teacher as change agent in two Chinese primary schools in Zhong Shan, People's Republic of China

Monika Trittibach-Andres

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Communicative Interaction in the English Language Classroom

A Field Study of a Western Teacher as Change Agent in Two Chinese Primary Schools in Zhong Shan, People’s Republic of China

A research submitted for the Master of Arts Degree in Applied Linguistics

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of a 'Change Agent' in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Chinese primary schools, and to determine whether changes were perceivable in the number and type of communicative interactions that occurred in EFL classrooms. The Department of Education of Zhong Shan, People’s Republic of China, welcomed this research as the communicative approach to teaching English is sanctioned by the authorities. However, the formality of the actual classroom in primary schools often precludes much use of this method. An investigation of the influence of a Westerner in the role of ‘Change Agent’ (teacher trainer), may provide more information on adequate EFL teacher training. As Penner (1995) pointed out, these Change Agents need to be aware of the pedagogical complexities between the traditional/formal and the communicative teaching approach in China and have had experience in EFL teaching. As such, the study was of particular relevance to both the Chinese EFL teachers and the Education Department of Zhong Shan. It was also of benefit to future decisions in EFL teacher training because it explored the situation of primary school settings and the demands on adequate input of methodology which up to now has not yet been investigated in primary settings.

Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study investigated the use of the communicative method in two Standard 4 classrooms at different schools, prior to and after an in-service and the work with a Change Agent. The researcher was the Change Agent and acted as both a participant observer and as a teacher model while team teaching with the teachers from the two classes. Interviews, questionnaires and field notes provided the qualitative data, while counts of number and type of communicative interactions before and after intervention provided the quantitative data. Data on type and number increase in communicative interaction after the researcher’s intervention ceased, suggested that the two Chinese EFL teachers were able to promote
more communicative interaction and initiated more permanent change in their EFL teaching approach. The implication for more and better communicative interaction is that the teachers of both classes planned, designed and implemented relevantly more pair and group work and material provision after the in-service. The Department of Education of the Southern District of Zhong Shan and the teachers of the research classes positively commented on the external contact with a foreign EFL teacher. Thus, direct influence of a Western teacher as Change Agent who promoted communicative interaction directly at the school premises was considered a relevant and new approach.
USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.
Certification

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any materials previously submitted for a degree or a diploma in any higher institution of higher education; and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made.

Signature:

Date: 2002
Acknowledgements

I owe special thanks to the students and teachers of the two Grade 4 classes of my observation. Their commitment in this research went far beyond normal standards. Further, I am thankful for the support from the two headmistresses and the colleagues in both schools.

I thank the English Research Officer, Mr Joseph Stone-Kwok, for his relentless help and participation in my projects.

I offer my thanks to the Education Authorities of the Southern District of Zhong Shan who granted me free and unquestioned access to their schools and supported this research.

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1. Introduction

Here I am with my lens to look at you and your actions.

As I look at you with my lens, I consider you a mirror;

I hope to see myself in you and through your teaching.

J. F. Fanselow (1988:114)

1.1. Background to This Study

In the past, foreign language programs used in Chinese classrooms have tended to be formal and follow a set format. The practice of Chinese teachers of English often focuses on the formal teaching of language, rather than on the development of communicative ability (Defeng, 1998). The teaching of English tends to be 'book-centred' and does not really foster authentic interaction. Further, in the Chinese context, teachers of English traditionally consider their pedagogical approach to be the 'Confucian perception' of teaching and learning. This has led to an emphasis on reading, rote learning and memorisation as the preferred language acquisition techniques (Zhenhui, 1996). As in other countries, this may have arisen from the fact that in teacher training, language training was often restricted to book learning (Reves & Medgyes, 1994). In China, language programs were usually introduced in secondary schools and continued at college and university level. The contemporary Chinese curriculum considers English to be a major subject and it still serves as a selection criterion in tests for entrance to prestigious universities. Additionally, teachers may not have sufficient command of oral English to conduct a more communicative approach. Related to this is the fact that, in China, English teachers are predominantly trained by non-native English-speaking instructors, who themselves may have had limited oral practice. Further, many of these teachers and teacher trainers rely on the methods they learned in their own English language training courses. They also often rely on the materials provided by their education authority as the only source of methodology (Duff & Polio, 1990). Research by
Breen (1996) cited in Oliver, Milton and Breen (1998, pp2-3) suggests that the main influences upon teachers' pedagogical principles are:

'...their own direct experience as learners, the theories of learning to which they may have (had) access during their own education as teachers and the particular situation as they define it, in which they are teaching...'

The opening of China to foreign investors has highlighted the need for more and better-trained English-speaking persons and has put the educational system under considerable stress. Thus, English language programs in State Schools of the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) are trying to meet these demands with the result that English as a foreign language (EFL) has become an important part of Chinese primary school education. One of the localities chosen for such an introduction of English at primary school level is the city of Zhong Shan. Because of the newness of this program there are insufficient EFL teachers available. Although authors such as Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill and Pincas (1978) indicated as early as the late seventies that the profession of EFL teaching was growing, this has not yet occurred to any considerable extent in Zhong Shan. Many EFL teachers in Zhong Shan have a Major in English but have had little special training in EFL teaching as such.

In 1996, the Education Authorities of Zhong Shan introduced a new English course for Grades 1-6 in primary schools. The first part of this course is based on oral expression and offers many opportunities for communicative interactions to take place. Although a communicative approach to language teaching is recommended and featured in the English course books, the education authorities are aware that the English teachers seem unable to apply them. There are several factors which may be influencing teachers to resist using the communicative approach. For example, if the teachers are not confident in the application of communicative interaction, it may be difficult to motivate their students to converse in the target language. Further, the teachers' oral
proficiency in English and their ability to engender communicative interaction are crucial to successful classroom application (Horwitz, 1996), thus, the teachers may need support and encouragement in the preparation of communicative interaction. Up to the present, the main modes of teacher training were workshops and attendance at seminars as practised in other parts of China (Ng & Tang, 1997).

A further concern, voiced by the Chinese language teachers themselves, is related to testing. They contend that if their students are required to sit for the 'National English Language Test' which is formally based on grammatical correctness, listening and reading skills, then these factors should be the main focus of their teaching (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurell, 1997).

However, effective communication in any language is a two-way, social process and needs to be exercised consistently; thus, non-English speaking students need to practise the oral language they are learning or have learnt. By this means they can gain confidence in using the foreign language orally (Allwright, 1988; Ellis, 1989; Ellis & Xien, 1999). In the present general communicative climate it seems important that assessment of oral competence be introduced to demonstrate whether learning of grammar can take place in communicative classrooms. Any such assessment should reflect a realistic communication situation. These tests are not as yet prevalent in China (Weir, 1988). However, Stone-Kwok and Trittibach (2000) in Zhong Shan have recently designed and introduced such an oral test for their students in Grade 6.

1.2. Field of This Study

This study was conducted in Zhong Shan, because this city is one of three locations in Guangdong Province, P.R.C., which offers a regular English course at primary school level. The Department of Education was eager to engage a Western-trained person who could act as a Change Agent to encourage communicative interaction and who had previously held several seminars on this topic in other non-
English speaking countries. The introduction by the Change Agent of 'activity groups' in Grade 1-6 where English is practised orally illustrates a step towards the utilisation of a communicative approach.

The field of this study was limited to the investigation of English lessons in Grade 4 in two primary schools. The main focus was on the analysis of communicative interaction between teachers and students while working with a Western Change Agent and after the collaboration ceased.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The general trend in English language programs towards a more communicative approach was introduced in Zhong Shan in 1996. Since these changes in language teaching methods are relatively new, it was not clear how they were being applied in primary schools. Because the quality and quantity of interaction provided are vital to the effective teaching of oral language skills, this factor was deemed worthy of investigation.

Prior to conducting this research I had lived in Zhong Shan for a year and my earlier observations in Chinese classrooms indicated that although recent teaching strategies were known to the teachers they were sometimes at a loss as to how to successfully implement them. Some of the pre-requisites for language acquisition which applied linguists such as Harmer (1995) recommend were sometimes missing in EFL lessons. One of these is that language learners need exposure and opportunity to use the target language for communicative purposes (Harmer, p.43, 1991).

In some classes I observed that although the students were at first motivated to learn English, they lost interest in the lessons. This may have been because many lessons consisted of repetitive, thus predictable, matrixes and included rote learning and multiple repetitions of words and phrases. If the teacher did not involve students in varied oral activities, future lessons could be perceived as less interesting.
It was thus understandable that the two top priorities suggested by the teachers and the Department of Education of Zhong Shan were those of receiving further training and experience in designing and conducting more attractive lessons. (i.e. more communicative interaction)

1.4. Significance

This study was considered to be significant because materials which had already been designed in the support of communicative methods of teaching English in China (Malcolm et al, 1988) were not yet being fully utilised as aids to classroom reality. However, many English language teachers at the primary schools in Zhong Shan saw the necessity to improve their knowledge of these methods in order to introduce and improve their communicative interactions in the classroom. Although the Department of Education of Zhong Shan has supported a more communicative approach in the introduction of English at primary school level in 1996, the effectiveness of these methods has not yet been established. Up to the present, there have been no studies available from Zhong Shan or surrounding cities which would show that these methods are being introduced and utilised at primary school level. Therefore, the Education Department of Zhong Shan readily supported this research.

1.5. Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the frequency and types of communicative interaction in two English primary school classrooms in Zhong Shan as a means of gathering baseline data on the use of the new communicative method, as well as to determine whether the interactive pattern was influenced following a period of training and support from a Change Agent. Further, the study investigated whether, by encouraging teachers to plan for such instances, more communicative interaction occurred.
1.6. Research Questions

As communicative and interactive teaching methods form the basis of the English course in the primary schools of Zhong Shan, the research questions concentrated on the types of interactions and the methodological changes which might have been implemented since 1996. The main question investigates if a Change Agent can promote more communicative interaction and thus influence changes in EFL practices. Sub questions relate to teaching practices before and after collaboration with the Change Agent. The investigation included the following questions, which assisted in the formation of the research design.

Main Question

To what extent can involvement with a Western teacher as a Change Agent promote the adoption of communicative methodology by Chinese teachers of English in the two primary schools?

Sub-Questions

a) How many and what types of communicative interaction did the teachers use prior to the Change Agent's intervention?
b) How many and what types of communicative interaction were used after the intervention of the Change Agent?
c) Where intervention results in increased use of communicative interaction was the change sustained after the departure of the Change Agent?

1.7. Definitions of Terms

The following terms were used in this study:

Change Agent: For the purpose of this study a Change Agent is the person who serves as a source of information on the target language, the methodology in question
<table>
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<th><strong>Authentic language:</strong></th>
<th>The language which naturally occurs in native conversation.</th>
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<td><strong>Target language:</strong></td>
<td>The foreign language to be acquired (English).</td>
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<td><strong>Communicative interaction:</strong></td>
<td>The involvement of a speaker and a listener who engage in exchanging an interaction in the target language. i.e. Teacher-student, student-student, student-teacher interaction.</td>
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<td><strong>Communicative approach:</strong></td>
<td>The methods utilised to motivate and encourage students to use the target language orally, using 'natural' conversation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction type:</strong></td>
<td>The description of types of interaction which take place in the classroom. i.e. Classroom management, interaction initiated by the teacher or the students.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class management:</strong></td>
<td>The methods used by the teacher in order to proceed with the lesson and to maintain discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content related interaction</strong></td>
<td>Interaction in the target language between speaker and listener which relates to the subject of the lesson.</td>
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Explicit language focus: The defined and narrow field of the target language which contains a word or a sentence and which is frequently repeated in order to drill pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary. i.e. In this study it mainly consisted of drill of individual words or phrases which the teacher repeatedly uttered (such as 'doctor') and the students had to repeat ('doctor').

1.8. Outline of This Study

The need for applicable and effective choices in communicative methodology will be reviewed in consideration of findings in similar studies and from second and foreign language methodology literature. The focus will be on practicable and acceptable interactions at primary school level. Practicability will be one of the main focus points in this study because the teachers needed to receive methodological in-put which they would be able to reproduce themselves. An in-service which was provided by the researcher/Change Agent had to demonstrate such 'easy to do' strategies. Observation in other non-English speaking countries, especially in lesser developed countries, suggested that often teachers have little access to resources other than the course book and the tape recorder (Trittibach, 1997). Therefore, the influence of the choice of methods and possible application in primary school classrooms will be highlighted by illustrating the situation which the researcher has found prior to her intervention. The discussion of the situation as found in the two schools in Zhong Shan was an indication of the nature and the extent of the problem in primary schools in the Southern District of Zhong Shan and the surrounding villages (Stone-Kwok, 1999b). Government policy on English as a foreign language in primary schools in the People's Republic of China shows that they, too, are aware of the problem of introducing more communicative interaction in the classroom. However, as the program is new in Zhong Shan, (1996), the
Department of Education was more concerned with employing a sufficient number of English teachers who were willing and able to teach at the primary school level. The provision of classrooms, course books and tapes affected the policies even more as these arrogated a huge portion of the education budget in the past years. The Department of Education in Zhong Shan decided to provide three English lessons per week in all primary school classes. However, because of the shortage of teachers in some schools, some courses only start in Grade 3.

In order to answer the research questions and to triangulate the findings, the study includes qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative research method offers an insight into the classroom situation and gives participants a means to voice their experience with teaching and learning 'English as a Foreign Language'. The quantitative research method gives an indication of how successful the Change Agent was in implementing communicative interaction.

The results are presented in six parts: Part One is concerned with the situation of the EFL classroom prior to the Change Agent. Part Two illustrates and displays data of what took place during the lessons before any involvement by the Change Agent. In this part the evaluation of questionnaires helped to achieve some answers to what the teachers and students perceived while teaching and learning English. In Part Three, teachers' comments on the in-service and its outcome are presented and some comparison was made. Part Four offers a detailed account of the in-service. In Part Five, the role of the Change Agent is described and analysed. In Part Six, the data to answer the main question of this research is displayed.

The discussion of the results that were collected after the in-service and the conclusion are added to this study. The research ends with a recommendation and an addendum which are concerned with actions that took place after this research was concluded.
2. Literature Review

This literature review is divided into four parts.

Part One introduces the development of language theories of the 1960s to the recent observations of language teaching and learning. It discusses the methodology of the communicative approach in language learning and introduces possibilities in EFL methods which may promote more communicative based interaction in the English classroom. The chapter explains several communicative language purposes and why they are favoured over other methods. It further discusses the role of the language teacher in a primary school environment and the provision of materials which support the communicative approach.

Part Two discusses certain possible difficulties in implementing the communicative approach in China and stresses the historical roots of such constraints. Further, it examines possible solutions for the specific Chinese language classroom

Part Three analyses the role of the Change Agent as described in the relevant literature. This part includes the account of this role from the private sector to its implementation in an educational environment. It also includes a debate of possible relevant changes which the Change Agent could implement in Chinese teacher training.

Part Four contains discussion of research methodology and classroom observation which are practicable and favourable in EFL environments. The discussion includes definitions and classifications which were utilised in similar studies and are thus relevant for this research.
Part One

2.1. Discussion of the Communicative Approach and Communicative Interaction

The communicative approach in foreign language teaching grew mostly out of the works of the Firthian philosophers (e.g. Hymes, 1968) who viewed language as a system of communication and argued that language was most efficient when utilised in oral interaction. In later years, exponents of the communicative approach (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Ellis, 1994; Marton, 1988; McCarthy, 1991; Widdowson & Allen, 1974; Widdowson, 1978) suggested that communicative interactions in language learning were a positive influence in the development of students' language abilities. They argued that with these methods students succeed in their acquisition of the language and are able to speak a foreign language with greater competence and less inhibition. However, the communicative method is just one of a number of foreign language teaching methodologies that emerged in the sixties and seventies. Thus, second or foreign language teaching methods (ESL/EFL teaching methods) which support the communicative approach derived from several sources and developed from different backgrounds.

A short analysis of the various sources of these foreign language teaching methods reveals the different philosophical, social and psychological backgrounds from which these methods stem:

a) The ‘cognitive’ method focused on the syntax of the language.

It observed that first language is based on the knowledge of set rules. Thus, it was argued, if the rules were understood, the learner would be able to acquire the language. However, the cognitive approach enhanced the learning of grammar rules which the student was required to learn and apply in individualised sentences. To improve the comprehension of these rules, the teacher usually used the mother tongue to explain them. Thus, interaction in
the foreign language was narrowed to grammatical correctness in sentences which were provided (Blair, 1991, p.29).

b) The 'humanistic' method stressed that foreign language learning was a process of self-realisation, thus, furthering the social functioning of language. However, based on the humanistic theory foreign language learning was realised through translation and students were requested to be able to translate sentences from their mother tongue to the foreign language (Blair, 1991, p.29).

c) The 'comprehension' method averred that language acquisition only occurs when the learner comprehends meaningfully and authentically. It emphasised the development of comprehension through listening to words or sentences and viewing of pictures. However, the learners indicated comprehension usually by pointing to a picture which comprised the word or sentence they heard. Although, listening, reading and writing skills were required, speaking skills were not demanded (Milton, 1983).

d) The 'audio-linguistic' method derived from behaviourist psychology which suggested that language learning was based on repetition and memorisation of sentences. This method enabled the student to speak in the foreign language. However, if the language sample in an interaction did not match the mechanically acquired sentences, the learners were usually unable to respond or react (Blair, 1991, p.29).

e) The 'natural' method suggested that foreign language acquisition develops in a natural manner and that younger children can be successfully trained (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). This approach demonstrated the presence of more student-directed learning tasks (Wolff, 1994) and indicated that a foreign
language may be acquired by young learners provided they also have access
to the language outside the classroom. Natural language acquisition often
takes place in second language situations where the second language is
either present in the society or in the family.

For a further discussion of the different methods see Blair (1991) or Ellis (1994).
Although, some of these different methods contained several common elements, they did
not readily support genuine communication in the foreign language. Strei (1991, pp.20-
21) concluded that many (e.g. audiolingual method) are: ‘...unnatural and mechanical
(and) serve little more than prepare the student in the manipulation of language forms
rather than in a meaningful or communicative use of language as a whole.’

During the late seventies the expression 'communicative approach' was created
and this method maintains that language is interactive and that the goal of language
acquisition is communication and that this process takes place as a ‘sharing of meaning’
(Pride & Ferrell, 1995, p.511). The communicative approach in foreign language learning
could integrate parts of the above mentioned methods. Marton (1988) and Al-Arishi
(1994) strongly recommended such integration into language teaching which would then
supply a necessary balanced variety of communicative activities. Marton (1988, p.91)
stated that: ‘Teachers who use more teaching strategies in combination with the
communicative approach present better results.’

Analysis of the communicative approach in foreign language training demonstrates that it
supports and improves the experience and expertise of the learner. Examples of the
communicative approach in various combinations of interaction between learners are
displayed and implemented in many of the newer course books for EFL teaching.
Although, of course, these course books tend to focus on grammar, vocabulary training
and on other language skills, they mainly support language learning by utilising the
communicative approach. Two examples of such successful implementation of research-
based material development are worthy of mentioning. The procedures and exercises used in their oral practice of language instruction and testing reflect the outcomes of research in this field; the course books mentioned below were developed by teacher trainers.

Firstly, 'Focus on Proficiency', O'Connell (1995) includes sections which reflect the latest development in materials and procedures that support communicative interaction, thus are based on the communicative approach. Although, designed for adult learners and for an examination situation (Cambridge Proficiency), the course book includes maps, plans, original advertisements, pictures, cartoons and photographs of actions or original sites. These support discussion, description and opinion finding in a communicative manner.

Secondly, 'Non-stop English', Ramsey (1993) a Swiss secondary course book includes, tasks such as 'dialogue-creation' where the students create and combine their own dialogues according to a set objective. For example, the topic 'travelling abroad' includes dialogues with the flight attendant and the customs officer. Although, the topic is provided for, the students may chose their own questions and answers and practise a variation of dialogue outcomes.

These examples indicate that successful implementation of the communicative approach in EFL lessons should provide practice of skills and a high proportion of authentic language use and preferably contain genuine communication tasks, thus support the significance of the oral component in the classroom. Similar ideas of a combination of several methods are displayed and discussed by Ur and Wright (1992). In their introduction Ur and Wright (1992) argued that activities which support communicative interaction should be provided in lessons which traditionally favour and include other methods:

'When preparing your lesson, you start by planning the main items you want to include: the teaching of a new grammar point, for example, or a grammar exercise,
or the reading of a text. But once you have prepared the main components of your lesson, and made sure it is learning-rich, varied and interesting, you may find you still need some extra ingredients to make it into a smooth, integrated unit.‘ (Ur & Wright, 1992, p.x)

Ur and Wright (1992, p.xi) suggested that these ingredients could be activities in which the students ‘continue to practise, learn, increase knowledge and improve thinking’ in the foreign language. From the above discussions, it can be argued that the communicative approach should include activities which support the oral performance in a foreign language, which then in turn, supports other skills in this language. A further support of this contention is found in Harmer (1991, p.42) who stated that: ‘...the job of the teacher is that of ensuring that the students get a variety of activities which fosters acquisition and which fosters learning’.

These activities foster learning in an environment where different communicative actions pre-dominate over formal, tightly controlled language presentations. A balanced communicative approach thus includes social aspects and is highly dependent on the ability of the teacher to adapt the program to engage the students in communicative interaction.

The social aspect of the communicative approach includes oral exchanges which draw on the linguistic resources of the learner who shares them with other learners in ‘an enjoyable and motivating way’ (O’Connell, 1995, p.4). Learning a foreign language by including the communicative approach, is not the result of mere teacher instructions; it is rather the result of participation in a meaningful setting. How to include participation of students and how to prepare for a meaningful interaction in the language classroom, will be the aim of the following discussion.
In order to assist and support teachers in their attempts to implement more communicative interaction, an understanding of the following concepts of Celce-Murcia (1991, p. 8) proved helpful:

a) 'The goal of language teaching is to develop the ability of the learner to communicate in the target language.'

b) 'The content of a language course should include semantic notions and social functions, not only linguistic structures.'

c) 'The classroom materials and activities should be authentic to reflect real-life situations.'

d) 'Skills need to be integrated into the activities.'

e) 'The teacher's role is primarily to facilitate communication.'

f) 'The teacher should be able to use the target language fluently and appropriately.'

When such prerequisites are met, language learners become more fully involved in meaningful communicative interaction (Brumfit, 1984; McCarthy, 1991). The present discussion focuses on communicative interaction and how it can be successfully implemented in the EFL classroom. If language serves communication, it must include several functions in connection with activities. Such functions enable the students to participate in communicative activities such as greetings and partings, information seeking and giving. As mentioned above, these communicative activities include partners, thus, are interpersonal and mostly highly social. A consideration of such functions may be helpful in analysing different types of speaking.

In his research, Nunan (1991, p.40) viewed these functions from the perspective of the producer rather than the receiver. This contention might support a position in the EFL classroom in which the teacher's role is usually that of the producer while the
student's role is that of the receiver. However, recent research suggested that the role of
the producer is more demanding and thus needs to be practised by the student
(McCarthy, 1991). The provision for communicative activities or inter-personal exchange
is a difficult task for EFL teachers in a foreign language situation and teachers may need
some practical information on how to support such communicative interaction. Nunan
(1991) suggested that oral interaction display characteristic terms and routines. He
(1991, p.40) maintained that they are: ‘...conventional and therefore predictable.’
Research in the communicative approach suggested that such predictable functions
could be practised in EFL lessons. This point of view maintains that the teacher should
consider ‘domains’ in which these functions appear and can be introduced. These
domains could be points of interest and they should be an integral part of the course
(Kress, 1989). In their early childhood curriculum Schiller and Hastings (1998) presented
such domains in activities and topics which occur naturally in child development, and
they included communication based on the inquisitive nature of younger children. For
beginners and young learners McCarthy (1991) suggested, the following different types
of communicative interaction which are worthy of consideration and offer practical help
for EFL teachers:

a) ‘Classroom encounters’ which include communicative interaction such as
asking for someone’s name, expressing favourite items or subjects, asking for
objects occurring in a school setting and requesting help or offering solutions.
The students are exposed to the foreign language, motivated to utilise it and
have the opportunity to communicate in it with other students.

b) ‘Family descriptions’ which include and practise the necessary vocabulary; but
also offer communicative interaction such as finding out about someone’s
grandparents, parents, siblings, uncle and aunt. The students learn to speak
about their family and they learn to inquire about other students’ families.
c) 'Language in action' which includes activities such as calculations, learning of verbs. Mathematical problem-solving in the foreign language for example offers the students the possibility to communicate together. Communicative activities such as measuring of items or acting out of verbs support foreign language use. The students are engaged in activities were the foreign language mainly serves in reaching a result or finding a solution.

d) 'Casual conversations' which include meaningful exchange of greetings and other socially based conversation. As the students learn how to 'socialize' in the foreign language they are involved in communicative activities such as saying 'hello' or 'goodbye' in different settings, formal or less formal. They are supported in their ability to adapt to certain situations. They learn to introduce someone or inquire about someone's health. Such communicative activities are part of casual conversation.

e) 'Direction and organization of people' which includes activities such as giving orders, offering help in finding streets or shops. The students can be involved in activities which include a whole group, giving directions such as 'go straight', 'go left', 'go right'. Communication appears in a setting where one student has the information that others need.

f) 'Service encounters' which include communicative tasks where the students are asked to imagine scenes for example in a restaurant, a shop, at the dentist or doctor, and to act them out. Communication occurs in role-plays and is dependent on the students' ability to act. However, these service encounters are highly 'communicative' and support interaction in the foreign language.
g) 'Telephone calls' which include communicative interaction that occurs usually in pairs: the caller and the receiver. The conversation follows set patterns and includes different openings and endings. 'Turn-taking' between the caller and the receiver is practised. Each student has to find out about when he or she is requested to 'react' to the partner. The students create their own standard sentences such as 'This is Lio, can I speak to Ling Ling?', or, 'Sorry, wrong number'; and thus are actively involved in dialogue creation and language practice.

(Examples in accordance with McCarthy, 1991, pp.118-119)

The above suggestions indicate that the teacher has to consider that the knowledge of the foreign language grows with the child as an active part of thinking and speaking and that, as Lord (1994, p.16) stated it enables the student to 'go] out towards the other'. McCarthy (1991) stated that language teachers have to rely on their intuition to decide what is useful to practise with younger learners. However, the main consideration of teaching a foreign language to younger students, is the aspect that their most immediate medium, also in their mother tongue is the spoken language; and that this language connects them to their environment. Thus, learning to speak in the foreign language is an important objective in foreign language teaching that enables the students to connect their environment to the foreign language and to communicate with it and in it. Ellis and Xien (1999, p.298) stated that: 'Interaction has to be a totality ..., in which learning is socially constructed. Output does not occur in a vacuum – it occurs as a response to input and the opportunity to interact.'

In the primary school setting, communicative interaction can be understood as a method of enabling the students to speak in a foreign language about their interests. It includes a partnership between speaker and listener. Applied in various activities which are based in social behaviour, it serves functions which normally occur in the mother
tongue too and are part of the learners' environment. Linder (1999, p.34) maintained that communicative interactions should therefore be designed as an 'input of facts' from the world outside. How such input of facts could be implemented will be discussed in the next section.

2.2. Communicative Methodology in Primary Schools

The nature of the younger learner necessitates some adjustments, not only in the content of the units of learning which needs for example adaptation to the level of the primary student; but also in the teaching techniques. Rivers (1981, p.166), for example, made the following comments on the teaching of younger students:

a) ‘Their limited span of attention suggests shorter lessons.’

b) ‘Their love of mime and imitation show that younger students are less inhibited.’

c) ‘Their inquisitive nature supports the introduction of topics which do not occur in the textbook.’

d) ‘Their love of varied social activities enhances communicative learning.’

Thus, Rivers' recommendations suggested that communicative methodology, which supports interaction, needed to be considered when providing lessons for younger students. McCarthy (1991, p.121) also observed that native speakers at primary level already elaborate their speech, which indicates that native speaking students are able to design their sentences in greater detail and with more choice of vocabulary. Such sentences may occur to be longer and more complicated. Non-native speakers at the beginning of language acquisition do not always have the linguistic ability to do this in the target language and specially, young learners will probably rely on simpler sentence construction and on language which contains only one meaning. The 'Content-Driven Principle' supports the teacher in such endeavours (i.e. In order to teach students about
farm animals the teacher would show pictures and produce sounds of farm animals and
discuss their utility for people, rather than just teach vocabulary and grammar in
isolation). In their research on the 'Content-Driven Principle' (Jones, Tinzmann, Friedman
& Butler Walker, 1999, p. 76) recommended the following:

'One advantage of the content-driven principle of skills instruction is that the skills
are selected to help understand meaning. (...) The teacher selects the skill
according to its appropriateness for a given content or task.'

Therefore, adjustment from the teacher in task selection, sentence length and semantics
is necessary, especially at primary school level.

In the following discussion I focus on methods which support foreign language
acquisition in an active manner as mentioned above and with the necessary adjustments
for younger learners. Littlewood (1999) stated that communicative methodology should
be recognised as a vital target-based teaching approach. The teacher thus defines the
target or objective of the lesson and plans and provides communicative activities
according to this objective. This includes the use of materials which favour the learner's
autonomy (Lu, 1998). This points towards the fact that, if the learners are involved in
activities where they learn the foreign language independent of the teacher's direct
engagement and with the help of authentic materials, they will have more freedom of
choice in participating in an interaction. Such language training preferably takes place in
activity-groups or pair work. These groups might include students with different learning
abilities or interests. Such an activity group might support the slower learner and engage
and encourage the faster learner. One child has the opportunity to listen and observe
before being directly involved and the other is able to set examples and offer help. This
method also supports social behaviour among students. From the above discussion the
conclusion may be drawn that EFL teachers may need to be encouraged to draw on
sources other than just the course book and that they should include everyday items or
'realia'. For example, Linder (1999, p.34) suggested the utilisation of materials such as 'films', 'music' and 'fashion magazines' which would offer the opportunity for more attractive interaction. This type of interaction thus connects the students to the world outside the classroom and helps the interaction to be more original (Gersten, Baker & Unok, 1999). In his research McCarthy (1991, p.32) suggested that the teacher should create systematic 'speaking skills' programmes and design activities which generate communicative interaction. These activities should preferably resemble naturally occurring speech. McCarthy remarked (1991, p.144-145) that: 'The feeling that one is engaged in an authentic activity is important to the learner.' A reason for supporting authentic activities is the fact that the young learners might face similar activities in the foreign language at a later stage and these activities will most probably take place outside the classroom. Conditioning and preparing the learner for such situations is an important task for EFL teachers.

Further, for students who have very little opportunity to speak the foreign language outside the EFL lessons the above suggestions are significant, too. The teacher at primary school level thus serves as the provider of various communicative activities which could take place outside the classroom.

Learning a second language through interaction seems more desirable by a learner provided that this interaction contains social functions (Ellis, 1999). Further, effects of the positive influence of communicative interaction were shown by reports and analyses of educational setting and instructor/peer type interaction (Clark, 1999; Malcolm & Malcolm, 1988; Oxford, 1996). These researchers favour language learning in an environment where the learners have to communicate together in order to reach an objective. An analysis of their views shows that implicit in this definition is the notion of 'transmission of information' because these learners need to share and exchange facts. An example of information transmission can be a 'mini-research' where one group of students has to
find information by asking another group of students or the peer/instructor. Teachers who are involved in such tasks might often find themselves in different roles such as the ‘instructor’ or the ‘entertainer’. These roles are sometimes very demanding and might not be readily adapted because they are not a part of the teacher’s personality. Possible roles that EFL teachers might play in an EFL lesson are discussed below.

There are several different roles for EFL-teachers which promote communicative interaction. One of the most favoured ones is that of the ‘controller’. This role also corresponds to the understanding of many traditional teaching methods (i.e. Chinese). Although the controller has the advantage of being in charge of the classroom, there are several features which are not so desirable. For example, the teacher has not only control over what the learners do, but also over what they say. However, in certain stages of the lesson, it may be of advantage to use the role of the controller to ensure that tasks are clearly understood. An analysis of the following teacher roles described by Harmer (1991) reveal their suitability for the primary school settings. Harmer (1991) considered these roles to be worthy of introduction to EFL-teachers.

a) The role of ‘organizer of communicative interaction’ is described by Harmer (1991, p.239) as being ‘one of the most important and difficult.’ It indicates that many activities not only depend on good organization but on the clear instructions from the teacher. Activities which include group or pair work need to be designed and planned in advance and must be connected to the lesson and in accordance with the language level of the students. If the instructions are too complicated the learners fail to understand what they should practise and the exercise might end in de-motivation of the teacher and the students.

b) The role of the ‘prompter’ encourages students to participate and suggests how they should proceed. This role entails the teacher to be in constant contact with the students while they are engaged in an activity. An example of
a teacher in a 'prompter' role is, while students are involved in group work, the
'prompter' walks through the classroom and observes the weaker students.
The teacher then concentrates on their performance and prompts and
encourages them to participate. Shy students who would not participate in a
group because they are intimidated by apt students might be more inclined to
'open up' to the teacher. Mistakes can also be individually attended to and
corrected by the 'prompter'.

c) In the role of 'assessor' the teacher comments on the student's performance
and promotes and directs accurate language use. The teacher utilises this
role mainly in giving individual feedback when he or she addresses a
student's problem with the foreign language. Since these problems can arise
from different sources of difficulties the teacher needs to adapt the feedback
to the situation, the individual and the level of the learner. The assessment of
a slower learner can be different to that of a more advanced one.

d) The role of 'participant' simulates natural language use by performing different
scenes or actions. Some teachers do not feel comfortable acting in front of a
class. Therefore, the introduction of this role is delicate. Another point of
cautions is the fact that in many cultures, teachers are not used to acting out
this role and it is necessary to be aware of this fact when introducing it.
However, in an in-service situation there might be a possibility to introduce,
demonstrate and practise this role.

(Examples in accordance with Harmer, 1991, pp. 235-242)

The relationship between teacher role and communicative interaction can be seen as
giving the students an environment where they are able to practise certain language
activities. By changing the role the teacher prepares the students for the world outside
the classroom, where language by nature is not tied to a set area or behaviour. Also, the
teacher retains the prerogative to intervene and correct the language used. However, at the early stages of language learning the teacher will be more involved in language practice than in real communicative interaction. One of the language teachers of adults interviewed by Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver and Thwaite (1998, p.62) referred to the role of a language teacher as that of an 'entertainer, performer and motivator'; roles which are generally viewed as demanding by many EFL teachers. Taking on different roles involves organisational change in lesson planning and the provision of supplementary materials (McCarthy, 1991, pp.123-124). Lamie (1999) further suggested introducing role changes in small steps from short isolated activities, which foster communication, to entire lessons which do not involve the actual textbook at all. Thus, for pedagogical reasons and for the benefit of the students' learning, the above points can be regarded as essential components of the methodology being introduced at the primary school level in an interactive classroom.

Materials have played important roles in most language teaching methods; however, in the communicative approach materials are an essential resource for the purpose of interaction. As the current study included an in-service, the discussion, development and provision of teaching materials were an important part of the work and the ideas of Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.25) and Ur and Wright (1992) were included in the lesson provisions. The following criteria are considered important in choosing instructional materials which favour functional communicative interaction.

a) 'Materials which focus on communicative abilities.' These materials are designed to further negotiation and language expression. In a primary school setting they can also serve as vocabulary training. Such materials could be the different items in a classroom. For example, the students may have to practice vocabulary such as pen, pencil, ruler, eraser and pencil box. In a
communicative approach the real items are displayed on the desks and students are involved in communicative interaction by asking each other for these items:

'May I have the pencil, please?'
'Here you are.'
'Thank you.'

b) Materials which focus on interesting exchanges of information.' These materials are designed to find out differences or similarities in an interactive manner. For example, in a lesson where the topic is 'family members'. The utilisation of communicative interaction could be that the students first write a questionnaire. The questionnaire could include sentences like:

'Do you have brothers?' 'If yes, how many?'
'Do you have sisters?' 'If yes, how many?'
'Do you have uncles?' 'If yes, how many?'
'Do you have aunts?' 'If yes, how many?'

In pairs the students are then involved in a communicative interaction which at the end could serve as a report. For example, one student would say:

'Gregory has one sister and no brothers.'
'He has three uncles and three aunts.'

In view of discussions above, such material does not focus on one skill or method only. The above task involves writing, communication and review and can easily be performed by primary school students.

c) 'Materials which involve different kinds of text, media and pictures.' These materials can be found in a variety of items such as newspapers, magazines, on tapes or on CDs. There is little limitation in finding such materials for EFL
teaching purposes. For example, if the objective of a lesson is a 'visit to the restaurant', the teacher and the students collect pictures of food. In group-work the students collect pictures of food. In group-work the students design a menu for their restaurant and in role-plays they practice the ordering of food. (Examples in accordance with Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p.25)

As the above list indicates, material provision at the primary school level should consider the needs of the learners, preferably include entertainment and reflect the world outside the classroom (Nunan, 1989a). The introduction of varied material applications and adaptations that favour communicative interaction are considered important aspects in language teaching. However, in less developed countries or in countries were material provision is difficult, such notions might be less obvious. In many such EFL classrooms the only resources are the textbook and the blackboard. So, expectations that teachers will use materials which support communicative methods, may be hampered by a lack of resources. Challenging such constraints is the suggestion from Ur and Wright (1992, p.x-xi) who maintained that: ‘...the activities should demand a minimum of preparation before the lesson.’

Many of the activities suggested in their book ‘Five-Minute Activities’ (Ur & Wright, 1992) are based on materials such as the blackboard, textbooks, sheets of paper and pictures from magazines. Further, in their advice for teachers they suggested (Ur & Wright, 1992, p.xi) that:

‘In order to explain the organisation of an activity, you will usually have to give an example of what is to be done. However, once the activity is clear, it is advantageous if the students or a student can take over the teacher’s role.’

The above suggestions and advice indicate that material provision does not necessitate a huge budget nor time consuming search and design. Important for communicative activities, which are supported by materials, is that the teacher does not just provide
mere time-fillers to engage the students by doing something relatively futile. In the communicative approach materials must support communication in a meaningful mode. This can support the motivation of students to acquire a foreign language. In the following section the function of motivation and motivational factors in language learning will be discussed in more detail.

2.3. The Function of Motivation in Foreign Language Acquisition

The successful learning of a foreign language is closely linked to the motivation of the learner. Further, language learners are generally affected by two motivational forces, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Although there is some contention about the definitions of these terms (Ellis, 1994), in this study Harmer’s (1991) understanding of the terms are used.

1. Intrinsic motivation, is connected to internal factors that influence the students as they learn a foreign language.

2. Extrinsic motivation, which derives from the situation outside the classroom, and can be divided into two major types: ‘Integrative Motivation’ in which the learner wishes to integrate into the foreign culture and ‘Instrumental Motivation’ in which the student can foresee some reward or gain, such as better employment possibilities.

What happens in the classroom is of importance in determining the students’ attitude to the target language. Harmer (1991, pp.4-6) states that: ‘We can consider factors affecting intrinsic motivation under the headings of physical conditions, method, the teacher and success.’ Thus, intrinsic motivation plays a vital part in the students’ success or failure in oral language performance. Several arguments for intrinsic motivation have already been discussed in this chapter. However, according to Malcolm
Intrinsic motivational factors for students to learn the foreign language can be summarised as following:

a) 'Condition for learning.' The teacher realises that learning of language as a means of communication includes development of the individual. The learner is encouraged to experiment with the language and to have a choice of responses. The students learn to cope with changes in interaction and meaning.

b) 'Approach the learner.' The teacher realises that 'approach' consists of various means. These means or methods contain:
   - A combination of different skills.
   - An involvement with different speakers as they interact together.
   - Language, which contains functions which occur in everyday situations.
   - Materials which are attractive and are supportive of learning.

c) 'Approach the language.' The teacher realises that his or her approach to language needs to be focused on the practicability in the world outside the classroom. The learner develops language fluency while the teacher gives varying attention to accuracy.

d) 'Selection of language input.' The teacher realises that the appropriate level, length and speed are vital for the learner. The teacher is concerned with the gradation of the language input. Input can be communicative tasks which are graded in order of the level and competence of the language learner.

(In accordance with Malcolm & Malcolm, 1988, p.7)

Further, observations by Shim (1993) indicated the existence of sensitive periods for foreign language acquisition and that these periods could influence the motivation and
thus language proficiency of the child. My earlier observations in a primary school in Sri Lanka revealed that the students in Grades 1-4 were less inhibited in their oral performances, i.e. role-plays, interviews and enquiries. However, observations in the same school in Grades 5 and 6 indicated that these sensitive periods started to influence the students' attitude towards such interaction. Therefore, the conditioning and exercising of students to confidently use the target language in interaction at an early stage seems to be important.

Extrinsic motivation can vary and is directly dependent on the students' environment. Teaching English as a foreign language in European countries might be different to teaching English in Asian countries. Oxford (1996) who maintained that language learning strategies vary around the world and might influence efficient foreign language acquisition mentioned such consideration of extrinsic motivation. Critics of the communicative approach have argued that it underestimates the difference between the mother tongue and the target language and that these differences might confuse, frustrate and thus de-motivate learners. In defence of the communicative approach the 'Communicative English for Chinese Learners' (Teacher's Handbook, Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Languages, 1987, p.v) contains the following argument: 'It is through communicating that one learns to communicate.'

The presence of the target language outside the classroom is another point of extrinsic motivation. As mentioned before, in Europe English is present in many different forms. For example, in Switzerland, English is omni-present and spoken in everyday situations by tourists, in songs, in advertisements and in the media. Therefore, Swiss students of English are familiar with the language before they enter school and to learn it is viewed as necessary, even inevitable. The situation in Asian countries can be different because English may not readily be a part of everyday life and contact with English speakers can be problematic. Some large cities in China do have well established English corners,
where pupils of the English language may go on the weekend to practise their oral English with others who speak English. However, the presence of English corners is not widespread and this institution might not be attractive for primary school students.

Students in China depend on the provisions of the teacher to prepare them to be competent when the situation in the world outside the classroom arises. At present, in China, the most extrinsic motivating force for learning English is the outlook for better employment after graduation. For this reason, older students might be highly motivated to learning English but the primary school students might have less such extrinsic motivation. Therefore, at primary school level intrinsic motivation is more important and younger learners need to have an 'enjoyable' introduction to the target language in order to encourage them to be successful, persistent and consistent learners in their later education. In Part Two, I analyse research which is concerned with problems in intrinsic motivation and constraints of the communicative approach presently observed in China.

Part Two

2.4. Constraints in Teaching and Learning of the Communicative Approach in China

Reports and research on how students in Chinese primary school learn the English language are not readily available. One major reason is that up to the present, English as a subject has been taught mainly at secondary and tertiary level. As in some other countries which were recently faced with the introduction of English at primary school level (i.e. Switzerland), there is not much evidence that at primary school level in China research findings are applied in the area of ESL/EFL teaching (Crookes & Arakaki, 1999). This might explain the gap, which existed between the theories of communicative methodology in China and the activities that actually occurred in the classroom (Li, 1984, p.12). In Chinese EFL-teaching, communication mainly reflected written forms and content from the textbook that was then practised (Carter & McCarthy, 1998). Carter and McCarthy (1998) also referred to this phenomenon as 'speaking the written grammar'.

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This indicated that the language used within the classroom was not very suitable for purposes outside (Valdes, 1998) and that, restricted by the large classes, the individual student did not have enough opportunities to participate equally in the ongoing interactions. Therefore, in their later career, the students are often unable to take an active part in conversing in the target language in the 'real' world (Hams, 1994). In his research, Harmer (1991, p.50) commented that communicative methods should include a clear purpose, and focus firstly 'on content, not on form'. Li supported this contention and stated that: 'Communicative competence does not mean the ability just to utter words or sentences. It involves the ability to react mentally as well as verbally in communication situations' (1984, p.3).

However, as the methods observed in the Chinese classrooms were often exclusively controlled by the teacher and did not include real-life situations as suggested above, there might be some other constraints impairing EFL methodology. It is pertinent, therefore to address the reason why such methods are not often used in Chinese language teaching. To be able to analyse and understand the situation in EFL classrooms in China it is important to understand the Confucian philosophy which influenced and still influences most activities in the Chinese classrooms. The main tenet of Confucianism is that of 'obedience'. When young, one has to obey the father or older brother, the wife obeys the husband or son, the ordinary man obeys the minister and the minister obeys the king. This of course implies that students are obedient at school.

Further, the traditional Chinese way of learning is still influenced by Confucian sayings which for example contended that: 'The scholar learns with sincerity' and that he follows the teacher's 'principles' by attentively listening to them. The ideal Confucian teacher for children was described and distinguished by the following attributes:

'The generosity of mind'
'The kindness and mild integrity'
'Respectful bearing'

'Carefulness'

'Freedom from talkativeness'

(The sayings of Confucius, Graham Brash, pp.31-37, 1999)

This suggested that the teachers were free from any flaws and students approached them with due respect. Learning took place by listening to the master and only occasionally the student was allowed or requested to ask questions which the 'master' then willingly answered. Younger children first had to learn to listen and to be quiet when the teacher spoke only later did serious learning take place. Research analysis in China revealed four main constraints in applying the communicative approach and all four might still be related to the Confucian views of learning and teaching (Chen, 1987, p.10; Grabe & McMahon, 1981, p.208).

The first constraint is that of the attitude towards learning a language. The language learning methods utilised in the mother tongue and therefore also in foreign language training, do not favour a communicative approach but rather utilise the 'analysing model'. In the Confucian approach the scholar was asked to recite the master's text and analyse its meaning. This indicates that language is viewed as text and texts are exhaustively analysed. In today's Chinese classrooms language is usually still predominantly observed as text. In the subject 'Chinese', quite often these texts are classical or traditional and the students are able to recite them by heart and explain their meaning. By using this approach the learning is judged to be successful and teachers argue that the students are able to talk since they are able to recite and convey their interpretation. Observations in the design and preparation of new EFL teaching materials for China by Malcolm and Malcolm revealed that: 'The open-endedness of the communicative approach would seem to take away the basis of the learner's confidence that he has learned anything' (1988, p.3).
A second point of constraint is that of practical objection. Confucian scholars had to pass strict examinations in order to reach the next step in their education. A master thus had passed all necessary assessments to reach the highest level. Up to the present, students are still very much concerned to pass exams. However, the nation-wide tests in Grade 6 do not yet include oral testing in English and therefore up to now, communicative methodology was not highly demanded (Bachmann, 1990; Malcolm & Malcolm, 1988). This problem has supported teachers in focusing on language which they assumed was going to be tested. Research by Resnik and Resnik (1992) on the nature of educational reform goals in connection with standardised tests in the United States of America has indicated that such tests are 'incompatible' with the demands of the practice.

A third point of constraint is that of the role of the teacher. In Confucian philosophy the 'master spoke, the scholar listened'. The teacher in China is still viewed as the one who conveys knowledge and solves problems. Therefore, the traditional way of teaching and the traditional role of the teacher might prevent the meeting of present students' needs. Teachers are also supposed to be 'sincere' and this attitude may prevent them from including more entertaining methods. Classroom observations by Malcolm and Malcolm in China revealed that: 'Social relations in the classroom are stiff and formal because this is considered respectful classroom behaviour' (1988, p.2).

Penner (1995, pp.4-14) described the above arguments and cautiously solicited that: 'Because these principles of learning permeate the entire Chinese education system, is it reasonable and even ethical to expect teachers and students to change their teaching/learning beliefs for only one subject area'?

However, in China the communicative approach to foreign language teaching and learning is recommended. Campbell and Zhao mentioned that: ‘...[although] professional literature in China reveals a clear understanding of the communicative approach, the importance of viewing communication as the organizing principle of foreign language,
instruction continues to exist in the professional literature to a far greater extent than in actual practice' (1993, p.4).

A fourth point of constraint mentioned by Penner (1995) was that of the teacher's own proficiency in English. She stated that: 'Many teachers were teaching to the limits of their knowledge of English, so it was very threatening to use methods that allowed for unpredictability, such as student questions' (1995, p.6).

The communicative approach further assumes that the students are willing to be active partners in interactions. While the traditional approach allows them to be passive, the communicative approach demands that they take part and carry some responsibility for their learning (Penner, 1995, p.7). Further, she mentioned from her own experience that: '...Chinese students accept different roles and methods from foreign teachers more easily than from Chinese teachers' (1995, p.7).

However, Penner's article considered tertiary and secondary students and the above difficulties may not arise in a primary school environment. Penner (1995, pp.10-12) mentioned a variety of other reservations about Chinese teachers changing their teaching approach. These included the following:

a) Lack of target language cultural knowledge.

b) Inexperience with creating materials.

c) Complaints from other colleagues about the 'noise'.

d) Space availability in the classrooms.

e) Time limitation which does not allow group work and rearrangement of the classroom.

Because of the discrepancy in educational theories researchers and educators have been promoting a 'Chinese' approach to implementing more communicative methods (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Wang, 1986; Yu, 1984). Such an approach would then include the expertise of a foreign or local Change Agent who would work with one teacher or a
group of teachers together to achieve a ‘user-friendly’ result. Fullan explained this possible result as a: ‘...result of adaptations and decisions made by users as they work with the particular new policies and programs’ (1991, p.38).

At the same time Cumming warned that: ‘The greatest gap now confronting foreign language educators in China appears to be the absence of applied research to inform program decision-making’ (1987, p.216).

This study will contribute to the assessment of possibilities for the adaptations of change in China. Patrie and Daume (1980, p.394) proposed that pedagogical change agents should contribute to EFL methodology in China. A possibility for a solution to the above constraints were also offered by Maley (1982, p.15) who recommended co-operation between Chinese and Western teachers and maintained that such co-operation would be ‘an excellent way of breaking down barriers’.

Part Three

2.5. The Role of the 'Change Agent'

The expression of ‘Change Agent’ was initially used in the management sector where firms were seeking help from an outside source. Usually, the managers were sent to renowned Universities in order to receive further education on the latest developments in management skills. Often, these university courses were not designed to satisfy the individual needs of mature managers and the new knowledge acquired at university was not readily applied back at the work place. Therefore, the desired change in the management of firms did not eventuate, as the managers often did not identify their personal situation with the case studies analysed at university. Research from the industrial sector (Argyris, 1972, p.203) described the following problem of early management education:

'Most organisations send their executives to university executive programs ,..., usually designed following the concept of the university. (...) I would like to point out that there
may be a discrepancy between the characteristics of university education and the needs of the matrix organisation.'

The discrepancy mainly occurred because at that time the participant managers were not able to discuss their individual needs, and thus, failed to implement a change once back at their usual positions. The problem could be described as a discrepancy between 'theory and practice'. The idea to change such a discrepancy and to implement more practical education in the management sector was viewed as very demanding as Bennis claimed that: 'It is a complex social process which involves ..., collaborative relationship between managers and scientists to improve performance' (1966, p.247).

Some similar contentions and results are sometimes voiced by teachers who attend seminars or teacher training courses at university as they remark that the courses do not address their particular classroom needs or environment (Malcolm & Malcolm, 1988). Therefore, some researchers (Brown, Campione, Webber & McGilly, 1992, p.192) proposed model teaching that could provide an adequate training situation for teachers.

In a situation where a new approach in EFL teaching is required, such as in China, a platform on which the teachers could exercise newer methodology might be desirable. Brown, Campione, Webber and McGilly (1992, p.192) suggested that: 'The ideal implementation site ..., would be model teaching schools.'

However, such training schools may not be practical in some developing countries and more so are viewed as expensive. On the other hand the use of foreign teachers involved in Chinese classrooms and in curriculum design has taken place long ago. After the modernisation program of China in 1979 the Ministry of Education, now the State Education Commission has launched various EFL teacher-training projects. Teacher training was a point of discussion at the 15th Congress of the Communist Party in Beijing, where China's future through 'revitalisation of science and education' was promoted (Press Conference Paper, 1999). However, up to now, projects which focused on teacher
training were usually aimed at secondary and college educators and did not include primary school teachers to be instructed at their school premises (Penner, 1995). In general, the introduction of Change Agents is considered to be a very successful adjunct to EFL teacher training but not many reports from the primary school level are available. Penner (1995) described the role of the Change Agent as a person who is willing to work on an amalgam, which is acceptable to the teachers, and adaptable to the Chinese classroom. She (1995, p.14) recommended that the Change Agent should support and 'respect' the Chinese teacher and not purely act in a prescriptive way. She stated that: 'Nurturing a relationship based on reciprocal rather than on unidirectional expertise will prove to be most effective in effecting pedagogical change' (1995, p.14).

Penner (1995) was concerned about the general attitude of educators in China who viewed the discrepancy between the classroom reality and the promoted communicative approach as a matter of 'classical-traditional' against 'modern' debate. Her article on 'Change and Conflict' (1995) examined how beliefs and methods restrict pedagogical change in China. Penner (1995, p.1) cautioned foreign and Chinese teacher trainers to assume that: '...the innovation presented to the Chinese English teachers would manifest itself in the teacher's own classroom.'

In support of the need for facilitators or Change Agents in introducing the new foreign language teaching methods Ellis (1996) referred to this as the role of the 'cultural mediator'. Penner (1995, p.14) supported the cultural value of a Change Agent and stated that: '...the most important element in this pedagogical change debate is that all the participants clarify their own cultural learning and teaching assumptions, as understanding another culture can really only occur when people understand their own.'

From the research which is available on Change Agents it is suggested that the person involved in such teacher training should not only be a professional in his or her calling but should be equally educated in psychology and the host culture. Below is an outline of
some of the most important pre-requisites and characteristics of a successful Change Agent:

a) An awareness of the pedagogical complexities of the traditional teaching methods used at the school of her/his mission.

b) A regard for, and the understanding of, different socio-cultural environments and requirement for the introduction and positioning of the foreign language in the country of mission.

c) A willingness to strive for an amalgam which is acceptable to the authorities, principals and the teachers something which might not always be the ideal according to Change Agent beliefs.

d.) A willingness to work for a long enough period of time at the foreign or local school to implement change.

(Stone-Kwok & Trittibach, 2001)

At some locations such a Change Agent might not be available. However, they might be recruited from the established body of personnel and teacher trainers working at local primary schools or at local universities. Instead of teaching within the borders of their classrooms and schools only, these educators would have to give support and attend to the needs of a primary school and its teachers. This could additionally serve as a reward for teachers who are willing to change their career.

Change Agents also have to develop a regular need for change and establish an exchange of information from the theory to the teacher. Penner (1995, p.14) suggested that ‘sharing the process of change with experts of the host culture’ may implement a more lasting change. Exchange of insights on the use of methods and their results, thus, should promote a professional and stable relationship with the teachers involved. Penner (1995, p. 14) stated that: ‘Explaining the teaching and learning assumptions underlying
teaching activities will contribute further to the learners' (teachers') understanding of their learning process.'

In Part Four, I will discuss research methods which support the analysis of teachers' performance in the classroom and examine the methods which they use. These research methods are described as practicable for finding relevant answers to the influence of a Change Agent.

Part Four

2.6. Practical Methods of Classroom Observation and Analysis

This section contains two main topics, the qualitative research method and the quantitative research method:

The qualitative research method is firstly concerned with 'how and why' activities take place in the actual lesson and includes comments and descriptions of classroom activities which are provided by the teacher and the students as they interact with each other. It also deals with possible problems, which might be encountered, in research. In this method the researcher is advised to use field notes, interviews, recordings and questionnaires to derive meaningful results and support findings. The qualitative method offered the background information to this research.

The quantitative research method is concerned with 'what and how many' activities take place in actual lessons. This method is concerned with a number of items under investigation. Quantitative methods are dependent on clear definitions of these items and in this research the quantitative method was utilised to define how many and which communicative interactions actually took place in the classes.

Research and classroom observations in a foreign environment can be considered highly contentious and therefore should be more carefully thought through than similar undertakings in local schools. Firstly, the local educational department might
more readily support research because its findings can give immediate answers to arising organizational, pedagogical and personnel questions. Further, such studies are usually conducted in the mother tongue and interaction with authorities, principals and teachers is considerably easier than addressing them in a foreign language. Local research may also result in more immediate action from the authorities or the teachers involved. For example, in Hong Kong research (Education Department of Hong Kong, 2000 & 2001) has shown that at various school levels English teachers had inadequate proficiency in English. After a comprehensive language test those assessed to be less educated had to undertake further studies in English. Thus, research had an immediate impact on the organization and education of English teachers. In a foreign environment, finding the appropriate partners and decision-makers may be time-consuming. Further, in some cases teachers might not readily invite a foreigner into their classroom, especially, when knowing that the researcher will conduct an observation of activities. Explaining the research design and conducting interviews in a foreign language can be straining on a partnership between the different parties involved. Another consideration is that while the assessment of a situation and necessary changes may result in an acceptable outcome on a smaller scale (i.e. in a classroom or a school), these results may not permeate to a larger number of teachers or even into teacher training. Further, due to education policy the results might not be acceptable to the authorities. Therefore, for this study different possibilities of classroom observation and interview techniques needed to be considered. As the research questions suggested, the study included qualitative research methods, which were important to establish background information, and quantitative research methods, which helped to measure possible increases in communicative interaction in the two classes. The following discussion on qualitative and quantitative research methods reveals the philosophical and practical origins from which they stem.
Qualitative research methods used in many education studies derived mainly from classroom observations in native-speaker classrooms (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). However, today qualitative research is also an acknowledged method for foreign language classroom observation and various descriptions of classroom activities are available (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; McCarthy, 1991; Nunan, 1991). Nunan (1991, pp.189-207) discussed these methods of teacher observation and stated that they informed and guided the understanding of actual classroom practices. He (1991, p.207) added that: ‘Teacher action and teacher-learner interaction are important aspects of classroom life and there are many facets to structuring and managing learning.’ As possible points for observation he listed the following:

a) ‘Classroom management and organization.’ This observation mainly examines and analyses the teacher as an organizer of:

- Students, i.e. group or pair work.
- Materials, tape, text or items/realia
- Time, i.e. adequate time for tasks.
- Space, i.e. for practising skills such as role-plays.

b) ‘Teacher speech and teacher interaction in content-based topics.’ This observation monitors the teacher as the ‘provider’ and ‘participant’ of language input. The observation supports the analysis of the teacher language and determines if it was adequate and appropriate.

c) ‘Student speech and student interactions in content-based topics.’ This observation is concerned with the students’ language output. The observation supports analysis of student language and determines if they had appropriate time for speech and were, if necessary, advised or corrected. Student speech observation further includes the analysis of meaningful involvement.

(Examples in accordance with Nunan, 1991, pp.193-195)
Nunan (1991) further recommended the use of tape recorders or video cameras as a means of monitoring the teachers over several lessons and for collecting data on their classroom behaviour. Such audio-visual records prove to be useful in the discussions and interviews with teachers as the researcher has the possibility to recover data and thus raise questions about methodological assumptions of tasks or actions. Further, they supplement field notes and offer an 'audio-visual' picture of classroom actions. In their research guide Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, p.17) suggested that researchers conduct observations with a 'beginner's mind'. They advised researchers to begin: '...conversations, observations, conferences, and other teacher education activities without preconceived ideas about what we think should be going on in the classroom' (1999, p.17).

Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, pp.21-27) offered five different methods of qualitative research which could help the 'illustrating, describing, analysing and interpreting' of teaching. According to Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, p.21) exploring through observation can be conducted as self-observation which will give answers to our own teaching. Further, by observing other teachers, we can construct and expand our own ideas about teaching. Exploration in general offers alternatives to what we usually do and encourages the teacher to replace one teaching pattern with another. For example, if Chinese teachers seldom interact with individual students, they might change this pattern in their next lesson by directly conversing with one student. However, this implies that the teachers are aware of what they do. Thus, teacher observation as a form of qualitative research is a valuable way of finding relevant support for change.

The exploration through action research (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999, p.22) is concerned with problems which arise in the classroom. The problems are then actively addressed by initiating a plan of action and by reflecting on the degree that this plan might work.
Crookes (1993) demonstrated that action research might take us beyond the borders of a classroom. For example, if the students and parents complain about poor performance of a teacher or the curriculum, or, if students do not complete their homework, action research can systematically address these problems.

Exploring teaching through journal writing as mentioned by Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, pp.24-25) is recommended for emotional 'release' and it provides a place to keep a record of the class. They stated that: 'We can ..., accept a journal as a place to vent our frustrations and work through our judgment. Doing these things allows us to then focus more on exploring our teaching beliefs and practices' (1999, p.24).

Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) defined two types of journal writing. The first is the intra-personal which is a very private form of writing and is usually only read by the writer. The dialogic journal is a place where teachers converse with each other in a written form. By sharing views on teaching and by reading other opinions, teachers have the opportunity to face their own 'concerns, problems and accomplishments'. However, journal writing is a time-consuming task and in a foreign language environment may not be one of the most practical techniques.

Exploring methods through talks with a supervisor promotes a partnership between the supervisor and the teacher (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999, p. 25). These authors considered this form as acceptable provided the teacher is allowed some 'initiative' and is not just involved in a one-way critique from the supervisor. They (1999, p.25) contended that: 'Supervision promotes teacher learning, similar to the way teaching fosters student learning' (1999, p.25).

In their research on teacher exploration Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, p.27) further mentioned 'personal experience'. They recommended a form of 'thinking aloud' about various questions concerning teaching (1999, p.27). Some of these questions can be connected to the classroom, but, as Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) pointed out, some are
connected to the 'life experience' outside school. Gebhard and Oprandy stated that: 'Through such development, and the connections we begin to make with our professional lives, we can see not only who we are (becoming) as a teacher, but also who we are becoming as a person' (1999, p.27).

I viewed the philosophy of 'thinking aloud' as basically useful for interview techniques where the teachers have a opportunity to reflect on what they were doing during the lesson and why they did it. In her paper Woodward (1999) mentioned that lesson preparations are dutifully done but teachers have difficulties in allocating time to reflect upon what went on in the actual teaching of the lesson.

Once a form of class and teacher observation or exploration has been established and agreed on by all participants Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, pp.99-121) suggested the following actions:

a) 'Getting to know each other.' The teacher should know the supervisor. Preferably, the teacher may observe the supervisor in teaching a class. The supervisor should visit the class informally before the formal observation starts.

b) 'Questions to ask far in advance.' How much official observation will take place? Is a copy of the official evaluation available? Does one have time for discussions?

c) 'Working on your teaching to prepare for an observation.' Work on specific aspects of teaching which can then be a topic for observation and consequent discussion.

d) 'Preparing for pre-observation conference.' Set a date for the conference at least a few days before the observation. Make a schedule for each observation and allow time for post-discussion.
e) 'During the observation preparations.' These should include all materials and handouts. Make sure the audio equipment is working.

f) 'Post-observation discussion.' Let the teachers begin with their reactions to the lesson. Try to summarize at the end of each discussion.

g) 'After the discussion procedure.' Write down what you felt and what you observed. Your reactions, statements and reports will give a long-term impression of the teacher observed over a period of time.

(Extracts in accordance with Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999, pp.109-111)

In a further step, Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) recommended the use of a clear description of what will be observed. An example of 'source and targets of communication' (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999, p.115) supported this research in examining the communicative interaction in the two classes. They (1999, p. 118) stated that an unambiguous definition of 'what' is going to be observed: '... may have an impact' on the subsequent result. In their research on teacher observation Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) mentioned that the teachers under investigation needed to know why they were being observed. According to their opinion (1999, p.119) teacher observation may be useful for three purposes:

a) 'Evaluation of a teacher's performance' for various reasons such as promotion.'

b) 'Establishing collegiality among professionals' in talking shop. The teacher is usually alone and sharing experiences with colleagues is important.'

c) 'Exploring the teaching-learning dynamic' develops awareness in what the teacher does when teaching.'

(Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999, p.120)
However, Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, p.119) recommended giving the teachers more
time to get adjusted to observation in order to: ‘...[generate] a bit less anxiety....’

As mentioned before, qualitative research methods may also include
questionnaires and interviews. In this research these methods were utilised to draw on
the teachers' and the students' perception of lessons and to complement the field notes.
There are numerous ways of collaborative inquiry about teaching (Dantonio, 1995; Edge,
1992; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999). Many of them focus on the development of the
teacher and students. The following list of suggestions for a purposeful and informative
interview style emerged from research into supervisory post-observation discussions

a) Allow for an ‘initial move, usually by an open-ended question’ by either party.
   This may include something that impressed the observer. This initial move
   leads directly into the next phase of the interview. This phase is usually
   concerned with detailed professional questions.

b) Allow time for self-analysis, justification and self-evaluation of the questions.
   In this part the interviewer is advised to follow the lead of the interviewee who
decides upon the depth in which he or she desires to go. The interviewer may
have the chance for further questions. However, Oprandy (1999) suggests a
clearly collaborative approach to diminish the tendency of evaluation by the
interviewer. In this part the interviewee can make hypotheses about his or her
teaching, the learners' process or behaviour.

c) In a short closure procedure the interview is then ended. Here the interviewer
   has the time to eventually set a new date for further inquiries or meetings.

Patton (1990, p.40) maintained that in personal contact the researcher gets close to the
people, the situation and the problem under study. From his list of interview questions
I adapted and complemented my list of questions (see Appendix, p.158) which were focused on communicative interaction in the classroom. Generally, questionnaires and interviews are used to elicit data on attitudes, perceptions and experiences of difficulties encountered by the language teachers (Wallace, 1998; Woodward, 1999;). In an article about classroom schemata, Littlewood (1999, pp.1-13) pointed out that the teachers have a mental 'map of classroom reality' which includes personal values, cultural traditions, pre-service and in-service education and on-going social experiences. This map then directly influences their classroom perceptions, their decisions and actions. Although difficult to access, this 'mental map' was an important source of information for this research.

Another source of information as a recommended form of drawing on teachers' perceptions is the questionnaire. Usually, in a school setting questionnaires offer insights into the level of education, the lesson preparation and the perception of lessons or teacher/student performance. Often, they include some sort of evaluation system which can be useful for statistical purposes (Li, Mahoney & Richards, 1994).

In fields of ESL/EFL teaching and learning the search for answers is to observe natural life situations. Hatch and Lazaraton mentioned that: 'Very often the researcher is a participant-observer. The data collected may simply be a set of organised notes or it may involve elaborately coded videotaped records' (1994, p.2).

However, qualitative research methods focus on the nature of the phenomenon or a problem and it was essential to this study that the researcher described 'the context' and the 'lessons in progress' (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Merriam (1998) further indicated that a characteristic of the qualitative method is its flexibility. Further, this method ensures that the teachers are involved in ongoing discussions of the most recent processes of their EFL language teaching. However, the occurrence of constraints can limit such investigation. Qualitative research describes people and their actions in an event, and
thus, is often dependent upon the details, descriptions and conclusions outlined by the research. Merriam (1998, p. 101) described the personal involvement of the researcher in the work of the participants as the role of a 'collaborative partner'. Thus, the researcher’s identity and goals should be clearly known by all participants and they should be treated as equal partners. However, Merriam (1998) pointed out that there are no clear role definitions of the researcher when she is the observer and the participant in research, especially when the researcher is a member of the profession or the community. Gans (1982, p.59) discussed this problem and stated that the researcher might have: ‘...a tendency to over-identify with the people being studied.’ In order to avoid such bias the researcher needs to carefully conceptualize the research procedure in a way in which the data collected can be analyzed, repeated and interpreted by others. Thus, to avoid the above limitations the following advice was followed:

a) As an ‘observer’ it is important to ensure the internal validity of the research data and further make sure that the data obtained reflects the reality of the actual lessons, interviews and observations. This method includes more qualitative aspects.

b) As a ‘researcher’ utilizing the same form of observation in each lesson is vital. Therefore, more accurate, task-based information is necessary. This method includes more quantitative aspects.

In the following section I will discuss the quantitative research method which is concerned with tallying the defined aspects of observation.

Quantitative research methods are usually used for a limited period of time. A group of participants is being investigated and certain points of observation (i.e. variables) are measured and then analysed. Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, p.115) introduced a ‘source and target of communication’ sheet which formed the quantitative basis of this research. They observed different communicative interactions which were
recorded over a period of ten minutes per lesson. Such recordings should be conducted in intact groups of students interacting with a teacher (1999, p.115). Hatch and Lazaraton stated that: 'Intact designs are often the only practical way of carrying out research which will help find answers to questions' (1994, p.86).

However, they pointed out that the researcher has to interpret these findings with care. Hatch and Lazaraton (1994, p.86) further recommended a 'one-group pretest-post-test design' for such purposes as the following research design shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'X1'</th>
<th>'Recording of the classes prior to action.'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.e.</td>
<td>Counting of different interactions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'Action'</th>
<th>i.e. In-service with the teachers of the two classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Interval'</td>
<td>i.e. 'Break' from observation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'X2'</td>
<td>'Recording after the action.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.e.</td>
<td>Counting of the different interactions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Result | 'Tallying, interpretation and conclusion.' |

(Examples in accordance with Hatch & Lazaraton, 1994, p.86)

By applying this quantitative research method the data can be interpreted with more confidence and a t-test is recommended after the conclusion of the research. In order to be able to calculate t-test scores, the clear definition of pairs or variables is strongly recommended (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1994). They mentioned that: 'An operational definition is a clear statement of how you judge or identify a term in your research' (1994, p.15). Further, the definitions assured that the research was replicable (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Hatch & Lazaraton, 1994). Additionally, clear definition enables the researcher to inform the teachers accurately of what the research concentrates on, and thus, they may have more trust in the study.
To recapitulate the situation as it occurs in foreign countries (i.e. China) can be problematic as cultural values of the observer and the teachers could deviate. Different constraints can occur, for example, research usually fits the needs of the persons involved but also offers meaningful results. However, different perception of what should happen in a language class could lead to a clash of interests. Hatch and Lazaraton stated that: 'Each of us as individuals has different criteria for believing or not believing the truth of claims' (1994, p.1).

In such a situation it is recommended to include the education authorities into research and discussions. They should provide a platform from which the teachers could voice their expectations toward a study or an in-service. The knowledge of what the teachers actually want to know and want to learn is very often neglected or it only forms a small part of research but this might be an important one to be included in a study. The question of 'what teachers learned' in class observation was addressed by Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, p.202) who concluded that they: '...have learned the value of becoming aware of (...) teaching behaviours and of investigating their consequences for students’ learning.'

2.7. Summary

Relevant literature reveals that language methodology has evolved from different backgrounds and learning assumptions. In a communicative approach the students are involved in meaningful interactions and exchanges and these may need to be included the EFL classroom. An examination of reports on teaching EFL in the People’s Republic of China revealed that the introduction of certain desirable innovations in communicative language methods have been difficult to introduce and to maintain (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Hird, 1995). However, to promote and implement such methods research may help to find adequate answers and changes. It was suggested that such changes could take place by finding and defining what difficulties, if any, limit communicative interaction and
then discussing strategies of communicative interaction that could overcome these difficulties. An understanding of the Confucian principles and how they influence teachers and students in their teaching and learning process may support such undertakings. The present situation at primary school level in China is not yet well documented. Thus, the introduction of various communicative methods and the design of communicative materials for the primary school level seem to be important. Instructions in such methodology would enable teachers to decide which changes they need. As a possible form of introduction of change the role of Change Agent is recommended. By considering the cultural background of the teachers and students, and by carefully planning for their involvement in change, this Change Agent could provide the necessary observations, discussions, interviews and questionnaires. Further, the provision of workshops, in-services or team teaching is considered to be of great value. The careful consideration and evaluation of qualitative and quantitative research methods may support the researcher in an ongoing study of classroom observation. For the teachers concerned, knowing about the points of observation may be important, as they feel more confident in being analysed fairly. Thus, operational definitions of class observation and audio-recording can help to support the Change Agent and the teachers in their aim to promote the communicative approach.
3. Theoretical Framework and Research Design

3.1. Outline of Theoretical Framework and Research Design to Investigate Communicative Interaction in Two Classrooms in Zhong Shan

In recent investigations done by the Zhong Shan Department of Education, Southern District (Stone-Kwok, 1999a) some common problems in EFL teaching in most classes were detectable. As mentioned in the previous chapter teachers were accustomed to being in control of their classes (Stone-Kwok, 1999a). Some teachers perceived the introduction of the communicative approach as a threat to this control. In general, teachers perceive the introduction of new methodology as very demanding (Altan, 1999). In the present Chinese education environment where primary school teachers have so much to deal with (i.e. curriculum changes and introduction of new course books), these demands are often put aside or are not properly addressed. To be able to deal with the different persons involved in this study and to meet the demands of field research, the following theoretical framework was designed. It was later used for the proposal and presentation of the study to the authorities of the Southern District and the Chinese colleagues in the two schools involved in this research.

The underlying theoretical bases for this research are:

1. Theory behind the communicative approach.

2. That meaningful communicative interaction promoted through the use of specific materials can boost language acquisition.

(McCarthy, 1991; Ur & Wright, 1992)

These two parts are concerned with the knowledge and understanding of the communicative approach by both the researcher and the teachers. From my former observations in Chinese EFL classes, I was prepared for a 'small step' introduction of communicative interaction. Although, I was aware that by Confucian beliefs the teachers...
would treat me as the 'master', I intended to have them involved in every step of this research and draw upon their understanding of the communicative approach and their expertise of the Chinese EFL classroom reality.

This part is concerned with classroom observations which are based on a combination of 'action research' as outlined in Gebhard (1999, pp.59-77) and 'exploring with a supervisor' as outlined by Oprandy (1999, pp.99-121). Action research includes a problem-posing and a problem-solving part and is viewed as a developmental approach to language teaching. Gebhard and Oprandy (1999, p.58) defined these points of discussion which I included in this research. They (1999, p.58) contended that it is necessary for the teachers to 'identify and actively acknowledge' the problem. This idea is central because of its group decision (i.e. researcher and teachers). The idea also furthers a commitment to improve. Class observation by a researcher only provides a facet of the whole picture and the involvement of the teachers is a necessity. Further, many teachers believe that only their colleagues should legitimately voice critical opinions and they are usually apprehensive about 'outsider' intrusion and involvement (Bodycott, Crew & Dawson, 1999; Crookes & Arakaki, 1999). Often, these teachers have had years of experience in EFL teaching and it is therefore necessary that they can voice their concerns related to the problem.

A crucial role of the researcher in a field study is that of 'communicator'. The role is responsible for developing an atmosphere of trust. Patton (1990, p.255) described this role as follows: 'A researcher's actions speak louder than a researcher's words.' I hoped to be able to establish such trust as I had recorded and observed EFL classes in other schools (Trittibach, 1997). This enabled me to be more confident in my observation reports and in finding the best methods of recording the classes in action. As outlined in my paper about observations done in Sri Lanka, to recall observations in a more accurate form I had utilised a microphone which was aimed at the class and another wireless
microphone which was fixed to the teacher's clothing (Trittibach, 1997). As suggested by Gebhard and Oprandy, (1999) and Merriam, (1998) I started with the following observation techniques:

a) I observe from 'wide angle to narrow angle'. How did the students react to what the teacher was doing or saying? What feeling did I perceive in the lesson?

b) I looked for 'key words' or 'actions' during the lessons. Were the lessons repetitive? What did they have in common and what was outstanding?

c) When listening to the tapes I 'mentally played back remarks and scenes' during observation.

(Merriam, 1998)

Merriam (1998) highly recommended that field notes be taken during observations and that they are in such a format that the researcher would find the desired information easily. Therefore, to make clear observations I had described them in this order: The class, the teacher, lesson organisation, special incidents or interests, materials and tasks. To be able to tally different communicative interaction in the lessons, I planned to use the computer generated Excel list as outlined (Appendix, p.164). However, this task was intended to be performed at home with the help of a tape recorder. In this manner I planned to be able to describe the lesson in progress without being overly concerned with tallying interactions; I had time at home to analyse the individual interactions (Merriam, 1998). My role as observer of the lesson in progress was to concentrate more closely on the teachers and to comment on the activities, rather than to pay attention to each individual interaction at the time. The tape recorder was also used as a back up in discussions and to elicit and supply information on why a certain strategy was preferred and additionally supplemented the triangulation. To substantiate the findings it was
important that I was already familiar with my research methods and with the general
outline of EFL lessons. Apart from being a tolerant and sensitive observer I intended to
treat the data obtained with due care.

According to the example on 'source and target of communication' on 'exploring with a
supervisor', Oprandy (1999, p.115) the following pairs in both schools were compared:

1. 'Content Related Interaction', initiated by the teacher prior to and after the
   Change Agent’s intervention.
2. 'Content Related Interaction', initiated by the student prior to and after the
   Change Agent’s intervention.
3. 'Content Related Interaction', initiated by other means (materials) prior to and
   after the Change Agent’s intervention.
4. 'Total of Content Related Interactions' prior to and after the Change Agent’s
   intervention.
5. 'Explicit Language Focus and Non-communicative Activities' prior to and after
   the Change Agent’s intervention.

(Examples in accordance with Oprandy 1999, p. 115)

Individualised ‘hands-on’ approach in EFL teacher training by a Change Agent
supporting communicative interaction is concerned with what actions are necessary to
improve the current situation. It included an in-service in which the researcher
additionally acted as Change Agent. In this part of the study the teachers were focusing
on intended changes in their EFL lesson planning. The Change Agent supported their
intention with options and suggestions on possible communicative interaction which
could be included. The Change Agent was present in the classes and supported the
teachers in the organisation and provision of communicative interaction. As
recommended by Oprandy (1999, p.108) I was prepared to teach alongside my Chinese
colleagues and act as Change Agent. A detailed description of the in-service and my role as Change Agent is discussed in Chapter 4.

Student expectations in English classes have also been reviewed and documented in research reports from the Hong Kong Baptist University. Many concluded that 'oral and constant' practice in the target language was highly valued (Chan Kin, 1986). Many students found that communicative interaction was inadequately present in their lessons. This conclusion was confirmed by the results of a questionnaire which was distributed and completed by the students of the primary schools in the Southern District of Zhong Shan (Stone-Kwok, 1999b). A further finding of this questionnaire was that, on the students' part English language knowledge was viewed as essential for their future career. In order to secure further information on reservations on the students' part the present study included a basic questionnaire in Chinese for the children in the two Grade 4 classes. (Appendix, p.156)

The recommendations by Hatch and Lazaraton (1994) and Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) were used in the collection of the responses and feelings about the experience of teaching English in a more communicative approach during the research period. Interviews with the teachers as outlined in Appendix, p.158 complemented the researcher's own observations made in the classroom. The results were then presented at a meeting with the Education Department of the Southern District in Zhong Shan.

T-tests were used to determine whether any observed 'change' in either class was significant.

3.2. Research Design

The research design below introduces the participating persons and the locations observed during the study. The expressions 'C' School and 'H' School were used for the two primary schools which took part in this research. Detailed comments on the research model that identify research procedures were useful for submission to the Department of
Education in Zhong Shan and to obtain authorisation of this project. In six steps the research design is outlined and explained.

3.3. Subjects

The participants in this study were the primary school teachers ‘Vera’ and ‘Igor’ (both names changed) and the students of English in Grade 4 in two schools in Zhong Shan. The classes contained 41 students each and thus the classes used in this study were intact groups. During the research all students were present in all lessons.

Table 3.3.1: The General Outline of the Research Design.

This table assisted the researcher to complete the study within a set time of 12 weeks. The time frame was practical because the teachers involved in this research had enough time to teach at their own pace during the rest of the semester.
3.4. The Six Stages of This Study

1. Introduction of the research design and procedure.

2. The English language lessons in both primary schools were observed, audio-recorded and monitored by the researcher. The researcher not only described and analysed the communicative interactions, but also, classified them as outlined by the research questions.

3. The teachers had the opportunity to discuss any difficulties encountered during the two-week observation period and were individually asked to participate in an open-ended interview. Additionally, information about different strategies for communicative interaction was introduced, and if teachers asked for assistance in their lesson planning in order to introduce these strategies, it was provided.

4. There was a break of four weeks from observing and feedback.

5. The lessons of both classes were again observed, audio-recorded and commented upon for a period of two weeks.

6. The teachers and I conducted a meeting where the data from the second set of observations were discussed. The meeting concluded this stage of the research.

3.5. Authorisation

The Department of Education of Zhong Shan indicated their interest in this study and gave prior permission to collaborate with the teachers and to audio-record their lessons. They assured me of their full co-operation and support and no difficulties were perceived during my work.
3.6. Limitations

This field research in China was made more feasible by limiting it to an area from which adequate samples could be obtained. However, the chosen classes and the teachers may not be representative of other classes and teachers in this area or in other provinces. The teachers in the study have examined, experienced and utilised many interactions throughout the study but this may not be maintained after its conclusion. Further follow-up would be needed to determine whether the level of interaction is sustained.

A further limitation at the beginning was the use of English in communicating with the officials and the teachers to obtain the necessary entrées into classrooms. However, due to the interest shown by the Department of Education of Zhong Shan in this study, these limitations were minor and did not cause any difficulties.
4. In-Service Methodology

This chapter includes an account of activities which were part of the in-service.

The researcher took on the roles of participant observer and teacher model. In the role of participant observer, I was part of the class, however I took a less active part in the proceedings. In the role of teacher model, I demonstrated teaching strategies and made resources for use in class, so I took a very active part in proceedings. Both roles, the participant observer and the teacher model, made up the role of the Change Agent.

Some materials which were developed to promote communicative interaction (Linder, 1999; McCarthy, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Ur & Wright, 1992) and then utilised in the in-service are included to offer an idea of what kind of communicative interaction was promoted. In accordance with the relevant literature (Harmer, 1991, p.239) I also introduced different teacher roles which were considered desirable by the teachers because they supported the learners' communicative competence in a variety of different activities and tasks including skills such as listening, watching, reading, combining, guessing and acting. As material development and provision are largely based on observation and analysis of classroom data previous to the Change Agent's intervention, the teachers agreed to focus on the above aims during the in-service.

4.1. Introduction of the Two Primary School Settings

Some background information concerning the two schools and their environments will offer important knowledge of the situation of teachers and the students in the two schools. This knowledge may lead to a better understanding of the perception of implementing communicative interaction in the two classes.

School 'H' is a small primary school which serves a village community in the Southern District of Zhong Shan. A hundred and three students attend and most of them live within walking distance. Due to the distance to the city centre of Zhong Shan and the village-like
lifestyle of most families, contact to English speaking foreigners inside or outside of school is seldom realised. Ten full-time teachers are presently employed in teaching primary school subjects and two of them as full-time EFL teachers. The teacher in Grade 4 has had seven years teaching experience and has already attended EFL-training courses conducted by native speaking English teachers. However, the teacher could not confirm if the instructor had been an ESL/EFL teacher. At the time of writing, he is attending an English course initiated and run by the Chinese Education Authorities of Zhong Shan. The course is aimed at the teacher's proficiency in English.

Primary school 'C' is situated in the Centre of Zhong Shan's Southern District of approximately twenty thousand inhabitants and is the biggest primary school there. Five hundred and eighty students attend primary levels Grades 1 to 6. Although being the biggest primary school in the district, contact with English speaking foreigners in or outside of school is not readily available. Eighteen full-time teachers teach the classes, three being EFL teachers. The Grade 4 English teacher is in her second year of teaching English. She too, has attended a workshop with a native speaking instructor. Neither of the above mentioned teachers has a specialised EFL background but all have a Major in English from the Teacher Training College in Zhong Shan or Guangzhou.

The two schools are equipped with a language laboratory and a computer room. However, at the beginning of the research there were few EFL teaching materials available. Most of the teaching aids were privately owned and few exchanges took place.

4.2. Provision for Communicative Interaction

The following short description of materials which furthered student-student communicative interaction in pairs and groups is an extract of the collection of ideas and approaches which both teachers felt applicable and successfully tried out. (It is now in more detail, part of a forthcoming publication for the English Researcher Association of
Zhong Shan, Kwok-Stone & Trittibach, 2001). Each material provision is described according to material provision, organisation of the activity, skills, teacher role and learning assumptions.

In a further paragraph the example of a lesson plan designed and introduced in the in-service displays communicative interaction as solicited in the English course book used by the primary schools in Zhong Shan.

The 'Slap/Touch' Game, Vocabulary Training

Material provisions: Pictures of the vocabulary of a lesson for the blackboard
(Preferably A2).

Pictures of the vocabulary for each group in a smaller format.

First step

Organisation: Six new words in picture format are displayed at the blackboard. They already raise the students' curiosity before the actual start of the lesson. The teacher briefly introduces the pictures in English and then calls out one item in the picture and waits for the students to find the correct picture. This is repeated for a few times.

Learning assumption: With this method the students familiarise themselves with the English word. In conjunction with the picture, the pronunciation of the word and its meaning, further understanding and memorisation.

Organisation: The teacher then calls three or four students to the blackboard to identify the pictures in a little competition. In this manner individual students have the opportunity to come forward. Because of the competitive character the students will try their best to 'make' a

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1 The Zhong Shan Researcher Association in October 2001 published a description of all activities.
point for their group. The teacher starts to call out one word from
the pictures. For example: 'The cow, which one is the cow?' The
student who is first to 'touch' or to 'slap' the correct picture wins a
point for his group. When this routine is established one student
will take the role of the teacher. This role is changed for a few
times.

Teacher roles: The game includes different teacher roles such the controller, then
the entertainer. The teacher also acts as a provider of interaction
when a student takes her/his role.

Skills: Listening and understanding. For example to prompt students to
participate in the game the teacher will ask:

'Who wants to be the teacher?' 'Hands up, who wants to be the
teacher?'

These sentences do not occur in the course book but they
condition the students to listen and guess what they mean.

Further, 'Classroom management' will not take place in a small
circle of teacher commands such as 'sit still', 'stand up'; they
include a larger corpora of English sentences which are longer and
include more meaning.

Learning assumption: In giving the students the possibility to interact as 'teachers' they,
too have the opportunity to pronounce the words, ask other
students to come forward for the game and correct. Thus,
interaction with other students takes place. The teacher has time to
concentrate on pronunciation and is able to individually correct.
Second step:

Organisation: The students form groups, each group has the same pictures as displayed on the blackboard. Each group of students consists of a 'teacher' and three 'students'. The game is now repeated in groups and the role of the 'teacher' changes according to a visual or acoustic signal.

Learning assumption: This game familiarises the whole class with the vocabulary used in the lesson and includes activities such as guessing, listening and interacting, speaking and interacting.

Skills: At the later stage of the lesson the game can be expanded to reading and interacting. The teacher shows the word of an item on the blackboard and the students 'slap' the correct picture. This game can be played in groups, too.

The teachers commented on this activity and said that they liked to be able to walk through the class and being 'relieved' from teaching. An extension of this game is offered below.

'Spelling Game', Vocabulary and Spelling Training

Material provisions: Pictures of the vocabulary of a lesson for the blackboard

(Preferably A2 format)

Pictures of the vocabulary for each group in a smaller format.

The letters of each item in the picture. One set for students and two sets for the blackboard.

Organisation: The above mentioned game can be extended to a spelling game by adding letters to the provisions. Under each picture at the blackboard, the students find a cluster of letters which, when put in order, will result in the correct spelling of the item.
The teacher asks: 'What's this in picture one?' Because the students are now familiar with the vocabulary it will be easy to find the correct answer.

The teacher asks: 'COW, which letter do you chose for the beginning of this word?' The students contribute to the solution until the whole word is spelt correctly. This is repeated, however, the teacher does not need to prompt the class to find solutions.

This game can be played in pairs as a competition where the students try to match the letters to the picture.

Learning assumption: The game offers guessing and discussing of possibilities. A solution is reached by interaction.

Organisation: In groups the students match the letters to the pictures. This game can also be played as a competition.

Teacher role: First by controlling the game the students get familiarised with the task. Then the teacher takes part as organiser and prompter.

Skills: The students are combining the letters to achieve the correctly spelled words. A combination of reading and comparing from memory is needed.

Role-play, Sentence Structure and Interaction Training

Materials provision: Food and drink in form of 'realia'

Trays and tea towels for the role of the waiters.

A menu, which includes different dishes from the above-mentioned 'realia'.

Blackboard drawings of a waiter/waitress and a customer. Under each person is the respective sentence which is the focus of the lesson.
‘What would you like to eat?’

‘What would you like to drink?’

Learning assumption: Role-plays offer the students the opportunity to participate in an activity. It is suggested that the students contribute to the design of the menu and that the teacher writes these suggestions on the blackboard.

Organisation: The teacher then introduces the task by providing an example with a student. The teacher has the tea towel over the arm and goes to one of the students asking:

‘What would you like to eat?’

‘What would you like to drink?’

(Teacher points to the sentence of his/her role at the Blackboard)

The student then makes her/his choice:

‘I would like chicken, vegetables and Coke, please.’

The teacher repeats:

‘Chicken and vegetables and a Coke.’

Just a moment, please.

The teacher proceeds through the class, making up more examples.

The questions: ‘What would you like to eat?’ ‘What would you like to drink?’ are repeated. The students then practice their roles in pairs. The teacher visits each group and listens in at the activity in progress. If necessary the teacher intervenes or corrects individual students. At the end of the activity the pairs are allowed to come forward and show their role-play by using the materials provided.
Skills: Role-plays offer meaningful oral practice and interaction and involve students in activities which can take place outside the classroom. Reading of the sentences, the menu and combining them in an interaction is relevant.

Learning assumption: Students are more confident to speak and act in the classroom. Like this they will be more confident to order food in a foreign environment.

Teacher role: As an entertainer the teacher introduces the topic. As a prompter and promoter the teacher supports meaningful language exchange. As an assessor the teacher is able to individually attend to the needs of the less active students.

The students commented on this interaction as being entertaining and real. The teachers had some difficulties in accepting the higher noise level. However, they liked the preparation of the ‘menu’ where the students had to contribute to what food could be ordered in the restaurant. The role-play was in the end a great success and the students repeatedly organised it during the recess time.

‘What is in the bag?’ game, vocabulary revision

Material provision: A pillow case or laundry bag.

‘Realia’ such as a cup, an orange, an apple, a banana, a fork, a knife, chop sticks, a toy car, etc.

Organisation: Before the game starts the teacher shows all the items intended for this activity. The students need to know the vocabulary. The items then are put into the bag. The teacher can prompt this activity by saying:

‘Mimi, please put the car into the bag.’

Mimi will do so or needs help from others.
As soon as the students understand the activity the teacher hands the bag to a student who will proceed with asking for items to be placed into the bag.

Learning assumption: By watching and listening the students soon understand the meaning of 'into' the bag. Vocabulary is being revised in an entertaining manner.

Organisation: The teacher points to the bag and singles out one item feels it through the cloth and asks:

'What is this Miu?'

Miu feels the item, too and answers: 'It's a car.'

The class will quickly get the gist of the action and the teacher hands the bag over to the students. The student who finds the correct word may have the bag for the next round.

Skills: The usual skills addressed and trained in a language lesson are listening, speaking, writing, reading. With the introduction of a tactile approach this activity addresses a new skill and is also entertaining. This 'bag' game might be useful for class routine because the students are able to organise it themselves.

Teacher role: If the activity is new, the teacher will first be the controller but at later occasions could just produce the bag and the students would fill it with the items of their choice. The teacher was then just a prompter.
4.3. Lesson Plan as Designed and Introduced in the In-service

The activities in this lesson included communicative interaction and language revision as outlined in the course book. It was one of the first lessons which had been planned together with the teacher. The example shows that provision for communicative interaction was introduced in small steps as outlined by Lamie (1999) and offered an amalgam of the communicative approach and Chinese traditional methods (Penner, 1999). The lesson plan was in accordance with the format of the Education Department but included some additions which were considered being important. The lesson plans were organised as following:

1. Title, including time of the lesson, book and Grade.
2. Objective(s), indicating the sections in the units, oral topic or language focus.
3. Teaching key point(s).
4. Procedure or organisation of the lesson.
5. Summary, list of materials.

The following pages display a lesson plan as designed and utilised in the in-service and supported by the Change Agent. This lesson plan concludes the discussion of in-service activities and methodology.
Period Two, Book 1, Pages 2-3, Grade 4

Objectives: Parts C, D and F
Introduction/Greeting
Let's learn English
Revision of numbers in words from one to five

Teaching key points: 'Hello' as an introduction or as a greeting!
I am/ I'm
Let's...

Procedure
Step 1. Part C
Teacher introduces himself/herself: 'Hello I'm Monika'
Prompts students to reply: 'Hello I'm XXX'
Repeat a few times through the class.
Explain that if you want to say 'hello' to someone you can use the following sentence pattern.

Teacher: 'Hello, I'm Monika'
Student: 'Hello, Monika, I'm XXX.'
Teacher: 'Hello, XXX.'

Have pictures from famous people ready. Example Chinese leaders, singers and actors
What would you say to these persons when you see them?

'Hello, Mr Clinton.'

'Hello, Mr Jiang Zemin.'

'Hello, Ms Zhang.'

Step 2. Part D
Group work: Four students participate together. Each group has a table tennis ball. The students roll the ball on the desk top. The teacher gives an acoustic or visual sign to stop the ball. The student who holds the ball must introduce himself/herself.

'Hello, I'm Fu-ling.'

The others in the group greet him with:

'Hello, Fu-ling.'

Step 3.
'Let's learn English.' Explain that if you use the word 'Let's' in English this means that we should do it now together.

Teacher: 'Let's stand up!' Students follow.
Teacher: 'Let's walk around.' Student (giggling) follow.
Teacher: 'Let's sit down again.' Students follow.

Blackboard: (Combination of words and pictures)
Let's suggest:

PLAY
GO
SING
DANCE
LEARN

football, basketball,
home, to school
a song
English, Chinese

Teacher suggests:

Let's act these sentences on the blackboard. Students have time to prepare for one of
the above suggestions. Individual students come to the front and act their sentence. The
class offers a solution. Students are encouraged to combine sentences and invent their
own.

Step 4.

Group work: Introduction, greeting and 'let's' in one dialogue. The students in the group
are able to make their own dialogue in using all 3 sentences.

Teacher: 'Hello, I'm Monika'
Student: 'Hello, Monika I'm Ling Ling.'
Teacher: Hello Ling Ling. Let's learn English.'
Or
Let's go home.'
Or... (as above)

After giving an example the groups practise. The teacher corrects and occasionally
interacts with individual students.

Step 5. Part F

Revision of counting/numbers/items.

Use old materials which include vocabulary that is known such as chop-sticks, forks,
pens and glue them to cards. Each student has prepared a set of numbers in numerals
and in words. The students are asked to match the number (in numerals and words) to
the items.

Teacher holds up a card with 3 forks
The students show the word 'three' and the number 3. Teachers checks if they match.
As soon as the routine is understood, students take the role of the teacher.

Summary

Students have learnt to make a dialogue and use 'Let's'.
They recognise numbers from 1-10.

Materials

Blackboard as mentioned before.

Items which can be glued to card board: Chop-sticks, paper cups, plastic forks, old pens,
shapes, stamps, picture cuttings from magazines, etc.
5. Research Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used to conduct the research. It includes the outline of the weekly activities which were distributed over a period of twelve weeks. The first two weeks included classroom observations only. In this time the researcher was not involved in teaching or teacher training activities.

The following in-service week included lesson planning, open-ended interviews with both teachers and the presence of the researcher as a Change Agent in the two classrooms. A break of four weeks was planned to enable the teachers to reflect on what they saw and heard and to consider the information. After the break the research was resumed and the classes were again observed.

A short description of the participants involved in the study concludes this chapter.

5.1. Rationale for the Selection of Design and Instruments

A research paradigm was used so that the teachers were active participants in the whole research process. Merriam (1998) referred to such a situation as a collaborative partnership. Such a collaborative research partnership is often best documented using a qualitative approach. This type of research provides the opportunity for 'thick description' (Merriam, 1998) of the classroom environment, teaching styles, teachers' and students' perceptions and the process of change.

My different roles as passive observer and active Change Agent needed to be clearly delineated as this duality could have exerted certain influences on the data collected. One major concern is that the use of participant observation as part of the research design is usually accompanied by non-participant checks as well as member checks. While member checks were conducted with the assistance of the teachers involved, it was not possible to obtain any checks on data by an outside person. Such a situation was present in Zhong Shan as there was not enough English speaking staff available to help with this task.
To improve the validity of the results and to implement a 'collaborative' research style a mixture of qualitative research and quantitative research was regarded as appropriate.

a) Classroom observations by the researcher which reported what actually happened in the classroom between the teacher and the students by tallying communicative interactions. These observations also served as feedback information for the teachers.

b) Questionnaires for students and teachers which helped to draw on the individual perceptions of English learning and teaching.

c) Interviews with the teachers which clarified assumptions of the researcher and acted as member checks to ensure that the researcher's documentation of observations were accurate.

Point a) was mainly a quantitative research design while points b) and c) were mainly qualitative research designs.

The questionnaire for students had to be designed in Chinese because most Grade 4 students were not able to read and answer the questions in English. However, the students were familiar with the style of questions, as these had already occurred in a similar questionnaire designed by Stone-Kwok (1999b). The answers were tallied and listed into an Excel computer program which generated Figures 6.3.1 to 6.3.3. pages 103-105.

The questionnaire for the teachers was mainly used to derive background information on the two teachers involved in this research. A similar questionnaire was utilised in Sri Lanka (Trittibach, 1997). The questionnaire as such was not intended to collect or influence the results but it was a valuable source of information and explanation as to why the teachers reacted or taught in a certain manner.

The interview questions again enhanced the collaborative research design as most questions were aimed at the teacher's opinions and orientation in teaching methodology.
The questions also offered the opportunity to reflect on the past lessons. Oprandy (1999) suggested a collaborative interview style of questions (Part Four, p.56). This form of interview design is inclusive of the style of questions that were used by Patton (1990), who conducted similar interviews for the qualitative evaluation of teachers. The analysis of the data reflected on the provisions of the in-service and supplied me with relevant information on what the teachers needed in support of communicative interaction. Here again teamwork and a collaborative approach extended many interview questions to points of discussion. I often referred back to answers in the interviews in order to validate the 'change' which I perceived during the in-service. These references were important points of triangulation.

This is the recommended method for confirming the validity of the research results or assumptions by the researcher. Triangulation can be performed in a number of ways. Merriam (1998, pp.204-205) suggested:

a) 'Member checks'. Taking the collected data and its tentative interpretation back to the participants. For example, I asked the teachers to comment on the occurrence of communicative interaction in their classes and I let them explain why they had chosen certain activities for the lesson.

b) 'Observation'. Returning to the research site and repeating the observations of the same phenomenon over and after a period of time. For example, in my case in a single observation the teachers would have had the possibility to focus on certain activities under scrutiny, however, over a longer period this possibility is less obvious and deviation from their usual form of language teaching is less likely.

c) 'Participant collaboration'. Involving the participants in all the phases of the research. For example, I involved the teachers in ongoing discussions about EFL teaching, method choice and material provision. This raised an
increasing interest in the topic of my study and teachers identified themselves more readily with the research.

(In accordance with Merriam, 1998, pp.204-205)

Because every year the students of all primary school classes in the PRC have to sit for the 'National Test', this source of information served as a further indicator of how successful the contact with the Change Agent had been (Appendix, p.166). Another influence on the 'National Test' results was certainly also the growing awareness and interest of other schools and the Department of Education in this research and its outcome.

After gathering the data in both classes they were submitted to a two-paired t-test. This test procedure is recommended for the quantitative research design (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1994). This choice of statistical procedure establishes with confidence if the two group performances, prior and after the intervention of the Change Agent, had significantly 'changed'. The information from the five different 'Communicative Interactions' observed in this research were tallied prior to and after my intervention and the results were entered in a computer supported program. The t-test compared:

Pair one: 'Communicative Interaction Initiated by the Teacher'
Pair two: 'Communicative Interaction Initiated by the Student'
Pair three: 'Communicative Interaction Initiated by other Means'
Pair four: 'Total of Communicative Interaction'
Pair five: 'Explicit Language Focus'

5.2. Research Methods as Applied on Location

As planned the research could be introduced and started at the beginning of semester 2, 2000. In China this is in March.
A. Week 1

The two Grade 4 English teachers at the ‘C’ and at the ‘H’ Schools, in Zhong Shan, and the researcher discussed the research procedure in detail. It was essential that the participants in this study knew that the data collected was confidential and that the study had one main aim: Enabling of the teachers to provide for more communicative interaction in their English lessons.

Further, at a meeting, the teachers were informed officially that the lessons were to be audio-recorded during the time of my research and Mr Joseph Stone Kwok from the Department of Education of Zhong Shan presided. As the organisational problems were solved I had the impression that the teachers were looking forward to this support and that they were keen to participate in this study. No personal concerns were voiced. The meeting concluded with the written permission of this study given by the principals of the two schools concerned. The principals prepared a note for the parents of the two Grade 4 classes to inform them about the research.

B. Weeks 2-4

Observation and recording

The observation and recording of the two Grade 4 lessons started after the testing of the audio-recording equipment. The researcher observed three lessons per week and audio-recorded them. During this period the supply of detailed and accurate information about the actual communicative interactions taking place in the lessons and the lesson presentations was the main focus of the study (Appendix, Table 10.5. Excel Data Sheet, p.164, Tape Script A, p.167).

In the two classrooms, the number of interactions between teacher-student, student-student, explicit language focus and interactions by other means were noted and listed. Making use of my field notes, the teachers completed the assessments of their lessons and below is an account of the results from the first two weeks. The recordings supplied
the data on which I based my discussion and findings. They enabled me to comment on
them with confidence regarding the occurrence and types of communicative interaction. I
observed any distribution of communicative and non-communicative interaction during
each lesson and classified them into four main types:

a) Class management which included all remarks made by the teacher
concerning the procedural organisation of the lesson. These remarks
indicated the use of the target language in situations which were not
cconcerned directly with the lesson content.

b) Content related interactions which the researcher classified by the parties
involved in the interaction (i.e. Teacher-student interaction and/or student-
student interaction in teacher-fronted activities) and by their frequency and
content.

c) Content related interactions by other means including the observation of
material use, role play, pair/group work or listening/watching, reading/writing
tasks.

d) Explicit language focus and non-communicative interactions which the
researcher analysed. The researcher classified them into 'teacher-student
explicit repetition of one word or part of a sentence', or, explicit grammar
repetition, class drill and chorus repetition.

This form of observation is an adaptation of a form recommended by Oprandy
(1999, p.115).

The teacher’s understanding of his or her role within the classroom was important for this
study. In my field notes I thus observed and discussed the role and behaviour of each

*This model of classification and coding of interactions are the results from former classroom
observation gained by the researcher in Sri Lanka (Trittibach, 1997).
teacher whose involvement influenced communicative interaction to a considerable degree.

C. Week 5

Feedback and interviews
As a point of triangulation the teachers were given feedback on interaction types encountered during the two weeks of observation and were asked to reflect and comment on the interactions occurring in their lessons. For the remaining week I was available for discussions on lesson planning, material selection and preparation and for team-teaching. The recordings also provided evidence of the type and amount of communicative interaction in each lesson.

In open-ended interviews the teachers had ample time to comment on the individual lessons and to discuss any difficulties in applying the communicative approach. The interviews were audio taped to supply me with the possibility to listen to them again. The teachers often invited me to stay after school or to meet them in their free time. Quite often such meetings were visited not only by the teachers involved in this study but also by other teachers who approached me with their questions on lesson planning. These discussions proved to be most enjoyable and fruitful as the teachers quite openly talked about their perceptions.

D. Weeks 6-9

Break
During this period, the teachers and their classes were not involved in the ongoing research. However, I was present in the schools to teach my own classes once a week.
E. Weeks 10-11

Resumed Observation

The next round of lesson observation and recording was prepared and undertaken and it was evident that the teachers were now more aware of communicative interaction in their lessons. I analysed the changes in communicative interaction and discussed them in more in detail Chapter 4. I also distributed student questionnaires which served as additional feedback from the students of the research classes. The results and their outcomes were implemented in the discussion and conclusion of this study.

F. Week 12

Conclusion and meetings with the teachers

The teachers met with me in order to exchange information and to discuss their experiences during the research. Any increase in communicative interaction and possible shifts on behalf of the teachers towards more communicative strategies were discussed. Further, I received information concerning the effectiveness of this research and discussed any difficulties encountered in preparing and using a more communicative approach. A final meeting with the teachers and Mr Joseph Stone-Kwok concluded this research.

Mr Stone-Kwok commented on the experiences gained from this study from the point of view of the Education Authorities of Zhong Shan and it was agreed that I should stay on as a Change Agent for a further period of one semester.

5.3. Description of Participants in This Research

The Teachers

The teacher questionnaire revealed that the two teachers had different training backgrounds and also perceived different needs in their EFL training. Vera had two years teacher training at the Teacher Training College in Zhong Shan and up to present had
little knowledge of EFL methodology. She had been teaching English as a foreign
language for two years.

Igor had two years teacher training at the University of Guangzhou and had been
teaching English for seven years. Both had a major in English but little training in EFL
acquisition. Vera had very few contacts with English speaking foreigners and those she
had had were in teacher training. Igor had regular contact with English speaking
foreigners in his teacher training in Guangzhou and maintains this contact up to date. In
summer holidays he often meets other English-speaking teachers either in Hong Kong or
in Guangzhou and exchanges views and opinions about teaching English as a foreign
language. Both teachers participated in workshops in the Research Centre for English
Teachers in Zhong Shan. However, these workshops were critically commented and did
not offer the help the two teachers wanted. Their main concern was that these workshops
seldom reflected the daily needs of an English teacher in primary schools in Zhong Shan
and often included activities which were aimed at the language abilities of secondary
school students or the proficiency of the teachers'.

The Students

The 41 students in each Grade 4 class have had English as a subject from Grade
1. They attended English lessons three times per week (40 minutes per lesson). Both
classes have had no contact with an English-speaking foreigner in their schools and
similar contact outside school was seldom.

The Schools

In the first week of my research I encountered curious but shy attention from the
staff of both schools and by the parents who brought their children. However, the
students had a different and rather refreshing approach to my presence. They were
obviously delighted to try out their English language skills and to practise their newly
acquired vocabulary with me. To be able to use what was learnt in the lessons was a
unique experience for all of them. As I was the first Westerner to visit these schools it was a useful opportunity for the students to practise their English with non-Chinese and my presence was quickly accepted.

For example, now, when I approach the two schools in the Southern District, no special attention is paid to my presence. On school-outings I lead my class like the others and some surprised outsiders to the Southern District approach my students with questions about my presence. As the literature on 'Change Agents' demonstrates this person can work more effectively when readily accepted by the group.

The Classroom Procedures

In the schools the following aspect of class procedure was interesting to watch. It was that the students had to stand up in order to answer the teacher's questions. And that at the beginning, in both schools the students did not have much opportunity to participate equally in interactions because the lessons were very much teacher-centred and it was the teacher who normally chose the participant in a communicative interaction. Thus, often the students who were quick in assessing the situation and at giving an answer where considered for participation.

Students selected to participate were required to stand up to give an answer. In my role as Change Agent I suggested a less formal approach such as allowing the students to give an immediate answer without formality. However, the teachers were not consistently following these suggestions because they considered 'standing up' as a form of respect towards the teacher (Grabe & McMahon, 1981). Further, the students while at a task, were not allowed to move around in the classroom and had to sit up straight and be still. This, the two teachers believed, prevented the class of 41 students from getting unruly, but it also discouraged the inclusion of group and pair work. As Change Agent in the classroom I found, that like many colleagues, Chinese teachers were hesitant to utilise these teaching methods because of the additional noise level and the more lively
movements within the classroom. However, unlike Grabe and McMahon (1981, p.208) who found that: '…most teachers of English in China would not be free to innovate…', I was able to demonstrate how efficient and effective these methods were and how much more interest and motivation students enjoyed in participating in the lessons. The Education Officer, Mr Stone-Kwok, often encouraged Igor and Vera, to try out how efficiently these methods worked.
6. Results

This chapter presents the results of both the qualitative and the quantitative data collected in the two Grade 4 classrooms under investigation.

First, the chapter displays the data collected over the set time in which the researcher observed the classes without intervention. The qualitative research methods supported these observations and allowed more detailed comments on each class and teacher. The findings of the quantitative research method are displayed in figures with each class separately depicted.

Second, the chapter deals with the teacher and student questionnaires. The questionnaires with the teachers were conducted before and in the in-service. The student questionnaires were distributed before the in-service.

In a third part, the chapter describes the in-service and the outcome of interviews with the teachers. Many questions were more than once addressed and some were even raised in discussions with other teachers in Zhong Shan.

At the end of Chapter 6, the data collected over the set time in which the researcher observed the classes again is displayed. Qualitative research methods supported these observations. The results then were tested and analysed by a t-test. During the in-service the teachers and I designed a 'Check List' to be able to monitor classroom activities. The outcome of this list is added to the result chapter.

6.1. Teachers' Use of Communicative Interaction Prior to Change Agent's Intervention

In order to answer 'Sub-Question A', i.e. 'Before the Change Agents' intervention, how many and what types of communicative interaction were used?', I attended each English lesson in the respective schools. The English research officer Mr Stone-Kwok introduced me to teacher Vera in 'C' School and teacher Igor in 'H' School some time before the research began. As outlined before I had explained in detail what I intended to
do in their Grade 4 classes. However, at first, both teachers were rather nervous about my presence in the classroom and were very worried that they would not be found 'good enough'. Teacher Vera from 'C' School voiced her concern as follows: 'I don't know what to do. What do you think I should do?' It took quite some time before and after each lesson to reassure the teachers that I was not there to judge their teaching, rather that I would be a colleague teaching another class in their school and using a different methodology. Further, that I would be working alongside them to demonstrate this methodology and to give them the opportunity to try it out in their classrooms. They could then determine whether or not they felt it improved the children's oral English. Teacher Igor from 'H' School wanted to start immediately with the in-service as he mentioned that he considered the two weeks of observation as 'a waste of time because we need your help. There is no question about it!'
First Two Weeks Observations in 'C' School, Vera

I started in 'C' Class and the following observations were made:

There were all forty-one students present, and they were present in all other observations. At the beginning the students were very attentive and quiet. Vera introduced the topic of the lesson and used Chinese to explain the grammar,

'We are.'

'They are.'

Vera had prepared two different tasks on the blackboard and additionally had copied the text from the course book. The students had to read after the teacher. Vera usually started the reading task with the sentence: 'Read after me!' The whole class then read the text in chorus. If Vera considered a word to be difficult she began repeating it up to five times and the class had to repeat it after her.

When asked why she repeated these words so many times she said, '...like this the children learn to pronounce the word correctly, learn to read it and also have something to say with the teacher'.

This type of word repetition occupied the class from 23 times in the first lesson, 59 times in the last lesson of the first two weeks.

Vera used this teaching strategy for most of her lessons and the data from the two weeks' observation were similar. She mostly initiated content related interaction such as asking a question that occurred in the book and different students had to answer the same question many times. When I asked her why she used only these two or three sentences she answered that these were the sentences which were in the book. 'Explicit language focus' consisted mostly of words which Vera considered difficult. In the field notes I noted that some of the students seemed to mechanically repeat these words and waited for Vera to do the prompting. Sometimes students just shouted the word and Vera had to remind
the class to be more disciplined. When she once included group work, the classroom was very lively. Vera considered this lesson as '...very bad because the students were so noisy.'

Vera wanted to know how many instances of each type of interaction she had utilised in the lesson. Several times I had to explain to her that I first had to document her teaching methods for two weeks before giving her any suggestions. However, I usually told her what I had observed and asked her a few questions about the past lesson. Although she had been teaching English for two years she was rather insecure about her teaching, in front of me, as many teachers in her situation would have been. She had visited one workshop for her own language proficiency and had attended several meetings with Joseph Stone-Kwok concerning the improvement of teaching oral English skills and lesson planning.

The results of the different communicative interaction are displayed on the following page.
The figure shows how Vera interacted with her students. The interactions are displayed as the sum of each interaction type, as they occurred in her first two weeks of my observations. The display indicates that most interactions were teacher initiated and had an explicit language focus. ‘Teacher Initiated Interaction’ focused mainly on the whole class and ‘Explicit Language Focus’ included mainly word drill. Both teaching strategies were integral and important parts of classroom activities in Grade 4, ‘C’ School.
First Two Week Observations in 'H School, Igor'

At the same time as I started the observation in 'C' School, I also observed 'H' School.

In 'H' School the following observation were made:

The Grade 4 class included 41 students who were present in all my observations. Igor has more professional experience than Vera as he has taught English for seven years. My first observation in his class began in the same week as Vera's and I could readily compare the two teachers' methods because they were teaching the same units in the course book.

Igor used fewer teaching aids and concentrated on 'Teacher Initiated Interaction' and an explicit language focus. His two weeks count of 'Teacher Initiated Interaction' was between 19 in his first lesson and 50 in the last lesson of observation. The section 'Explicit language Focus' included counts of between 58 and 103 per lesson. When I asked him why he used language drill so often he answered '...I wasn't aware of this!' He was naturally confident in the classroom and the students tended to follow him attentively and were quiet. As he used very few teaching aids except the blackboard and the tape, I questioned him about the availability of other resources. He replied that up to now he had not thought much about '...such things.' He said: '...you know Monika, I have no time, no talent and no money to make them.' In the next two lessons Igor included two role-plays from the course book, which some students performed in front of the class.

Igor utilised Chinese to explain grammar and listening tasks. It is interesting to note that the tape also used some considerable amount of translation.

Igor attended two years teacher training and also had a Major in English. He had visited several workshops and summer camps in Zhong Shan and Guangdong. These workshops were aimed mainly at the language proficiency of the English teachers.
The above figure depicts how Igor interacted with his students. The interactions are displayed as the sum of each interaction type, as they occurred in his first two weeks of observation. The observation of communication occurring in 'H' class displayed that 'Explicit Language Focus' was an important part of the teaching strategy used in Grade 4 in 'H' class and the figure shows that there was little use of materials. Igor concentrated on teacher initiated interaction.
I had the impression that both teachers used the similar methods and approaches. When I discussed this observation with them they agreed that these lessons were based on the outlines which they had received from other teachers at meetings. Joseph Stone-Kwok explained that the English teachers met once or twice a semester to discuss and prepare lessons.

The following display shows that 'Explicit Language Focus' and 'Teacher Initiated Interactions' formed the major parts of activities in the two classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'C' School</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by Other Means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Language Focus and Non-communicative Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vera’s activities consisted mainly of ‘Teacher Initiated Interactions’ and ‘Explicit Language Focus’.

The observations in Igor’s class in ‘H’ School prior to Change Agent’s intervention showed that the lessons were characterised by ‘Explicit Language Focus’ or ‘Non-communicative Activities’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'H' School</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by Other Means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Language Focus and Non-communicative Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The comparable small sections of 'Content Related Interaction Initiated by Students' or 'by Other Means' are pertinent to this research. A discussion and analysis of the two classes are addressed in Chapter 7.

6.2. A Comparison of Vera's and Igor's Teaching Approaches

Teacher Questionnaires

To obtain further information about the teachers' approaches to teaching English before they attended the in-service on communicative method, I asked them to fill in a questionnaire (Appendix, p.150). The two teachers had time to fill in these forms and if they wished they could discuss certain issues arising from the questionnaire with me during the interviews. The teachers returned the questionnaire at the end of the in-service. I will analyse questions four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten in this questionnaire as the information from the other questions have been used the portrait of each teacher presented earlier. Those questions were aimed at the educational background and on the professional experience of Vera and Igor.

Question 4: How did you perceive your last English lesson?

Both teachers were not quite satisfied with their teaching. Vera wrote that she had difficulties in keeping the class interested until the end of the lesson. She felt that she did not know if the students had understood her or even learnt anything. Igor on the other hand was quite satisfied with the lesson in general but mentioned that he felt that something was lacking. He remarked that he was 'always doing the same things' and that the students were politely following him, but rather in a detached manner.
Question 5: How many communicative interactions did you include in your last English lesson?

Vera and Igor first had the feeling that they had included ‘many’ communicative interactions. When I asked them to describe them, they both appeared to be surprised and stated: ‘But the students were speaking, weren’t they!’ After the in-service I approached both teachers again and showed them their answers. They laughed and Vera said: ‘Well, that was before we knew what communicative interaction is all about!’

Question 6: Which learning effect did you have in mind when using communicative interaction?

Vera could not understand this question at first and I tried to paraphrase it by making an example:

‘If I distribute pictures of a classroom to each student, I intend to prompt the students to tell me what they see in the picture. The learning effect would then be that the student talks freely about a topic by making his individual sentences.’

She seemed surprised about this and could not offer any answer. At a later stage, she stated that she had no idea of ‘learning effect’ and up to this moment had ‘never thought’ about it. She told me in confidence that after this meeting she went home ‘a bit worried’ that she had not considered this in her preparations. She said that she usually copied what was recommended from other teachers and did not have the necessary methodological knowledge ‘to do something like this on my own’.

Igor stated that he could give me any learning effect of activities such as reading, ‘but since the students are repeating my words or sentences, I guess it is mainly pronunciation which they learn.’
Question 7: Which factors do you think are important for your students to learn English?

This question is interesting because of the discrepancy in answers to the same question in the student questionnaire. Both teachers answered that the most important factor was that of passing the 'National Test' and 'that's what we do here' prepare them to pass. An interesting remark here is that none of the students in the two classes ever raised this issue.

Question 8: Which factors are important to you?

Both teachers again answered similarly. The situation of 'testing' was predominant in their minds. Igor was most concerned about two of his students whom he considered 'weak'. I asked him, if he felt some pressure from parents to have all students pass the test. At first he did not clearly answer the question. However, at a later stage, he stated that the reputation of the school and the funding by private persons living abroad depended on the outcome and the performance of the 'National Test'.

Question 9: What motivates or de-motivates students to learn English?

Vera stated that she believed that: 'Good students have no problem in staying motivated'. She assumed that it was the bad students who were not interested. 'They are naughty', she wrote.

Igor mentioned that: 'At first all students want to learn it, but later when it gets more difficult and you have to remember vocabulary and grammar, they fail to show interest.' He commented that 'the girls are more disciplined'.
Question 10: Which difficulties do you have in implementing communicative interactions?

Vera stated that she was not so 'good at having the right ideas'. She also mentioned her proficiency in English was not sufficient to 'quickly making up something, like you do'. Igor was more concerned with the preparations of materials and the 'crowded' classroom.

6.3. A comparison of ‘C’ School and ‘H School

Student Questionnaires

To obtain the answers to the students’ questionnaire, I interviewed the students and with the teachers’ help the questions were translated. The students tried to formulate their answers in English but of course the teachers had to assist with the written answers. The answers were then tallied as they occurred in the student comments and have been presented graphically so that the two schools can be compared. The questionnaire revealed the following results:

![Graph showing answers to 'Do you like learning English?']

Figure 6.3.1. Answers to Question ‘Do you like learning English?’
The Students' answers in 'C' and 'H' Schools to the above question demonstrate that while class 'C' seemed to be positively inclined towards learning English, 'H' class had a more critical view. I interviewed some of the students in 'H' class and asked them why they didn't like learning English, many answered: 'It is boring.' In 'C' class one student answered: 'It is not useful.' Others also indicated that they perceived the lessons as 'boring'.

![Bar chart showing answers to why students like learning English](image)

**Figure 6.3.2. Answers to Question 'Why do you like learning English?'**

The Students' answers in 'C' class and 'H' class to question two 'Why do you like learning English?' are presented in Figure 6.3.2. The result showed that they were aware that they might have a better chance in their search for employment if they had knowledge of English. In 'H' class a larger number of students planned to pursue their studies in college or at university.
The students rated the skills of reading, writing, speaking, acting and memorising in English from 1 to 6, 1 being the most preferred. I concentrated on the choice of the number one to the skill 'I like most' because the students showed some difficulties in distributing the other numbers. However, the choice of the most popular skill gave a comprehensive picture of what the two classes liked to do in English lessons.

'C' class had a nearly balanced outcome between 'writing' and 'acting'. On the other hand, 'H' class clearly rated 'acting' over 'writing'. However, 'acting' was the most preferred skill in both classes.

The figures above show that the students in both classes knew what they expected from an EFL lesson. Their pre-disposition towards English as a language is positive and they see the need for it for their future employment. However, the figure shows the wish to participate actively in the lessons and that the least favoured skill was memorising. None of the 82 students raised the issue of passing the 'National Test'. As I inquired about this fact, the teachers queried their respective classes and the students mainly answered: 'We cannot change this!'
In part one where they were requested to tick according to their liking of the English lessons 'C' class students seemed rather satisfied. On the other hand the students from 'H' class were not always content with the lessons and mainly perceived them as predictable, thus, boring. In part two where more detailed information was required, the students of both schools answered similarly and the request for more entertaining, lively and less book-centred lessons was evident. In the final part, where a rating system was required, it was obvious that both classes did not like memorising as a form of learning. However, the highly rated writing and acting indicates that the students liked practising both skills.

The above facts were presented to the teachers and I asked for comments. Vera answered: 'These facts make me think...I think I fail my students...but I have to teach them like this (otherwise) they will never pass the exams!'

Igor wanted to know, if there was a solution to their dilemma. He asked me: 'Can we teach more activities and meet the 'National Test' expectations?' On several occasions after this discussion I heard such concern.

6.4. In-service With the Change Agent

With the open-ended interviews I started an assessment of the situation in the two classes I had observed during the previous two weeks. A meeting was held at each school and an agreement was reached on the following procedure:

1. The 'Change Agent is be present during each lesson preparation in Grade 4.

These preparations proved to be a fruitful occasion for interviewing the teachers. Very often during such periods we could discuss methodology and in support of suggestions of 'Exploring Through Supervision' in Oprandy (1999, p.27) we had time to 'talk shop'. At the beginning Vera needed more support in lesson planning and she at first seemed hesitant to try new ideas. She still acted shyly in my presence. After a week in an
intensive work relationship, she demonstrated more confidence in her own ideas and abilities. She often sought my company in the staff room to draw on my experience in EFL teaching. As we both found out, she liked the idea of team teaching and we prepared and taught some interesting lessons together. Igor found this idea appealing, too. He appreciated 'practical' ideas such as the 'laundry bag' game and he often asked me to 'invent' games for his lessons. His approach was normally like this: 'I teach Unit 15, any ideas?' Often we would discuss more than one approach. In one lesson Igor tried to implement as many communicative interactions as possible.

2. The Change Agent together with the teacher prepares and uses activities which support communicative interaction according to the course book.

Working with the teachers, we discussed different methodological approaches to communicative interaction such as the tactile, the audio-visual and the emotional approach, and both were very keen to learn about the possibilities they offered. A description of the methodological approaches as outlined by Linder, 1999; McCarthy, 1991 and Ur & Wright, 1992 and that we utilised are displayed in Chapter 4. However, in order to give insights into what occurred and how the Change Agent worked together with the teachers during the in-service, an account of four lessons using the course book and communicative interaction is given below.

Unit 11, We are classmates (WE ARE/THEY ARE)

Material preparation: Signs with numbers.

One student comes to the front of the class and takes up a sign. He or she selects other students to joint him or her. The students say the sentences from the book.

'We are in class 3, we are classmates.'

Other such groups are formed. They all have different numbers on their sign.

Each group repeats the sentence but with another number.
The remaining students now individually contribute. Body language helped to define the group. The students quite naturally pointed to the group they were referring to.

'This is class 3, they are classmates.'

As we had received previous permission from our colleagues next door, we asked several students from their classes to quickly come into our room. The students automatically learned to say 'Come in' and 'Sit down, please' as the teacher did that with the first visitors. As I intended to have this lesson connected to the world outside the classroom this was a good opportunity to interact with others.

The visiting students sat in front of the class and our students then applied the new sentence.

'They are from class 6a, they are classmates.'

'We are from class 4, we are classmates, too.'

Unit 12, On the farm, (VOCABULARY)

Material provision: Pictures of the animals.

As I have outlined one lesson preparation in Chapter 4 based on this unit I will describe the group work:

Each group of four students had a set of pictures from the following animals: goat, cow, pig, horse, duck, sheep and rabbit. One student was the teacher and following the examples we had given, the students started immediately to ask each other.

'What's this?' 'This is a cow.'

'What's this?' 'A horse.'

I had anticipated such an answer and the teachers were first opposed to accepting it, however, I convinced them that this was 'natural' language, and they accepted my judgement. Here the lack of direct contact with English speakers was obvious.

Some students copied my questions and included them in their repertoire such as:
‘Is this a…?’

‘Which of these animals is a …?’

My contribution to this lesson was to draw the pictures of the above animals.

Unit 14, Word games (IS THIS A /YES, IT IS /NO, IT ISN’T, IT IS A /POINT TO THE )

Material provision: Realia

The vocabulary included in this unit was cup, box, bed, apple, egg and orange.

Igor suggested the real things as supported by Linder (1999). However, in case of the egg I suggested to have it boiled first. I also bought a plastic toy bed for this activity.

The laundry bag was in use and the class was first involved in vocabulary revision.

In a change of method the teacher then requested:

‘Point to the desk.’ The students followed.

‘Point to the girl.’ The students followed.

This change of action can be recommended for two reasons.

First, to conform to the shorter attention span of primary school students (Rivers, 1981) and second to condition the students for the unexpected.

The students responded quickly to this activity and the teacher could leave it to the class to continue with it.

The students would request:

‘Point to the apple.’

‘Point to the egg.’

The teacher then interrupted again and asked one student:

Excuse me, is this an orange in English?

The student answered:

‘Yes, it is’ or ‘No, it isn’t. It’s an apple.’

Here again I suggested that the negative answer could also be:

‘No, it’s an apple.’
The teacher then had the pairs practised freely. They had the choice of question and the teacher had time to interact and correct individual students.

Unit 15, Ask for things (Revision, addition of ‘good morning’ and ‘good afternoon’)

Material provision: Realia

The teacher changed the vocabulary of the lesson but more or less followed the last lesson plan.

Instead of the above items the teacher provided a pear, a banana, a cake, a tomato, a potato and an ice cream stick. The teacher just took the laundry bag out and the students knew what to do.

In this lesson the teacher added a new more natural dialogue as it could occur in the market.

‘Good morning, may I have the banana, please?’

(gesture toward the banana, hand open)

The student was requested to react to this.

‘Good morning, may I have the pear, please?’

Student reacted according to the example.

Then the teacher prompted the student to ask for an item by pointing to one and make a gesture.

Student asked:

‘Good morning, may I have a banana, please.’ (Teacher helped to finish the sentence)

The teacher gave the item and said:

‘Here you are.’

The students had pictures of these objects and could now try in pairs to do the same.

The teacher acted as prompter, assessor and entertainer.
At the end of the lesson the teacher requested school items in order to bring the activity to the students' most immediate environment (McCarthy, 1991).

3. The Change Agent is present in the lesson and interacts with the students.

I enjoyed this task and together with the two teachers we found an acceptable manner of interacting with the students. I often included role changes as recommended by Harmer (1991, pp. 235-242). Vera at first was not sure if she could do this. However as we were in her class she started to imitate some of the roles. Igor adapted to this contention of role change and seemed to enjoy it.

4. Immediately after each lesson the teacher and the Change Agent assess the lesson and provide ideas for the next lesson.

In these lesson assessments I could include interview questions and the answers to these were 'eye-openers' for my two colleagues and me.

I usually started the assessment with Question a) of the interview. (Appendix, p. 158)

Question a): To what extent was your lesson what you expected it to be?

Both teachers first mentioned that this had been a 'very good lesson' and never failed to say 'thanks to you'. I pointed out that they were in charge of the teaching and that I was merely following the lesson plan. Later, they pointed out that they had never felt better and more secure in what they did in the classroom. Of course, most of the time both had been aware of the main aspect of my research and they freely admitted that they were always focussing on communicative interaction during their teaching. This gave an answer to Question b).

Question c): What feelings did you have when using communicative interaction?

Vera felt rather uneasy at first. She mentioned that repetition was easier to produce.
Igor felt at ease with communicative interaction and said that the class was responding 'very well'. Concerning role change both felt it demanding and stated that they usually were 'tired' after the lesson. Vera mentioned that it needed her full concentration.

Question d): How did the students respond to your efforts to use communicative interaction?

Vera thought that she had a more attentive class and the boys were taking more part in the activities. Igor as mentioned before said it was 'a hit'. 'They (the students) say they want more jokes.' I had the impression that the classes were very lively and most students participated with vigour and sometimes forgot to stand up for answers. More often I could witness that each student had at least one interaction with the teacher or a peer.

Question e): What do you consider the best method of the past lesson and why?

Vera enjoyed the material provision and found that this helped her to produce better lessons. Igor found role changes fruitful and also liked to introduce more 'games'. In general the teachers were satisfied with each method we introduced.

Question f): What do you consider was the best communicative interaction of the past lesson and why?

Vera reflected on each lesson carefully and found that 'the best was when the students were working in groups and in pairs'. She mentioned that then the students would speak English amongst themselves. Igor mentioned similar feelings and as a result of such reflection the school installed a 'chatter box' on the playground. The machine consisted of a button and a loudspeaker. By pressing the button, a tape would say something in English i.e. 'Good morning. How are you?' The students could listen and answer or just
listen. The idea was that the students should get accustomed to hearing English phrases on the school premises.

**Question g):** Do you think communicative interaction can change the role of the teacher?

Vera thought that these roles would change a lot in her classroom and that the students would profit from it. However, she had the feeling that she could only perform such changes in my presence. I was her 'safety net'. Igor said that it did not only affect the class or individual students but also 'me, myself, I changed a lot and what I see I like.' Both teachers felt that the biggest influence of the Change Agent was in this field where they could 'watch and try out' roles. Igor stated: 'With your examples, we can do it, too.'

**Question h):** What effects did the communicative interaction in your class have?

Vera said that her class paid more attention to what was going on 'because they never know when I ask them now'. Igor said that he had better 'connection to each student'. When I asked them if they planned to maintain the interactive style both said that they were willing to do it. Igor even mentioned that 'I cannot turn back anymore, the class would not like it'.

5. The Change Agent teaches other classes at the respective school to give input and provide demonstration of communicative methods.

As mentioned before I taught 'activity classes' as an 'after-school' activity in both schools. When I started out, Vera and Igor were present. In the following weeks the number of teachers who watched the lessons increased and lesson plans and materials were intensively assessed and discussed after these lessons. In the week of the in-service, we planned, discussed and practised the following units in Book 1, Grade 4, Let's Learn English, Dan Wallas, (1996), Longman:

Unit 13, On the Farm (2 to 3 lesson preparations, see Chapter 4)
Unit 14, Word Games (2 to 3 lesson preparations, see Chapter 4)
Unit 15, Ask for Things (2 to 3 lesson preparations, see Chapter 4)

6.5. Data Display After Change Agent’s Intervention

To give answer to ‘Sub-Question B’, ‘After the intervention of the Change Agent how many and what types of communicative interaction were used?’, I utilised the quantitative research method. In order to allow comparison, I applied the same form of sampling as indicated in 6.1. The same number of lessons were observed and commented on in the field notes.
Observations of Interactions After Change Agent's Intervention in Class ‘C’

The observations in ‘C’ class resumed after a break of four weeks and in this time Vera had the opportunity to design and provide for communicative interaction on her own.

Apparent is the change in the section ‘Class management’ which became less necessary as the class was involved in more interactive tasks than previously. She refrained from utilising ‘Explicit Language Focus’ and drills but concentrated on pair and group work. She felt that my presence and the involvement in interactions were supporting her in her classroom and her choice of method. Her comments were:

‘Suddenly, I am an important person because you are here and you are interested in what I do. My own perception of teaching has changed. I ask myself more often: How can I present this lesson?’

Vera was impressed by her high count of student-student interaction. She found that with the help of the materials, which she provided for the lessons, these interactions were easily initiated. At first, she found these preparations time consuming but later was convinced that she presently feels much less dissatisfied with her teaching.

Material provision was worth the effort, and currently feels much less dissatisfied with her teaching. She mentioned: ‘Material provision was worthwhile and satisfying.’ She also mentioned that she could use the materials in other classes or in later years. She was proud of her ‘changes’ in her methodology.
Figure 6.5.1. Communicative Interaction in 'C' School After Change Agent's Intervention.

The figure illustrates the change in Vera's provision for communicative interaction. With her material preparation she provided for many student-student interactions. As a researcher my main involvement in her lessons was discussing lesson plans and materials provision. Vera would sometimes ask me to draw pictures on the blackboard and to support her in the organisation of the activities.
Since both teachers knew that I was also teaching my own classes she attended them and observed certain methods in order to be able to utilise them later in her own class.

Observations of Interactions After Change Agent's Intervention in Class 'H'

The figure below indicates the different methodological approach which Igor applied in his teaching after the Change Agent intervention and the following changes in classroom activities were immediately apparent:

'Explicit Language Focus' took place but occupied smaller sections of the lessons. (i.e. Occasionally repeated words up to three times for pronunciation.)

Further, although he had earlier explained that he had no experience and time for materials provision, he involved the class in more student-student interaction and was innovative in material provision. For example he displayed several vegetables for vocabulary training and involved the class in a role-play containing 'shopping' as the topic. However, he indicated 'time' as a problem. He said:

'Twice a week I attend an English course and I should also do my homework.' I wonder if I could do lesson planning and material provision for each class as you suggest.' He was surprised that he had 'changed' his methods in such a short time and felt that 'after all it was not that difficult, once I had an 'idea' of different teaching approaches'. Igor in his perception of teacher role still initiated many 'Content Related Interaction' activities but he initiated also more communicative interactions that were based on pair- or group work.

The students participated in the lessons more actively and thus communicated more freely. As the lessons were more interesting and entertaining, and they paid more and closer attention to the activities taking place. Igor, on the other hand, changed from drill and little material provision to a more varied style of teaching.
The above figure illustrates the change in communicative interaction in Igor’s class.

In comparison, both teachers changed but from the data collected it is apparent that ‘change’ did not mean the same for Vera and Igor. As Figure 6.5.1. and Figure 6.5.2. depict Vera changed from rigid ‘Class Management’ measures, teacher centred methods and ‘Explicit Language Focus’ activities to ‘Student-Student Interaction’. As a direct cause of this change the students perceived the lessons as more interesting and entertaining. Igor changed from ‘Explicit Language Focus’ activities to ‘Content Related Interaction Initiated by Other Means’ which included material provision and group work.
His class seemed more focussed on the tasks at hand and some students remarked:
'English is fun!'

The following figures from 'C' School give an overview of the changes which took place in the classroom of Vera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'C' School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by the Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by the Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by other Means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Language Focus and Non-communicative Activities</td>
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</table>

The figures show the increase in 'student-student interaction'. However, material provision seemed less evident in lesson preparation. Obvious was the general increase in student activities.

Figures from 'H' School show the changes which took place in Igor's classroom. They indicate that Igor changed from 'Explicit Language Focus' towards more task-based interaction. Igor's material provision can be considered as minimal but here too an increase can be seen.

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<th>'H' School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Management</td>
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<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by the Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by the Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Related Interaction Initiated by other Means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Language Focus and Non-communicative Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.6. Data to Answer the Main Question of This Research

In order to answer the main question: i.e. 'Can involvement of a teacher trainer as Change Agent promote the adoption of communicative approaches by Chinese teachers of English in the two primary schools being studied?' I compared the data from Figures 6.1.1. and 6.1.2. with the data in Figures 6.5.1. and 6.5.2. The comparison indicated that a change had taken place.

Obvious changes were made in the following three main sections of this research plan:

<table>
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<th>'C' School:</th>
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<tr>
<td>'Explicit Language Focus and Non-communicative Interaction'</td>
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<tr>
<td>declined from 25% to 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Content Related Interaction Initiated by other Means'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increased from 6% to 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Content Related Interaction Initiated by Students'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increased from 16% to 29%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'H' School:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Explicit Language Focus and Non-communicative Interaction'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>declined from 50% to 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Content Related Interaction Initiated by other Means'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increased from 1% to 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Content Related Interaction Initiated by Students'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increased from 6% to 45%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To summarise the changes in Schools 'C' and 'H', it may be said that in three areas of classroom interaction some considerable changes were made.\(^2\) A series of t-tests (two-tailed) were performed and the results revealed significant differences at the 95% level in all but one variable. That was 'Content Related Interaction by Other Means' at 'H' School.

**'C' School Only**

- Content Related Interaction Initiated by the Teacher: \(t=3.426, p=<.019\)
- Content Related Interaction Initiated by the Student: \(t=10.361, p=<.000\)
- Content Related Interaction by Other Means: \(t=-2.866, p=<.035\)
- Total of Content Related Interaction: \(t=3.106, p=<027\)
- Explicit Language Focus: \(t=-4.615, p=<006\)

**'H' School Only**

- Content Related Interaction Initiated by the Teacher: \(t=3.444, p=<.018\)
- Content Related Interaction Initiated by the Student: \(t=5.416, p=<.003\)
- Content Related Interaction by Other Means: \(t=-.928, p=<.396\)
- Total of Content Related Interaction: \(t=-7.541, p=<001\)
- Explicit Language Focus: \(t=3.832, p=<012\)

\(^2\) These changes, however, should be viewed in the context of the short time involvement of the Change Agent. Further, the changes might not be sustained after this person has left the school. However, results of the most recent 'National Test', while possibly due to a range of factors, tend to show an indication of such permanence still present in the two schools after this study was concluded.
6.7. Further Outcomes

Vera, Igor and I decided to design a 'Check List' which could provide some guidance in lesson planning. The list is now widely used in the Southern District and serves as a point of focus for lesson preparation (Trittibach, 2001). The original list is provided in the Appendix, p.173. It contains the following questions:

Activities: What kind of activities will I include in the next lesson?
- Group work, describe organisation, materials and time involvement
- Pair work, describe organisation, materials and time involvement
- Individual interaction, describe organisation, materials and time involvement

Tasks: What kind of tasks do the above activities include?
- Speaking, interaction, communication
- Reading and interaction
- Writing and interaction
- Listening and interaction
- Watching and interaction

Others: What kind of other activities will I prepare for?
- Songs, indicate when in the lesson and the connection to lesson content
- Games, indicate when in the lesson and the connection to lesson content
- Recitations, poems, indicate the connection to lesson content
- Role-plays, indicate when in the lesson and the connection to lesson content
This 'Check List' provided a safety net for the two teachers. As suggested by McCarthy (1991) communicative interaction has to be planned and provided for. Further, backed by Lamie (1999) who suggested that a more appropriate and practical approach for such provision should be made in small steps, I asked both teachers to provide just one activity per lesson from the list above. As Vera and Igor grew more and more confident in communicative interaction planning and conducting, I suggested adding as many as they felt manageable.
7. Discussion and Conclusion

The positive outcomes in the two primary schools demonstrate how a Change Agent can positively influence changes in teaching methodology, materials provision and lesson planning and, therefore, may support the communicative approach by promoting more communicative interaction in the EFL classroom. How such results relate to the relevant literature and provide support for the use of Change Agents and the communicative approach to EFL teaching in China are addressed in this chapter.

The chapter assesses and discusses the scores and outcomes in each school individually, both, prior to and after the intervention of the Change Agent and offers connection to other studies in related literature. Further, it analyses the changes which took place in the two classrooms and which were made by the teachers.

In a further part, the discussion deals with the in-service provided by the Change Agent and includes references to discussions which occurred during the in-service.

Further, the assessment of the role of Change Agent offers support to assumptions and studies from other research. However, as such a role has not yet been described in a Chinese primary school setting it may have to be adapted to such needs.

In the conclusion the organisational terms and the provisions for successful implementation of change and of Change Agents are discussed and analysed.

7.1. Assessment of Results Prior to Change Agent's Intervention

As reported by Chen (1987), Grabe and McMahon (1981) and Li (1984) in China the Confucian view of learning and teaching is still a classroom reality and I found relevant support of this contention in the two schools under investigation. The first weeks of observation revealed similar constraints as noted by Malcolm and Malcolm (1988) and Penner (1995). They can be summarised as following:
a) The influence of traditional teacher training which does not necessarily include methodology and material provision but supports 'drill' and 'book-centred learning'.

b) The classroom behaviour which is supported by the Confucian view of teaching and learning and which defines the teacher's role and students' behaviour in the classroom.

c) The teacher's own proficiency in English.

In both schools the provision of space or time limitations, mentioned by Penner (1995) as limiting teachers' uptake of the communicative method, were not found to be detrimental to the outcome of classroom activities. In discussion with the two teachers I found that both had an understanding of the theories of the communicative approach (Campbell & Zhao, 1983; Li, 1984). However, these theories were not readily reflected in the two classrooms. As observed by Li (1984) also in my classes, language 'drill' was the main form of teaching method. When I visited the two schools I was able to observe Chinese language classes and there too, chorus repetition was the main approach to teaching. On other occasions, when I was watching English lessons on television, very similar methods were utilised. Thus, it has to be acknowledged that this traditional form of teaching is broadly accepted and applied in language teaching in China (Chen, 1987; Penner, 1995).

In both schools teaching aids and other materials were seldom used and the lack of them indicated the direction in which my work as Change Agent had to be concerned. In many cases lesson preparation by the Chinese teachers included just the obvious things such as the blackboard, the tape recorder and the book.

Further, as reported by Penner (1995) and Horwitz (1996) teacher language output highly depends on the teacher's own communicative abilities in the foreign language.
and this I observed was sometimes restricting the supply of more communicative interaction in the two EFL classes.

In the next section I will deal with the individual observations which were made in 'C' School and 'H' School and which were considerably relevant for the organisation of the in-service.

The quantitative data gathered in 'C' School and 'H' School prior to Change Agent's intervention indicated that in both schools, 'Interaction Initiated by the Student', 'Student-Student Interaction' and 'Group Work' were seldom practised. 'Communicative Interaction in 'C' School Prior to the Change Agent's Intervention' showed a large distribution of 'Content Related Interaction Initiated by Teacher'. Vera tended to control the class via her own involvement in communication. However, the data collected in count form did not indicate that Vera utilised repeatedly the same few question-answer patterns as provided from the course book. For example, when the book provided the question: 'Is this a cow?' Vera would use this question only, although, there were five other animals to choose from. Therefore, the qualitative method of classroom observation was a necessary supplement to impart this important data and to be able to offer feedback to Vera. It also supported the change in her performance in the classroom.

Prior to intervention, Igor utilised 'Explicit Language Focus and Non-communicative Activities' for up to half of the lesson and he provided few materials to support communicative activities. He also tended to control his class via 'Content Related Interaction Initiated by Teacher'. He often referred to the same few students in these interactions and omitted to address others. Here too, the qualitative method supported and supplemented the data accumulated by the quantitative method (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999).
Both teachers were not quite satisfied with their teaching and were keen to receive more information on how to apply communicative interactions in their classes. Thus, their intrinsic motivation was relying on the in-put provided by the Change Agent.

7.2. Discussion of the In-service

In order to discuss the possibilities or feasibility of 'change' of EFL teachers in the two schools in this study, the following points in the in-service needed to be considered.

1. Access to EFL teaching methods and a variety of roles of the EFL teacher.

   (Harmer, 1991; McCarthy, 1994; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Ur & Wright, 1992)

2. Assessment of classroom performance. (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999)

From my observations and the discussion with the two teachers I could not find many indications that they had access to diverse teaching methodology. From the open-ended interviews and from the questionnaires which were completed by the two teachers, I gained the impression that they had not received sufficient methodological support in EFL teaching. What they knew and had experienced was mostly from training workshops and from their own experience. Both teachers positively welcomed more insight into this subject and admitted freely, that they copied what they saw from other EFL teachers and their teacher trainers at the Teacher Trainer Colleges. This observation supported reports by Breen (1999) who stated that teachers are often influenced by the in-put they had received during their training. The situation was also described by Li (1984) of Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Languages who found that traditional, practical and theoretical reasons obstructed a more communicative approach to EFL teaching.

There was little utilisation of other materials and when the Change Agent started to include such teaching aids in lessons their usefulness was often acknowledged.
Especially ‘realia’, items of daily use, which were easy to achieve, were readily taken into consideration (Linder, 1999). Thus, when both teachers followed the Change Agent’s suggestions in their lesson planning, both perceived lesson preparation as being more demanding but necessary for implementing the desired communicative interactions. At first they both relied on the guidance provided by the Change Agent in the in-service and closely followed her suggestions. Thus, communicative interactions as defined by McCarthy (1991) and Richards and Rodgers (1986) were found to be useful. Quite often they took the opportunity to discuss the preparations, the use of materials and interaction and reflected on how to utilise them in the most effective manner. Further, it is important to mention that during the researcher’s work as Change Agent the teachers began a collection of materials relevant to their course. In their holidays they collected drawings, photographs and actual items mentioned in the course book. They also welcomed ideas from Ur and Wright (1992) that included activities which, the teachers judged as adequate material and ideas for the primary school level.

Further, at the beginning of the in-service both teachers were reluctant to consider different teacher roles. However, since I was present in the classes and utilised the role changes to a greater extent, they began to attempt different changes in their role as teachers, too. Therefore, the in-service was not just used as a provision of more communicative interaction it was also regarded as a forum for model teaching as proposed by Brown, Campione, Webber and McGilly (1992). Both teachers perceived the presence of a Change Agent directly situated in their schools as a very stimulating and effective manner of ‘on the job training’. They both felt that with the aid of a teacher who has an extensive and personal experience with English speakers and has the necessary background and knowledge to demonstrate different teaching methods, they had more incentive to experiment and to practise how these methods could actually work.
However, the open-ended interviews and the discussions with the teachers after school also revealed concern. They felt that the demands of the Chinese Education Authorities were in danger of not being able to be met. The two main aspects of their concern were:

a) In order to meet the demand of a more communicative approach they felt they might have to neglect the teaching of the required writing and reading skills.

b) In order to pass the 'National Test', exactly these neglected skills would have to be up to the national standard and would be tested.

They both were dubious that a student could pass the 'National Test' in its present form without explicit language learning such as the test material required and felt that they would be failing their students by not providing such teaching. However, it is interesting to note that in July, after the conclusion of this study, 'H' School passed the 'National Test' as the best school in the district and the score in English was above 90%. The school also had the best individual result in Zhong Shan City. 'C' School was placed fourth and up to now, had never achieved any such result. (Appendix, p.166) The results in 'H' School indicate that Igor improved his teaching approach considerably. The results also show that he could transfer his newly acquired knowledge in methodology to other classes i.e. Grade 6. A continuous increase in individual performance in the National Test indicates that he was able to motivate students and to provide a platform where they could excel. This contention supports arguments by Malcolm & Malcolm (1988) who stated that intrinsic motivation encourages learning and influences language acquisition. While results on the 'National Test' were not part of this research and there may have been other factors unknown to me that affected the improvement in both schools, the test results do appear to indicate that using the communicative method did not have a detrimental effect on students' results on the written test, as feared by teachers.
The observation methods as outlined by Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) proved to be practicable and successful and helped the Change Agent to focus on her task to promote more communicative interaction. By tallying such interactions the teachers had relevant answers to their classroom behaviour and direct reference to the quality and the provision of communicative interactions taking place in their classes. Therefore, the Change Agent had a few difficulties in directing the two teachers to prepare for more and different communicative interaction, especially, since they perceived their teaching as more successful and their classes as more responsive to this form of teaching.

7.3. Assessment of Results After the Change Agent's Intervention

The following discussion describes the teaching as it occurred in the two classrooms some time after the Change Agent's intervention. Vera in 'C' School needed more time for lesson planning and had some difficulties in defining the objective of each lesson. In a discussion with Vera she affirmed my assumption and explained that she tried hard not to repeat words or sentences so much. The class participated in a lively fashion and Vera seemed to enjoy the organised and planned manner of her teaching. She included varied questions and even dared to ask questions which were not in the book. Classroom observations showed that Vera concentrated on 'Interaction Initiated by the Student' and that she steered away from 'drill'. In order to achieve this result she often prepared pictures on the blackboard or used copies from the course book to provide communicative interaction. This observation supported the statement made by Ur and Wright (1992) which mentioned that material provision should not necessarily be a time consuming task. She commented on my observation and stated that: 'I try to complement my preparations with some pictures because I think the students like them. And, I am not good at drawing, so the pictures in the book are supporting me.' She often prepared some pair or group work and monitored individual students according to their
needs. This step indicates that at the end of this study she felt more confident to let the
class have 'a go'. She also seemed to enjoy this form of interaction in the classroom.

In comparison Igor in 'H' School made some different teaching choices which
were done, as he pointed out, according to his work experiences and his personal need
for change. At the beginning of this study he was already keen to receive in-put. After the
Change Agent's intervention Igor concentrated in providing less 'drill' situations. He was,
therefore, more active in communicating with the students as indicated in the high tally of
'Interaction Initiated by the Teacher'. I assumed that, in order to refrain from 'Explicit
Language Focus', he utilised another 'manageable' interaction. In a discussion after the
lesson, I asked him about my observation and my assumption. In contradiction to my
assumption he said that he first wanted to try out how he could involve his students in
more meaningful communicative interaction without the 'drill' part. He also commented that
he felt very comfortable with this style. Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) mentioned that it is
important for the person who acts as a Change Agent not to over-power or even interfere
with the personality and characteristics of a teacher. I therefore, just mentioned my
observation after the lessons but did not comment on them. As he knew his students
well, I was convinced that he could determine his actions and reactions without my help.
Igor also included more 'Interaction Initiated by Student' and it was obvious that he was
trying out different communicative approaches and different teacher roles. He also
provided group work and included 'realia'. For a teacher who first stated that he had 'no
time and no talent' to prepare 'such things' this seemed to indicate a change in his
perception. In a discussion he explained that he felt more comfortable to trying such
'things' out when I was present in the classroom. In support of contentions stated by
Gebhard & Oprandy (1999, p.13) he said that the presence of a researcher made him
more aware of his teaching. Fanselow (1988, p.116) pointed out that we can contribute to
awareness of teaching through observation and Igor was responding to this rule by
searching for change, changing and adapting new practices (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999). Igor remarked that: 'Now that you have pushed the door open, I can see what I have to do.' Without the observation of his classroom behaviour, Igor would probably still be in search for more communicative methods.

Reactions and change of attitude of the students toward learning English in the two classes could also be observed. The provision of group and pair work and my presence in the classrooms influenced and increased the intrinsic motivation (Malcolm & Malcolm, 1988). Meaningful exchanges of greetings, family descriptions and classroom encounters (McCarthy, 1991) took place on a daily base and every student in or after class tried to be involved in such an exchange. The students also paid more attention to what the teacher said because many tasks required interaction with the teacher or with the peers and were not based on mechanical repetition. In many cases I observed students after class repeating the tasks which had taken place in the lesson as they ventured out into the school ground and addressed the other students.

7.4. Discussion of the Role of the Change Agent

The presence of a Change Agent in the two EFL classes under investigation seemed to have had relevant and direct influence on the provision of more communicative interaction by the two teachers involved in this study. However, further research needs to be conducted to provide more evidence for such change. As a Change Agent who has a theoretical and practical knowledge of the possibilities of the communicative approach, the actual implementation of communicative interaction in a foreign classroom can be demanding. Further, it might be problematic to assume that every Change Agent can achieved similar results as displayed in this research. There are a few points which support such reservations. The Change Agent should not only have a sound knowledge of the theories of EFL teaching but definitely also an awareness of pedagogical complexities of the traditional Confucian-based teaching methods in China.
Further, the Change Agent requires a willingness to work together with the teachers and the schools on an acceptable amalgam of local teaching methods and the introduction of different methods (Penner, 1995; Stone-Kwok & Trittibach, 2001). A prescriptive manner of instruction may generate fewer results or might even prevent the acceptance of such instruction. Therefore, the achievements and results in the classroom made by the teachers are highly dependable on the characteristics and the personality of the Change Agent (Penner, 1995). The teachers in this study often mentioned that it was thanks to me that they did so well and it was up to me to comment on various occasions and meetings that the results were actually achieved by the teachers and not by me. Thus, nurturing the relationship based on reciprocal partnership was a relevant point (Penner, 1995) and the teachers' assessments that were transparent and followed an outlined route were more accepted than 'emotional' or even 'mood' dependant assessments (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999). It is however relevant to caution prospective teacher trainers to readily assume that the results presented in this research can be achieved in other schools. As mentioned before, the support of the authorities and the teachers in these two particular schools in Zhong Shan were ideal for this research design and the personality of the researcher.

7.5. Conclusions

To conclude this chapter, comments on the following four aspects of the influence and work of a Change Agent are made.

Table 7.5.1. Outline of the four stages on which the conclusions are based.

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<tr>
<td>What was the aim of the 'Change Agent'?</td>
<td>How was the 'Change Agent's' objective achieved?</td>
<td>How was the 'Change Agent' organised?</td>
<td>How was progress controlled and tested?</td>
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</table>
An important prerequisite to any undertaking to change by a Change Agent is that all persons involved in such an appointment view 'change' as important and necessary (Gehard & Oprandy, 1999).

1. Definition of the objective:
The teachers and the Education Department of Zhong Shan, Southern District defined the objective of the Change Agent's activities. The objective was clearly explained to the person who was to act as Change Agent. The definition of the objective helped her to prevent misunderstanding and assisted in the proper and correct conception of the role of the Change Agent. In the case of this research the objective was defined as 'supporting EFL teachers in their endeavour to introduce desirable communicative interaction in their English lessons'.

2. Strategy used to reach the objective:
Provided that the participants have understood and agreed with the above objective, the strategy to achieve this objective should be made clear in this stage. In cases of EFL training this could include workshops, seminars, in-service and language courses or if possible the appointment of a Change Agent. In this research the authorities and teachers agreed to work with a Change Agent; a definitely a new addition to EFL teacher training in Zhong Shan.

3. Structure in use:
To establish an atmosphere of trust (Patton, 1990) and thus to enable the participants to be familiar with the research the following structure was agreed on before the Change Agent actually started her assignment.

Firstly, the teachers needed to have a conceptual knowledge of the potential and the work of Change Agents and be familiar with the person who was to act as the Change Agent in their school. In this research the authorities were kept informed by the local English Research Officer of the Southern District of Zhong Shan. Mr Joseph Stone-Kwok
acted as the intermediary between the Education Authority, the principals, teachers, students, Change Agent and parents.

Secondly, in order to facilitate the introduction of the Change Agent the schools had to provide a classroom for demonstration purposes and preparation of lessons (Penner, 1995; Trittibach, 1997). Materials such as additional course books for the Change Agent, copier and computers were accessible. However, the researcher provided most other materials. Thirdly, a point, which was not relevant to this study but is considered worth mentioning, is some form of remuneration for the Change Agent.

Fourthly, a clear definition of the duration of the appointment and the hourly presence of the Change Agent had to be finalised. In this research the Change Agent attended lessons in two schools and supported the teachers for 12 weeks. Thus, the involvement of a Change Agent was based on a long-term relationship between the Change Agent, the teachers and the schools (Stone-Kwok & Trittibach, 2001). Additionally, the Change Agent was asked to teach one 'activity group' in each of the schools. These served as demonstration lessons for the EFL teachers of the Southern District of Zhong Shan.

Fifthly, the local EFL teachers needed to have a basic knowledge of English to communicate with the Change Agent and they had to be prepared to work as a team. In this study the teachers were well able to communicate with the Change Agent and were most willing to commit time and their work to achieve the agreed upon objective. An important conclusion to this research is the fact that over 50% of the preparation, lesson planning, discussions and interviews were made after normal working hours.

4. Systems involved:

Systems usually serve as controlling instruments to measure progress made within the defined timeframe. In this research four systems were utilised to measure the progress of the changes introduced by the Change Agent (i.e. the implementation of more communicative interaction). The Change Agents' research served as a basic test tool. By
assessing the lessons and defining interactions used in the lessons the researcher could comment on the progress of the teachers Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999). Further, by involving the two teachers in ‘C’ and ‘H’ School in conducting ‘public lessons’ for the other teachers in the district they could demonstrate their trust in the efficacy of including more communicative interaction. The results of the ‘National Test’ in ‘H’ School, Grade 6, were used to indicate the progress in the ‘activity groups’ where these students participated. A key point to the full acceptance of the role and importance of a Change Agent by the Education Department and the headmistress of ‘H’ School was the fact that the students all passed the ‘National Test’ in English; six of them with ‘High Distinction’ and fifteen with higher marks in English than in Chinese (Putonghua). A similar promising result was later achieved by the students and teachers of the ‘activity group’ from ‘H’ School who participated and won the first prize at the ‘Drama and Recitation Competition for Primary Schools’ in Zhong Shan (December 2001). The award not only consisted of a trophy but also of the acknowledgement by the Guangdong Provincial Education Authorities who granted a considerable sum of money for further development to this village school. While there may be a set of complex factors involved in obtaining these results (including the earlier presence of a change agent in the two schools), the results were viewed by the school administration personnel as an endorsement of the methods used in the research.

A later addition to the testing procedure and triangulation was the introduction of an oral test in the two schools where students of my research classes competed against students of other classes. The results indicated that the two teachers involved in this study were successful in their implementation of more communicative interaction and thus gained better overall results.

The following figure conceptualises the persons whose involvement was necessary in the successful achievement of the desired ‘change’.
Table 7.5.2: Requirements for a successful implementation of 'change'.

The above drawing shows how a situation which I considered to be ideal i.e. the most critical persons involved, was found in Zhong Shan. This ideal situation seemed to support the success of the Change Agent in achieving more communicative interaction. However, the table and the results of this research seem to indicate and strengthen the belief that a Change Agent alone may find it difficult to effect the desired change.

7.6. Recommendations

Based on the success of this research I have learned that personal and individual interaction with teachers in their classrooms is an efficient manner of teacher training. However, as this research was carried out in only two schools a generalisation of the cases found at 'C' School and 'H' School and the observations made cannot readily be applied to other school situations.

Finding a 'better' access to EFL teaching were the main motivators for Igor and Vera as they had the opportunity to speaking and interacting in English and to receiving in-put in EFL methodology. Therefore, studies of this type in other schools and at different levels would be recommended to further confirm the results of this research.
8. Addendum

Since the end of this research and the positive outcome, Igor has been nominated as a Change Agent for other EFL teachers in the Southern District of Zhong Shan. An assessment of the school situation in 'H' School by the Education Department conducted in September 2001, highlighted and positively remarked on his well-organised teaching approach. The authorities further mentioned that this research reflected positively on the whole school. For this work I have been presented with a trophy.
9. References


Li, D., Mahoney, D. & Richards, J.C., (Eds.), (1994). *Exploring second language teacher development*. Hong Kong: City Polytechnic of Hong Kong.


Trittibach, M., (2001). Check-list for 'Communicative Interaction' in the EFL classroom. Support of materials and skills provision for the EFL teachers of Zhong Shan. Published by the Education Authority of the Southern District of Zhong Shan City, PRC.


10. Appendix

10.1. Questionnaire for the EFL Teachers in Zhong Shan

The following questions have been used to draw upon the professional experience and teaching beliefs of Vera and Igor.

Question 1: Some general information:

a. How long have you been teaching English?

b. How did you learn English?

Question 2: From where do you get your teaching ideas? Please tick appropriate box(es)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From accumulated teaching experience</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From the way I learnt English myself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal consultation with colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogically oriented resources, such as journals, books, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training received at college or university</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionally provided teacher training, courses, meetings, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits from English speakers, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 3: How much does each of the following factors contribute to your teaching ideas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Most important</th>
<th>Some contribution</th>
<th>No experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Accumulated experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The way I learned lang.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Informal consultations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Pedagogically oriented resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Training received col./uni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Institutionally provided training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Recent experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Visits from English speakers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 4: How did you perceive your last English lesson?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I was satisfied with:</th>
<th>I was less satisfied with:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. My presentation works.</td>
<td>e.g. The students' answers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 5: How frequently did you include communicative interactions in your last English lesson? (Tick box)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Question 6: What was the purpose of the planned communicative interactions?

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Question 7: If you provided for different purposes, please comment on the specific interaction


Question 8: Did any unplanned communicative interactions occur?
If yes, how many? ________________________________
Why? Describe the occasions.


Question 8: Why do your students think it is important to learn English?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because it is good for their future career:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because the students are keen to learn about a foreign language and culture:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is part of the curriculum:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is the parents wish:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 9: Why do you think it is important to learn English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivates students</th>
<th>De-motivates students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 10: What motivates or de-motivates students to learn English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivates students</th>
<th>De-motivates students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 11: What do you consider as important skills for your students to command in English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar:</th>
<th>Reading:</th>
<th>Pronunciation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicative skills:</th>
<th>Writing:</th>
<th>Others: (such as)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 12: Do you have any difficulties in implementing communicative interactions?

If YES, please, explain below


If NO, please, explain below


Question 13: Further comments?


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Student Questionnaire

10.2. Questionnaire for the Students in Zhong Shan

The following questionnaire was used to finding answers to the students’ perception of English lessons.

Question 1: Do you like learning English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes:</th>
<th>Sometimes:</th>
<th>No:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Question 2: Why ‘Yes’, or, ‘Sometimes’, or, ‘No’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, I like it, because:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I sometimes like it, because:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No, I don’t like it, because:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Questions 3: What motivates, or, de-motivates you to learn English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivates me:</th>
<th>De-motivates me:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 4: What do you like in the English lessons? What don't you like?

I like:

I don't like:

Question 5: What would you like to do more of in English lessons?

Question 6: Rate the following 6 skills in English from 1, (what you like most), to 6, (what you like least).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorising</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.3. Questions For Open-ended Interviews

The following questions served to draw upon the teaching assumptions of Vera and Igor. Some questions also addressed their perception of the lessons and gave them time to reflect on their lesson provisions.

a) To what extent was your lesson what you expected it to be?
   How was it different?
   How was it as planned? And, did your planning succeed?

b) During the lesson were you aware of focussing specially on communicative interaction?

c) What feelings did you have when using communicative interaction?
   If you felt at ease, why was this?
   If you felt uneasy, why was this?
   In which role did you feel comfortable as a teacher?

d) How did the students respond to your efforts to use communicative interaction?
   Do you think they responded positively and why so?
   Do you think they responded negatively and why so?

e) What do you consider was the best method of the past lesson and why?
   Do you consider using this method again?

f) What do you consider was the best communicative interaction in the last lesson and why?
   How would you change other communicative interactions to be acceptable?
   In which situation would this interaction be right?

g) Do you think communicative interaction can change your role as a teacher?
   Which role(s) could you easily accept? Why?
   How do you feel about this role change?
   Would that change be considered positive/negative?
h) What effects did the use of communicative interaction in your class have?  
How do you plan to maintain communicative interaction in your future lessons?  
How will you provide for more communicative interaction in future?  
(In accordance with Patton, 1990)

10.4. Provision of Communicative Interactions in the Next English Lesson

The following examples of questions were used to introduce communicative interaction planning in English lessons at 'C' School and 'H' School. Firstly, I utilised the questions to find out, if communicative interaction was being planned. Secondly, the questions offered information about the most preferred methods, which the teacher planned to apply. Thirdly, they were used for the feedback and discussion with the teachers. Further, I was able to address the subject of variety in communicative interaction. For example, teachers found that students can communicate with each other in English during the course of a lesson, and thus practise the target language among themselves.

I commented on the occurrence of communicative interaction within the lesson. In this way the teachers received feedback and were able to include other communicative interaction which were often discussed and prepared in collaboration (Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1998)

Further, the teachers had the opportunity to discuss anticipated difficulties perceived with the preparations for certain units in the course book. By teamwork and team teaching the researcher tried to offer guidance in these preparations.

The researcher as Change Agent additionally introduced some teacher roles which were not familiar to the colleagues in Zhong Shan. While it was assumed that the Chinese teachers prefer the role of the 'controller', other roles were introduced into the classroom setting. (see 'Theoretical Frame Work'). In the in-service it was possible that the researcher sometimes took the place of the teacher or acted as a participating
teacher. In this manner communicative interaction by role change was directly shown in progress and was welcomed by the students and teachers.

Lesson Planning

Class identification code: e.g. G4/1/H' School

Number of students in this class:

Topic of the lesson:
e.g. The members of the family

Formulate the objective of the English lesson:
e.g. After the conclusion of the lesson the students know the English names for family members

How do you intend to introduce this topic? Please comment on the language used:
e.g. Instructions in Chinese because ...

After the introduction, how do you intend to practise the topic?
Please describe the method(s) you will use?
How will you initiate communicative interaction and with whom will the interaction take place? e.g. Teacher-student, student-student, student-teacher

<p>| |</p>
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</tbody>
</table>

Describe your favourite role as a teacher.

e.g. I am a prompter, entertainer, material provider, partner...

<p>| |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often do you plan to communicate with individual students in the next lesson?

Please indicate the approximate number of communicative interaction which you plan for the next lesson and describe the role you intend to play in these activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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How will you initiate communicative interaction among the students?
e.g. by organising pair work

Do you intend to evaluate the lesson?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If 'Yes', describe how will you evaluate the lesson.

Do you intend to evaluate the objective of the lesson?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If 'Yes', describe how you evaluate the objective.
Do you think you will experience difficulty in implementing communicative interaction in this lesson?

Yes
No

If yes, please, describe.

Do you have comments on some of the communicative interaction which you have planned?

Do you have any complementary suggestions or ideas for the next lesson?

Last, did you notice changes in your approach in preparing the next lesson?
10.5. Primary Data Collection

The following Table was designed by the researcher and utilised for class observation. An Excel computer program was used to tally the different types of communicative interaction (Trittibach, 1997).

Table 9.5.1: Example of an 'Excel' supported data sheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class management:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarks: Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarks: Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content related interaction initiated by:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher aimed at one student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher aimed at a group of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher aimed at the whole class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content related interaction initiated by:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student aimed at one student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student aimed at a group of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student aimed at the whole class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content related interaction initiated by other means:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group /Pair work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explicit language focus and non-communicative activities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual repetitions of words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual repetitions of sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus repetitions of words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus repetitions of sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar drill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list enabled the researcher to calculate the total number of different communicative interactions for each lesson and class and depicted them in graphs. These classifications were derived from a similar work done by the researcher in Sri Lanka (Trittibach, 1997). With the help of the audio recording this classification enabled the researcher to establish the start of an interaction and gave her the necessary background information on what took place in the lesson she has observed.
10.6. Ethical Considerations

The Department of Education readily consented so that the study could proceed. The choice of primary schools lay entirely in the hands of the authorities and they informed individual teachers and classes about this research. The researcher ensured strict confidentiality concerning the full Chinese names of the teachers and students, teacher and student performances, and individual results. In this study the names Vera and Igor were adapted to distinguish more easily between the two teachers involved. The audio recordings were only used for demonstration purposes together with the teachers and for the researcher’s necessary back up.
10.7. Results of the 'National Test In English' at 'H' Primary School Between 1998 and 2001

To Whom It May Concern

The following results have been achieved in English by students of Grade 4 and 6 from Heng Mei Primary School.

Grade 4, 1998 average: 79%
Best individual result (passing percent): 84.5%
Grade 4, 1999 average: 78.9%
Best individual result (passing percent): 85.3%
Grade 4, 2000 average: 78.4%
Best individual result (passing percent): 95%
Grade 4, 2001 average: 91.57%
Best individual result (passing percent): 100%

Grade 6, 1998 average: 74%
Best individual result (passing percent): 76%
Grade 6, 1999 average: 74.1%
Best individual result (passing percent): 75%
Grade 6, 2000 average: 76.9%
Best individual result (passing percent): 92.3%
Grade 6, 2001 average: 90.02%
Best individual result (passing percent): 100%

Data supplied by the Education Authorities of the Southern District, Zhong Shan City.
Research Officer in Charge
Signature: Joseph Stone-Kwok

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10.8. Tape Script A Prior to Change Agent’s Intervention

'C' School, Grade 4 Prior to Change Agent’ Intervention.

Lesson length 40min.

T: Teacher
Sti: Student individual
Stc: Students, class
Stg: Student, group

(Students rise)
T: (In Chinese) class begins
Stc: Good morning teacher.
T: Good morning children. One, two, three...
Stc: Sit still!
T: Ok, let's begin. Let's sing a song. A;B;C; understand?
Stc: Yes.
T: One, begin.
Stc: Students sing the ABC-song, very slowly and clap their hands rhythmically.
T: Ok. What's this?
Sti: It's a book.
T: Write it down. (Walks through the first row, points to items on the desk of the student) What's this?
Sti: It's a pen.
T: Write it down. What's this?
Sti: It's a book
T: What's this?
Sti: It's a pencil.
T: What's this?
Sti: It's a book.
T: What's this?
Sti: It's a pen.
T: This is XXX. He says 'hello' to the classroom.

Student does not understand the instructions.
T: In Chinese
Sti: Student does not understand instructions.
T: Hello, I am...understand?
Stc: Yes!
T: Begin
Sti: (Another student) Hello, I am Pak.
Stc: Hello, Pak.
T: Ok.
Sti: Hello, I am Mary.
Stc: Hello, Mary
T: This is Mary. She is a girl. She is my friend. Introduce your friend.
T: (To a student) Who is your friend?
Sti: We...(no answer)
T: Again.
Sti: This is XXX. She is a girl.
T: Praise.
Stc: Good, good, very good!
T: Other friends.
Sti: (incomprehensible)
T: Louder
Sti: She is YYY. She is a girl. She is my friend.
T: Speak louder! One, two, three...
Stc: Sit and still.
T: This is Mr Ma He is a doctor. (Chinese translation)
T: What does he do? He is a doctor.
Stc: He is a doctor.

T: He's a doctor. Stc: He's a doctor.

T: He's a doctor. Stc: He's a doctor.

T: He's a doctor. Stc: He's a doctor.

T: This is Mr Ma Stc: This is Mr Ma

T: He's a doctor. Stc: He's a doctor.

T: He's a doctor. Stc: He's a doctor.

T: He's a doctor. Stc: He's a doctor.

T: Understand? Stc: Yes.

Stc: What does he do?

T: Two by two, begin.


T: This is Mr Li. Stc: This is Mr Li.

T: This is Mr Li. Stc: This is Mr Li.

T: This is Mr Li. Stc: This is Mr Li.

T: This is Mr Li. Stc: This is Mr Li.

T: He's a driver. Stc: He's a driver.

T: He's a driver. Stc: He's a driver.

T: He's a driver. Stc: He's a driver.

T: He's a driver. Stc: He's a driver.

T: After me, driver. Stc: He's a driver.

T: Driver Stc: Driver

T: D-r-i-v-e-r, driver.
Stc: D-r-i-v-e-r, driver.

T: D-r-i-v-e-r, driver.
Stc: D-r-i-v-e-r, driver.

T: Two by two, driver.

Stg: Driver Stg: Driver Stg: Driver (Total of 21 times)

T: He's a driver Stc: He's a driver

T: He's a doctor. Stc: He's a doctor.

T: He's a doctor. Stc: He's a doctor.

T: This is Mr Ma Stc: This is Mr Ma

T: Mr Li.
Stc: Mr Li.

T: What's in Chinese? (student translates)
T: After me. He’s a... (Points to the pictures on BB)
T: He’s a doctor.    Stc: He’s a doctor.
T: What does he do?    Stc: What does he do?
T: He’s a doctor.    Stc: He’s a doctor.
T: What does he do?    Stc: What does he do?
T: This is Mr Wang. He’s a worker, worker, worker.
T: What’s in Chinese? (student translates)
T: He’s a worker.    Stc: He’s a worker.
T: Worker    Stc: Worker
T: Two by two
Stg: Worker. (Total of 21 times)
T: He’s a worker.    Stc: He’s a worker.
T: Mr Wang    Stc: Mr Wang
T: What does he do?    Stc: What does he do?
T: He’s a worker.    Stc: He’s a worker.
T: This is Mr Ling. He is a soldier, soldier, soldier. What’s in Chinese? (student translates)
T: Soldier    Stc: Soldier
T: Soldier    Stc: Soldier
T: Soldier    Stc: Soldier
T: S-o-l-d-i-e-r, soldier.    Stc: S-o-l-d-i-e-r, soldier
T: S-o-l-d-i-e-r, soldier.    Stc: S-o-l-d-i-e-r, soldier
T: Soldier    Stc: Soldier
T: Soldier    Stc: Soldier
T: Soldier    Stc: Soldier
T: Soldier    Stc: Soldier
T: Two by two, soldier.
Stg: Soldier. (Total of 21 times)
T: He’s a soldier    Stc: Soldier
T: What does he do?    Stc: What does he do?
T: He’s a soldier.    Stc: He is a soldier.
T: What does he do? He’s a soldier. Begin...(Points to pictures)
Stc: What does he do? He’s a soldier.
What does he do? He’s a doctor.
What does he do? He’s a worker.
What does he do? He’s a driver.
T: This is Ms Cheng. She’s a teacher, teacher, teacher. What’s in Chinese? (student translates)
T: Teacher    Stc: Teacher
T: Teacher    Stc: Teacher
T: Teacher    Stc: Teacher
T: T-e-a-c-h-e-r, teacher    Stc: T-e-a-c-h-e-r, teacher
T: T-e-a-c-h-e-r, teacher    Stc: T-e-a-c-h-e-r, teacher
T: Teacher    Stc: Teacher
T: Teacher    Stc: Teacher
T: Teacher    Stc: Teacher
T: Two by two, begin...
Stg: Teacher    (total of 21 times)
T: She’s a teacher.    Stc: She’s a teacher.
T: She’s a teacher.    Stc: She’s a teacher.
T: She’s a teacher.    Stc: She’s a teacher.
T: What’s Chinese? (student translates)
T: She’s a teacher.    Stc: She’s a teacher.
T: She’s a teacher.    Stc: She’s a teacher.
T: Ms Cheng    Stc: Ms Cheng
T: Ms Cheng    Stc: Ms Cheng
T: Ms Cheng    Stc: Ms Cheng
T: Miss    Stc: Miss
Teacher intervenes: T: She's a teacher.

What does she do? She's a teacher.

She is a teacher. What does he do? He's a doctor.

What does he do? He's a doctor.

What does he do? He's a worker.

What does he do? He's a soldier.

What does he do? She's a teacher.

Teacher intervenes: T: SHE, again

What does she do? She's a teacher

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What does she do?  She’s a nurse.

T:  (Some Chinese information about he and she)

T:  Aimed at one student, points to a picture.

Sti:  No answer, no reaction

T:  What does he do?

Sti:  What does he do?

T:  No, no rather frustrated. What does he do?

Sti:  (Another student) What does she do? (Points to a picture in the book)

Sti:  She is a teacher.

T:  Next

Sti:  What does he do?

Sti:  What does she do?

Sti:  What does he do?

Sti:  What does she do?

Sti:  What does he do?

T:  What is your father?

T:  What does he do?

Lesson ends

Materials provided:  Blackboard with the copied pictures of the professions.

10.9. Tape Script B After Change Agent's Intervention

'C' School, Grade 4 After Change Agent's Intervention.

Lesson length 40min.

T:  Teacher

Sti:  Student individual

Stc:  Students, class

Stg:  Student, group

T:  Good morning class.

Stc:  Good morning teacher.

T:  Today we have a revision unit. We will revise the 'farm animals', and 'classroom and classmates'.

Read after me:

T:  pig

Stc:  pig

Cow
cow

Horse
horse

Sheep
sheep

Goat
goat

Duck
duck

How many
How many

T:  Ok. I give each group some pictures. (She distributes 6 pictures of the above animals and the question 'How many?') Every group starts immediately the 'slap game. One student is the teacher and orders: Slap the xxx, the three other students in the group try to be the fastest. The class is very animated but concentrated on the task. English is used for instructions. The teacher walks through the class and has time to observe each group and to give advice.

T:  Duck not dog. Dog is long, duck is short.

Sti:  Duck

T:  Much better.

T:  What’s this?

Sti:  It’s a xxx

T:  Number one is a...?

Sti:  Ship

T:  Sheep. Long.

Sti:  Sheep
After 4 min. the teacher gives the sign for time out. The students turn again towards the bb.

T: Are you ready?
Stc: Yes

T: Here at the bb is a picture with farm animals. Each group receives the same picture. How many horses do you see?
Stt: I see 4 horses.
T: You do the same in your groups.

The Stg. start to ask similar questions. The groups organise the role of the ‘teacher’ themselves. Again the teacher has time to approach each group individually and to intervene if necessary.

T: How many sheep do you see? It’s not sheeps.
Sti: How many sheep do you see?
T: Attention class. (Claps hands) here is something you have to remember! One sheep, many sheep. No ‘S’ here! (Goes to the bb and writes sheeps crosses out the ‘S’)

After 4 min. the teacher gives the sign for time out. The class turns to the bb.

T: Goes to a student and asks. How many pencils are on your desk?
Sti: There are 2.
T: Good, each pair does the same. Arrange your desks.

The students arrange items on the desk. Erasers, pencils, pens, rulers, etc.

Stp: Start to ask each other. How many xxx do you see?

Teacher gives the sign for time out after 3 min.

T: Turns to me and says: This is Monika, she is my classmate. She is my friend. Who can make a similar sentence? Hands go up! Students beg for the attention of the teacher.
Sti: Me! Sti: Me!
T: Ok. You start
Sti: This is Mary. She is my classmate. She is my friend.
T: Next. You.
Sti: This is Little. He is my classmate. He...is...my ....friend.
T: Good! Next? You!
Sti: This is Bottle. He is my classmate. He is my friend.

T: This is John and Bottle. They are classmates. (Points to another student)
Stt: This is Mary and Rosa. They are classmates.
T: Next!
Stt: This is Bob and Li Ling. They are classmates.
T: Points to another group and asks: What about them?
Stt: These are Karin, Tim and Dora They are classmates.
T: Monika and I are Friends. We are friends.
Stp: We are Milly and Clare. We are friends.
T: Points to two students.
Stp: We are Jason and Geri. We are friends.

T: Open the book on page xx. Look at the pictures and the sentences.

Look at Part E. Who can read this? Students’ hands go up: Me, me, me!

Stt: We are nurses.
Stt: We are doctors.
Stt: We are workers.
Stt: We are drivers.

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Sti: We are teachers.

T: Who plays the nurses? Chooses 2 students. Who plays the others? Teacher chooses for each profession two students. She explains that they have to act their profession. Teacher and Monika make an example. (Acting like driving a car)

Students guess: You are drivers.

T: Organises the pairs in front of the class.

Stg: Play the game. Class answers.

T: Back to groups please. Revise the professions like we did just now. Three students act, one student guesses.

Class is very lively but on the task. After 4 minutes the teacher gives the sign for time out.

T: Close your books. Who can write one of the professions on the bb?

Sti: Four students come forward and write individually what they want. Hands go up many students want to participate.

Lesson ends.

Materials provided: bb picture of a farm with animals. Group cards.

10.10. 'Check List' for the Provision of Communicative Interactions

This 'check-list' was utilised to support the teachers in their provision of communicative interaction in their classes. The teachers usually just had to describe the organisation and the materials to be used. An estimated time involvement was helpful for lesson preparation. However, the section 'Skills just needed to be 'ticked off' to make the teacher aware of why to include the activity of his/her choice.
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