

Communicative Tasks, Strategy Use and Planning Time:  
Factors Facilitating L2 Acquisition in Learner-learner  
Interaction in an English-medium University in Hong Kong

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## **Abstract**

The aim of the thesis is to study the ways in which factors regulating communicative tasks, particularly strategy use and planning time, could be beneficial to L2 acquisition. I hope that the study will have some contribution to make to the study of L2 acquisition and will throw further light on task-based learning and pedagogy, with particular reference to L2 learning at university level in Hong Kong.

Chapter one outlines the teacher-dominant and examination-oriented approaches in Hong Kong L2 classrooms. It is found that L2 learners at university still lack confidence in using the language to communicate without planning. The unsatisfactory language ability of school leavers and undergraduates leads to the study of an alternative approach to assist L2 acquisition. Chapter Two then examines the effects of strategy use, task types and planning time on L2 output quality and L2 acquisition. The review forms the basis of the empirical research. Chapter three describes the research method and reports the findings. Chapter four discusses the findings. It concludes that planning time and strategy use in communicative tasks have their roles to play but individual differences, teachers and topic of discussion are other factors that should be taken account of in task-based learning. Chapter five focuses on theoretical and practical reflections based on this study. It also suggests some ways to improve the applicability of this study.

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**Abstract of Chapter One**

Chapter one describes the environment of learning English as a foreign language (L2) in Hong Kong, and the communicative competence of Hong Kong L2 learners. The one-way teacher-student interaction in Hong Kong L2 classrooms and the examination-oriented teaching approach limit the opportunities for learners to produce clear, precise and accurate language output. In contrast, the oral papers of the two major public examinations require learners to interact in communicative tasks. University education, particularly in an English-medium university, requires students to carry out academic discussions in English in tutorials and English enhancement courses. The business and professional world also requires graduates not only to listen to instructions but also to express opinions and communicate with clients. In this light, it appears that there is a huge gap between most English teaching, learning, testing and the needs of the real world.

Given the widespread dissatisfaction with the language ability of school leavers and undergraduates, and the dominance of teacher talk, I feel a strong need to explore the alternative means to encourage L2 learners at university, who still lack confidence and experience difficulties in using the target language after learning English for 13 years. There has been a growing interest in engaging learners in interactions so that they can learn from the process in second language acquisition. Engaging learners in communicative tasks and encouraging them to learn from interactions can be seen as an alternative approach which may boost Hong Kong L2 learners' confidence in using English at university. Having said that, it is still necessary to look at how interactions between learners facilitate language use and acquisition.

**Chapter One**  
**Introduction**

In this chapter, I will give some background information on Hong Kong university students' (L2<sup>1</sup> learners) linguistic and communicative ability, and review the prevalent teacher-dominant and product-oriented teaching and learning approaches at school. Many Hong Kong university students have learnt English (L2) for 13 years and a majority of them are from the so-called English-medium schools. English is a compulsory subject in the school curriculum in Hong Kong. Nonetheless, many Hong Kong university students still lack confidence in using the target language to express and argue. They may have reached the advanced level of English proficiency in some aspects, but they still experience difficulties in coping with the language demand of the university in other aspects - when they have to use English to discuss in the tutorial sessions of their disciplines, or in groups in English enhancement classes.

The description forms the basis of the present study of an alternative means to promote language use in view of the dissatisfaction with the current teaching and learning situations, among teachers (especially those teaching at tertiary institutes) and in the professional world. This dissatisfaction gives me a very strong incentive to explore the process-learning approach, which can provide chances for L2 learners to develop their language use and to boost confidence in manipulating the target language through interactions (in pairs, groups or with teachers) at university. Engaging learners in tasks in which they can acquire the target language from the process of communication seems to be an alternative to the product-oriented approach. Experience of such a method is

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<sup>1</sup> L2 means second or foreign language. This is the way the word is used in the thesis.

significant to university students who are expected by business community leaders to be able to exchange ideas effectively face-to-face with customers or English-speaking counterparts. However, the effects of this approach require careful investigation. I hope this study of an alternative means, that is process-learning, can throw light on L2 acquisition and contribute to more effective language teaching at university level in Hong Kong.

The following sections give a glimpse of the Hong Kong education system, the social environment outside the classroom, the gaps between teaching and learning and some observations on the language problems of L2 learners who have entered the university.

### **(1) Background information on Hong Kong and its education system**

Hong Kong is regarded as a meeting point between East and West. It blends oriental and occidental customs and social behaviour. Unlike Singapore, which has decided that English should be the dominant language in communication in addition to Mandarin and other languages used in the community and households, the Hong Kong Chinese are preserving their strong 'homogeneous ethnical and cultural identity' (Miller 1990). About 98% of Hongkongers are Chinese and the majority of Chinese in Hong Kong speak 'Cantonese', which is regarded as the 'vernacular' spoken language. Conversations in Chinese households and informal chats in offices are in Cantonese. Cantonese is the predominant language in the mass media in recent years and is popularly spoken in the streets. The oral language is one of a host of Chinese dialects. The written form for work and study is modern standard Chinese.

In Hong Kong, children who have reached the age of six will start receiving six years of primary education, followed by five years of secondary education and two years of matriculation level of education. Matriculated students

can receive three-year university or post-secondary education in one of the seven tertiary institutes. The first nine years of education are free and compulsory. There are two main types of school : Chinese-medium (predominantly using Cantonese speaking) and English-medium. The first type of school uses Chinese textbooks for all subjects and Chinese is the medium of instruction.

The second type of school uses English textbooks, and English is the medium of instruction except for two subjects : Chinese and History of China. The second type of school is most welcomed by parents because a good command of English guarantees brighter studying opportunities and careers. Students who have finished five years of secondary education have to sit for a public examination called the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (hereafter called HKCEE). Likewise, students who prepare for university education need to sit for a joint university examination called the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (hereafter called HKAL). Successful candidates can enter one of the seven tertiary institutes - including six universities, and one institute of education for non-degree courses. The six universities are the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the University of Science and Technology, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the City University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Baptist University. The University of Hong Kong remains as the only English-medium university. English was once the dominant language in government documents and law; and the most popular medium of instruction in schools. Nevertheless, with the approach of 1997, when Hong Kong will be returned to China, Chinese has apparently been recognised as an alternative official language, enjoying an equal status with English. A government senior education officer for research has reminded people of the need of both Chinese (he refers to Mandarin because Mandarin is the official language in Mainland China) and English in job markets and for survival, highlighting the need to make a special effort to be proficient in both languages (Moy 1993).

English is used in Hong Kong for historical reasons. Hong Kong has been a British colony since 1842 although it will revert to Chinese rule in July 1997. In the meantime, English is still enjoying a privileged status in law, government and education, but the status of English and Cantonese after 1997 has not yet been explicitly spelt out.

No one is certain about the language future. At the moment no decision has been made about replacing English as an official language in law, government and education. Although it is agreed between China and the United Kingdom in Article 9 in the Basic Law that the use of English is allowed in addition to Chinese for the executive, legislature and judiciary in Hong Kong, which will be a special administrative region of China, the language issue is not dealt with and no final decisions have been made on the language future in the special administrative region. But one can argue that Hong Kong is still heading for a continued bilingual future because it acts as an intermediary between China and other countries in business and finance (Mao 1992, Miller 1990).

English is one of the compulsory subjects in both primary and secondary schools. The rationale of learning English in schools in Hong Kong has been proposed explicitly and stipulated in the Syllabus for English (Form one to Form five) by the Curriculum Development Committee of Hong Kong (CDC)<sup>2</sup>. The principal aim of learning English is to develop the maximum degree of functional competence in the domains of use which are appropriate to Hong Kong's situation (Syllabus for English 1983:8). 'Functional competence' refers to 'the ability to carry out communication tasks successfully in English' and the domains of use specify the role of English in trade and commerce (workplace); in pleasure and entertainment; in

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<sup>2</sup> The CDC is a full time independent body served by educational experts and its duties are to improve the system for developing school curricula. For further information, read Education Commission Report No.4, p.7 (1990), Hong Kong.

official documents and in the education system'. The focus of the curriculum has been shifted from grammar translation and audiolingual methods to more communicative language learning. Nevertheless, many classrooms are still dominated by traditional teaching methods, and learners lack sufficient opportunities to use English. As a result, school leavers find it difficult to cope with the language demands of the professional and commercial world due to changes in the economic structure of Hong Kong.

## **(2) Role of English in trade and commerce**

Tourists in Hong Kong come from different parts of the world. English is the main lingua franca for the tourist industry, at the airport, hotels and all holiday resorts. Since Hong Kong is an international industrial and commercial business centre, it comes into contact with many countries and English is the main language in business dealings with most of these countries. Contracts, arrangements for the agreements and supply of technical services are all made in English. Results of numerous surveys on the use of English in the workplace have confirmed the importance of English and the strong motivation to learn better English for a future career (Yau, Lee and Yau 1992). In the meantime, Hongkong's economy is changing from being based on industries requiring mechanical manipulation of objects to being based on industries requiring constant expression of personal opinions and negotiation on alternatives. **In view of the change from labour-intensive industry to service industry and new expectations from workers, the newly developed industries and expanding commercial centre require workers to be able to express opinions and negotiate with English-speaking counterparts, and not to be submissive. This requires richer language use and higher quality of L2 output so that messages can be effectively transmitted.** It has been pointed out in the Education Commission Report (1990:93) that the English standards of Hong Kong workers are not as high as their counterparts in other English

speaking Asian countries such as Singapore. This is because Hong Kong workers use Cantonese for casual conversations among themselves, and English in formal business transactions only (both written and spoken). In actual fact, English is not used the whole time in business. Workers need to shift from English to Cantonese or vice versa in the office. Therefore, developing communicative competence in English is not an easy task.

In view of the continuing significance of English in commercial and industrial sectors, many local businessmen complain about the deteriorating standards of English of school leavers at all levels. In response to public complaints about the deteriorating standard of English in the territory, the Universities and Polytechnics Grant Committee (hereafter UPGC), which is a government body to decide on funding for higher education in Hong Kong, has allocated funds to run English language programmes in tertiary institutions. The funds enable such institutions to provide more intensive English enhancement courses to tertiary students with a view to enhancing their communicative competence as far as possible.

### **(3) Use of English in government documents**

English has been the official language used in circulars, recorded and written documents since 1842. Communication with senior staff requires a good command of spoken English. However, with the run-up to 1997 and the increasing number of popularly elected Legislative Councillors in the Legislative Council, Cantonese is regularly used in debates in the Council. Recently, more government documents have contained Chinese versions. In the court of law, Cantonese is also increasingly used by people who do not feel that they are able to speak English<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information, refer to *Report of the Working Group on Language Proficiency*, Education Commission, July 1994, Hong Kong.

#### (4) Use of English in education

English was once the dominant medium of instruction in most secondary schools. With the introduction of the new language policy in the mid 1980s, schools were encouraged to become Chinese-medium schools and were provided with additional funds and teachers to strengthen the teaching of English if they chose to use Cantonese as their medium of instruction. Some secondary schools have given up English as the medium of instruction, and English is spoken only in English lessons. Although some English-medium schools remain unchanged in their policy on the medium of instruction, teachers actually adopt a mixed-code approach in teaching English and other non-language subjects. Textbooks, written work and examinations are in English but teachers use Cantonese to explain the concepts and vocabulary. These confusing learning and teaching processes have prevailed in Hong Kong classrooms for many years. The same situation was described by Hinton (1976) who observed Hongkong secondary schools two decades ago.

Despite the confusing media of instruction in secondary schools, English still plays an important role in most institutions of higher education. Most reference books are written in English, and students are required to discuss issues in small groups in English. Students need to be proficient in both written and spoken English in order to pursue their studies. Good English enables them to further their studies in English-speaking countries. Thus a good command of English is important in study and communication. Fluent English not only guarantees better futures in study but also in business. Recently, results of a large scale survey about language attitude and language use among Hong Kong undergraduates (e.g. Littlewood et al 1995) have confirmed that many young people would like to learn fluent and accurate English for the sake of study and business. Their motivation to learn English is driven by extrinsic factors. Surprisingly, they

are more optimistic about their competence in the use of English than their teachers.

**(5) From a 'second' language to a 'foreign' language : A change of status**

In Hong Kong, English used to be regarded as a 'second' language among local members of its social elites, and was commonly perceived as representing authority. However, both the education system and the professional sectors have recently become open to people from a much wider spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds. Although these two sectors lay stress on the importance of English, to most people of Hong Kong today, English is increasingly experienced on the personal level as a 'foreign' language (Miller 1990). Everyday household conversations and conversations in the streets are conducted in Cantonese, although some educated Hong Kong people enjoy including one or two English words in conversations, symbolising 'status' and 'prestige'. Cantonese is increasingly used in the courts of law by people who do not feel able to speak English. It is also regularly used in the Legislative Council debates. Thus, English is not spoken in everyday contexts and there are few opportunities for learners to practise and use the language. Learners only know the target language through guided and structured discovery, mainly restricted to classroom contexts. Therefore, some educationists (Lord 1987) and an increasing number of English-speaking expatriates working in Hongkong have remarked that **English in Hongkong as a whole is not a second language, but a foreign language**. English in Hong Kong has become a foreign language and is learnt in a foreign language context in which almost all students come from monolingual cultural backgrounds and receive L2 input mainly from teachers only. The motivation to learn in a 'foreign' context is self-evidently different from that in a 'second language' context, as Ringbom (1987) points out.

**(6) Some observations on the teaching and learning of English in Hong Kong L2 classrooms**

Cries and complaints about the standard of English attract the attention of curriculum designers, researchers and teachers investigating the reasons for the deterioration of the language of school leavers. Such public complaints often result in attempts to analyze and reconsider the teaching and learning processes in schools in which students spend most of their language learning time. Since the 1980s, communicative language teaching has been advocated. Students are no longer taught to work on decontextualized sentence structures, but are required to demonstrate the ability to read, write, listen and speak in simulated real-life situations. This is supported by the design of examination papers which focus on the use of English for communication. For instance, the oral component of the HKCEE encourages learners to use the target language to interact with each other and to work on a given task. Similarly, an oral component was included in the university entrance examination syllabus in 1994; learners are required to discuss a study-related or work-related situation in which there is a problem to be solved or a task to be addressed, and to use English for transactional purposes. The two oral components require learners to demonstrate a wide range of conversational skills, namely turn-taking, topic control, repairs, clarifying, questioning, expressing feelings and judgements. The foci are on both fluency and accuracy. The revision of the examination syllabus encourages learners to produce more accurate and appropriate L2 output. In the light of the demands of public examinations for learners' communicative competence, why are employers still not satisfied with school leavers' and graduates' language ability? Are inadequacies related to learners' limited classroom language learning experience, especially in the productive skills? One of the ways to answer these questions is to understand what actually happens in the classroom.

### *6.1 Gaps between L2 learning in classrooms and public examination requirements*

Owing to the stereotyped classroom discourse and a number of internal and external factors restricting the learning of and exposure to English in the territory, it is unrealistic to expect Hong Kong learners of English to have ample opportunities to articulate thought, establish self image as English speakers, practise conversational skills, apply strategies for communication problems for group discussions. Since school teachers and students live under the thrall of examinations, they can arrange and afford very little time for discussion work and language activities; for fear that these activities will take away too much class time and make their work more difficult. As a result, one-way teacher-centred communication is prevalent.

Nevertheless, the 'oral component' of the examinations runs counter to the teacher-dominated discourse pattern and calls for learners to stretch their linguistic knowledge for the sake of better and more effective communication. The gap between other patterns of learning and more recent assessment methods is huge. In the university entrance examination, learners are divided into groups and they have to discuss a topic for 10 minutes with people whom they are not familiar with. Some time is given for planning before discussion. But why are some students more successful than others in this examination ? Effective communication and better language use by learners in the oral examination context might be attributable to a variety of internal and external factors, namely topic and interlocutor familiarity, the strategies used in interaction, preparation time, the response of the interlocutors and most important of all, their existing linguistic knowledge.

## 6.2 *Learning of English in classrooms : Interactions between teachers and learners in schools*

Sinclair and Brazil (1982), Wolfgang (1986) and Young (1992) have described the general and typical interaction pattern between teachers and students in most L1 and L2 classrooms across different cultures. Teachers navigate and direct the classroom discourse, and define the acceptable responses. Teachers expect to take the initiative role while students do not expect to have to give any response in any situation. Teachers will use strategies such as description to explain the meaning of some abstract nouns but there is no need for students to use similar strategies to explain or paraphrase the message because it is the teachers' job. Even if students respond, their responses are minimal and short. They comply with whatever they are required or expected to do. Rarely is there negotiation or navigation between both parties<sup>4</sup>

The interaction pattern between language teachers and students in Hong Kong EFL classrooms in schools is similar to the researchers' descriptions. This limits the opportunities for learners to produce more language output and better language use. The interaction pattern has remained unchanged for decades, despite advocacy of communicative language teaching in the territory since the 1980s. Many English teachers still stick to the direct grammar teaching approach in order to cover the prescribed syllabus and prepare learners for public examinations in secondary schools; this results in reliance on teacher talk. It is a common phenomenon that Hong Kong English

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<sup>4</sup> Allwright R.L. (1984) describes four modes of participation in interaction management in classrooms : compliance, direction, negotiation and navigation. Compliance means simply doing whatever is required or expected, and direction is from teachers. Negotiation means reaching decision by consensus to change the pre-planned lesson, and navigation means steering a course that represents planning for the participants.

teachers do most of the talking, initiate very direct questions, seek response from individual students and evaluate their response, while students listen. In this climate, language teachers concentrate on instilling 'knowledge' (Bialystok and Smith 1985) and the rules (Widdowson 1979) of the target language, and there are few opportunities for students to master the 'control' aspect (Bialystok and Smith 1985) or 'procedures' (Widdowson 1979) of the target language, or to practise the five aspects of management needed for language learning: turn management, topic management, task management, tone management and code management (Allwright 1984). In short, Hong Kong EFL learners are often encouraged to develop receptive skills and are deprived of the opportunity to produce the target language, to stretch their linguistic ability, to elaborate or modify their ideas in appropriate contexts, or to use strategies which help them produce more precise language. To put the description in another way, learners are encouraged<sup>5</sup> to communicate with reduced goals<sup>6</sup> and silence; they do not take much initiative in learning and do not have much confidence in using the target language to express ideas and feelings. In some cases, learners might retreat to their mother tongue for expression. A very recent study on classroom discourse in eight Hong Kong English classes (Pennington 1995) has also confirmed that learners are inclined to use more Cantonese than English during their discussion at school. They use English only when they are prompted or asked to respond in English. It is admitted that Cantonese is used for the purpose of negotiation of meaning while English is used for display

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5 Teachers might not intend to encourage students to interact with reduced goals or silence. However, the teacher-centred approach and authority might not be conducive to the expression of ideas.

6 As described by Malcolm (1993:165), non-native speakers of English use avoidance strategies in reception by communicating with reduced goals such as minimal answers, yes/no, vague phrase, refusals etc. For detailed study, refer to Malcolm K. (1993) *Strategic Adjustment in Native Speaker-Non Native Speaker Interaction in the Workplace* in Khoo R. (ed) *LSP : Problems and Prospects*', SEAMEO, Anthology Series 33, Singapore.

purposes including classroom rituals (1995:94). Pennington (1995) suggests encouraging learners to practise strategies for interacting in the classroom, for instance, nominating each other for responses, commenting on each other's responses and asking for clarification from the teacher in English and each other, so that they will be more likely to speak out. Too much teacher talk probably inhibits language development, and learners may become proficient in some aspects (for instance receptive skills) but remain weak in other aspects (for instance productive skills). This situation has been widely condemned by the language experts and educationists who have studied language learning and the medium of instruction in Hong Kong (e.g. Hinton 1976, Tsui 1992).

### *6.3 Language problems of L2 learners at university: Oral interactions*

After students have learnt English as a subject in school for 13 years (since beginning primary education), it is assumed by university teachers that many of them have reached an advanced level of proficiency in some aspects. However, when school leavers enter tertiary education, they still lack confidence and experience difficulties in expressing ideas in English in tutorials and group discussions (Littlewood, Liu and Yu 1995). Some learners who read their degrees at an English-medium university, for example, the University of Hong Kong, might experience more difficulties than those studying at the other six institutes. A recent large scale study (Littlewood, Liu and Yu 1995) on learning experience and proficiency of students entering tertiary education in Hong Kong shows that many university teachers are not satisfied with some aspects of the language proficiency of learners. The research surveyed students' and teachers' perceptions of language proficiency (mainly in the four skills), rated students' language ability as assessed by teachers and students themselves, and interviewed teachers. It was found that teachers consistently rated students

significantly lower than students rated themselves. Concerning speaking skills, teachers valued spontaneous speech in tutorials and discussions, while students valued planned speech. Students thought that they could communicate more successfully with planning than with no planning. Teachers expected students to raise questions and to produce impromptu speech in discussion. However, students felt frustrated in expressing ideas and discussing with teachers and peers in tutorials. They were not inclined to adopt the communication strategies which they would use when they used their mother tongue. Therefore, teachers perceived that students had difficulties in these two aspects of oral interaction. According to the in-depth interviews with teachers, they attributed the cause to the poor English language standard of some primary and secondary school teachers, mixed code teaching, insufficient requirements and opportunities at university for group work in English and even low expectations of students' English proficiency from some university teachers. With a view to encouraging learners to use English in academic communication, some action learning projects have been developed which explore strategies to enhance the use of English in group discussions at the tertiary institutes. The aim is to develop the proficiency of these students by engaging them in interactions. It is argued by many action learning project researchers that students rely on their mother tongue in discussions in English enhancement classes (e.g. Lee 1995) (For English enhancement classes, see 6.4). When they are asked to comment on an issue or to express their opinions, they are inclined to speak little; sometimes they may avoid getting into the topic. They prefer to be listeners and observers, and to converse in Cantonese in English enhancement classes when the teacher is not around. It seems that L2 learners do not have the tendency to grasp the opportunity to make active use of the target language, even in English enhancement classes. They begin to experience difficulties in coping with the language demands of the university. Up

to the time of writing, I know of very few solutions which have been suggested to overcome these difficulties.

Littlewood et al (1995) suggest some ways to improve the English learning situation at the tertiary institutes. One of these is to remind learners of the kinds of strategies needed for successful spoken communication, or to teach them if necessary.

'But research has shown that, when using English, students tend not to adopt communication strategies which they would normally use when they use their mother tongue. ... Is there then a case for reminding our students of the kinds of strategies (e.g. repair strategies, turn-taking, verbal/non-verbal feedback) needed for successful spoken communication? In some cases, there may even be a need for teaching specific language for doing these things. For example, some students may need to be taught the language of clarification and circumlocution in English.'

(Littlewood et al 1995:6)

A second way is to create a supportive classroom environment to enable learners to transfer linguistic knowledge to active language use. Students should be given time, patience, understanding and encouragement, practice opportunity and confidence. To achieve this, structured group work and a low risk environment to encourage greater use are crucial.

'After 13 years of English learning and in some cases 7 years of English medium university, HK students have amassed a body of knowledge about the English language. Given time, patience, understanding and encouragement, they would be able to make active use of that knowledge for very successful academic communication. Two critical factors in this transition from knowledge to active use are practice opportunity and confidence. Carefully structured group work which requires the use of English in a low risk environment would boost students' confidence in the language.'

(Littlewood et al 1995:6)

#### 6.4 Enhancing language use at university

Given that many university teachers, the professional and the business world are not satisfied with the standard of English of Hong Kong school leavers (sometimes even university graduates), the Hong Kong government is investing millions of dollars in language, particularly at the tertiary level, to enhance undergraduates' language proficiency. The seven universities run enhancement courses to improve their students' language proficiency. The University of Hong Kong (hereafter HKU), which is an English-medium university, has provided enhancement courses for all undergraduates since 1992. One of the courses offered to the undergraduates at the Faculty of Social Sciences is known as 'English for Academic Communication'.

The objectives of the course are to provide chances for students to learn how to write academically, to communicate ideas and to learn independently. The course comprises two written projects: the first one is about an area of their interest, and the second one is related to their discipline of study. Students work in groups, discuss the topic, look for relevant information from different sources and write up the report. The course is project-directed. Teachers are given teaching materials which familiarise students with the different parts of a report and relevant language input. There are tutorials and group discussions in the classroom. The teaching schedule and materials may be adjusted by the teacher to meet the needs of his or her students. Nevertheless, students are so used to the teacher-centred approach while at primary and secondary schools that they need to take some time to get used to expressing their ideas in front of the group and the teacher, particularly in English. As described previously, they need to face a new learning approach and different teachers' expectations of their language ability at the university. Their unwillingness to speak in the tutorial leads to unfavourable comments on their language ability. Unwillingness to speak does not mean that learners are

incapable of learning<sup>7</sup>. It may be caused by individual differences in personality or language ability, and the change of social context. The language demand in tutorials and group discussions at the university is different from the students' previous classroom experience at school. The gap between the previous classroom and current expectations of language and participation could be bridged by encouraging students to interact with one another in English in English enhancement classes. But there are a number of questions waiting to be solved.

- How can teachers encourage learners to use English and take the initiative to talk in English enhancement classes, given that many learners are used to teacher-centred and examination-oriented approaches?
- How can a low risk environment be created in order to boost students' confidence in the language and produce more L2, as Littlewood et al suggested (1995)?
- What are the effects of engaging learners in groups or pairs in language use?
- Will learners enrich their current lexico-grammatical resources through interaction?
- What is the most conducive context for learners to enrich or improve their linguistic resources?

These questions motivated me to look at alternative means to facilitate L2 acquisition for L2 learners at university level. The review of relevant literature concerning L2 acquisition forms the basis of the empirical research.

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<sup>7</sup> Nearly all first year undergraduates of HKU obtained 'D' grades in Use of English in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination. Some obtained 'E' grades. 'D' grade is the minimum entrance requirement for candidates' English language proficiency.

To conclude, Hong Kong L2 learners only have limited chances to use the target language under the dominance of teacher talk at school. It is not possible to eradicate the effects of teacher dominance in a fortnight at university. One of the ways to overcome the dominance of teacher talk and to enhance the low involvement of learners might be to engage L2 learners to interact with one another. In other words, it is necessary to provide a context in which learners are pushed to use or stretch their limited ability in order to test L2 hypotheses in their learning process, and in which they feel comfortable about using the language. If this is agreed, it is crucial to understand how learners benefit from interacting with one another in the classroom, particularly how this approach facilitates better language use by Hong Kong L2 learners at university. All this gives me a very strong incentive to investigate the alternative means and its effects on acquisition, with a view to contributing to the teaching and learning of English at university level in Hong Kong, particularly to the English enhancement courses at the University of Hong Kong where I teach.

**Abstract of Chapter Two**

Given the dissatisfaction with the ability of Hong Kong school leavers and university students to use English for work and study, their lack of confidence in using the language in spontaneous communication and the insufficient use of strategies to facilitate communication by undergraduates, there is a strong incentive for me to explore the ways to boost their confidence and assist them to acquire the target language.

There has been a growing interest in engaging L2 learners in tasks so that they could comprehend the target language and produce it in a meaningful way in second language acquisition. Therefore, in Chapter two, I start to examine the acquisition of L2 in process learning in contrast to product learning. Secondly, I investigate how strategy use, task types and time pressure can facilitate interaction and L2 output which is better in accuracy and fluency. Thirdly, I discuss how strategy use could combine with time pressure in communicative tasks and lead to richer and higher L2 output quality. The literature review forms the basis of my empirical research. I hope that the review and the discussion can have some contribution to make to the study of L2 acquisition, and to the teaching and learning of English at university level of Hong Kong, especially at the university where I teach.

## Chapter Two

### Introduction

The dominance of teacher talk in Hong Kong L2 classrooms limits L2 learners' experience of using the target language. There are many chances to expose L2 learners to a large amount of linguistic input, but there are limited chances to allow L2 learners to produce output at schools. L2 learners at university still lack confidence in using the language in spontaneous communication, and they rarely use strategies which they use in their mother tongue to facilitate L2 communication. As a result, university teachers and the professional world are not satisfied with graduates' English proficiency. Promoting output in process-oriented classrooms by engaging L2 learners in communicative tasks seems to be an alternative means to help them to acquire the target language. In interaction, L2 learners can use strategies to modify meaning linguistically in face of the interlocutor's linguistic demands for better and more precise expression; they can learn to manage communication breakdown in interaction and perhaps restructure the teacher-student relationship. In other words, the process-oriented learning approach or use of communicative tasks<sup>1</sup> is one of the means to provide a venue for learners to comprehend, manipulate, produce and interact in L2 (Nunan 1989).

As some researchers have commented (e.g. Skehan 1996), meaning primacy or fluency in task-based learning, in which L2 acquisition is believed to be promoted in a more meaningful way through interaction in the use of different task types such as discussion and debate, is achieved at the expense of accuracy and complexity of L2 in learner-learner interaction. Accuracy, complexity and fluency of L2 in learner-learner interaction in different

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<sup>1</sup> For definition of communicative tasks, see Chapter Two- 3.2

communicative tasks are indeed regulated by a number of factors. Task types, time pressure and strategy use are three of these and their effects on L2 output quality are not adequately researched in the study of second language acquisition. However, it is agreed that Hong Kong L2 learners are not confident in communicating without planning, they are not inclined to use strategies in L2 communication, and researchers propose as reviewed in the last chapter encouraging the active use of the language in a low risk environment. A study of the relationship between these three factors and acquisition is very relevant to Hong Kong context. The need for such a study has gained support from reviews of the literature and the Hong Kong L2 situations. Therefore, the questions of how the use of strategies and time pressure could be married in communicative tasks for richer and better L2 output quality, and could aid acquisition, are worth researching.

In view of this, this chapter aims to set up the background for the empirical research by reviewing the relevant literature on L2 acquisition in natural and classroom settings; and the factors of strategy use, time pressure and task types that regulate L2 output quality. Then, it goes on to look at the way in which strategy use could marry with planning time in communicative tasks for more accurate, complex and fluent L2. The literature review forms the basis of the empirical research.

## **Chapter Two (a)**

### **(1) Acquisition of L2 in natural settings**

Generally speaking, two ways have been studied of how L2 can be acquired. The first way for L2 learners or non-native speakers<sup>2</sup> to acquire L2 is to interact with native

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<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, 'non-native speakers' and 'L2 learners' are used interchangeably. 'Non-native speakers' could refer to L2 learners at different levels of proficiency. L2 learners are not native

speakers of the target language in natural settings with a view to obtaining comprehensible input and producing comprehensible output. The second way is to interact with L2 teachers or other L2 learners in classrooms. The following sub-section reviews the relevant literature on the first way so as to find out how comprehensible input can be best obtained and how comprehensible output can be best produced in interaction.

### 1.1 *Obtaining comprehensible input*

Krashen (1982:3) claims that obtaining input is necessary for second language acquisition. The input hypothesis, as suggested by Krashen, is the central part of his overall theory of second language acquisition. 'Input' seems to refer to the language which a child or a learner hears or learns through interaction with caretakers, teachers and native speakers of the language. Acquisition is glossed by him as 'a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language.' (Krashen 1982:1) In contrast, learning 'is a conscious process that results in 'knowing about' language'. The main difference between the two terms lies in the notion of 'consciousness'. Although the dividing line between the two terms seems to be clear, the distinction between 'conscious' and 'subconscious' is not as explicit as Krashen has defined. Children's acquisition of their first language seems to be not conscious to observers and analysts. However, the process might be interpreted as 'conscious' by children whenever the context requires them to make the effort; but their effort and concentration on the form of the language is relatively little. 'Acquisition' and 'learning<sup>3</sup>', in my view, also require children's or learners' effort and attention to the language, but to a different degree.

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speakers of the target language and they do not have intuition of the rules and structures of the language.

<sup>3</sup> In this thesis, I use acquisition and learning interchangeably.

'Input', in this thesis, mainly refers to the linguistic aspect, such as grammar and lexis.

There have been a number of theories and hypotheses which attempt to explain second language acquisition (hereafter L2 acquisition). The input hypothesis, which is a central part of an overall theory of second language acquisition, claims that humans acquire language in only one way - by understanding messages, or by receiving 'comprehensible input' (Krashen 1982:2). It is argued by Krashen that humans acquire the rules of language in a predictable order and move from a current level,  $i$ , to the next stage,  $i + 1$ , by understanding input  $i + 1$ . The understanding and move from  $i$  to  $i+1$  level is reached with the help of knowledge of the world, extra-linguistic information and previously acquired linguistic competence.

He illustrates the claim by referring to the contexts provided by caretakers and teachers. The two social agents provide different contexts, via 'here-and-now' context, visual aids and discussion of familiar topics. Therefore, what is essential for second language acquisition is 'input', and the input should be sufficient and understood by children or learners. If the input is 'sufficient' and 'understood' by children or learners, they will acquire the grammar of the target language. Instruction, in this light, is redundant.

'The Input Hypothesis claims that humans acquire language in only one way - by understanding messages, or by receiving 'comprehensible input'. We progress along the natural order by understanding input that contains structures at our next 'stage' - structures that are a bit beyond our current level of competence. We are able to understand language containing unacquired grammar with the help of context, which includes extra-linguistic information, our knowledge of the world, and previously acquired linguistic competence. The caretaker provides extra-linguistic context by limiting speech to the child to the 'here-and-now'. The beginning language teacher provides context via visual aids (pictures and objects) and discussion of familiar

topics.... To be more precise, input is the essential environmental ingredient.'

(Krashen 1982:2)

Therefore, following from Krashen's input hypothesis, there is a widespread belief that input must be comprehended by learners and the more the input, the better the second language is acquired. The notion of 'comprehensible input' is presented by Krashen (1981, quoted in Ellis 1985:157) in the form of the input hypothesis, arguing that **for acquisition to take place, L2 learners need 'input' that might or might not be finely tuned**. What is important for L2 learners is to understand the input, and **'understanding input' focuses on meaning and not language forms**. Input that is 'comprehensible' refers to the input that is slightly ahead of learners' current second language ability, and which in turn benefits acquisition. In Krashen's term, it is '*i+1*'.

Then, the next question is, how do children or learners acquire the grammar of the target language? For learners of the target language, one of the ways for acquisition to take place is to interact with native speakers of the target language. According to Richards, Platt and Weber (1985:188), 'the intuition of a native speaker about the structure of his or her language is one basis for establishing or confirming the rules of the grammar'. Native speakers can provide comprehensible input when they interact with non-native speakers or L2 learners.

Other researchers, who also recognize the significance of comprehensible input (e.g. Long 1983c), explore the way in which comprehensible input is best obtained. From an interactive perspective, input can be obtained through negotiation. Negotiation, in second language research,

'has been used to label exchanges between learners and their interlocutors as they attempt

to resolve communication breakdowns and to work toward mutual comprehension'

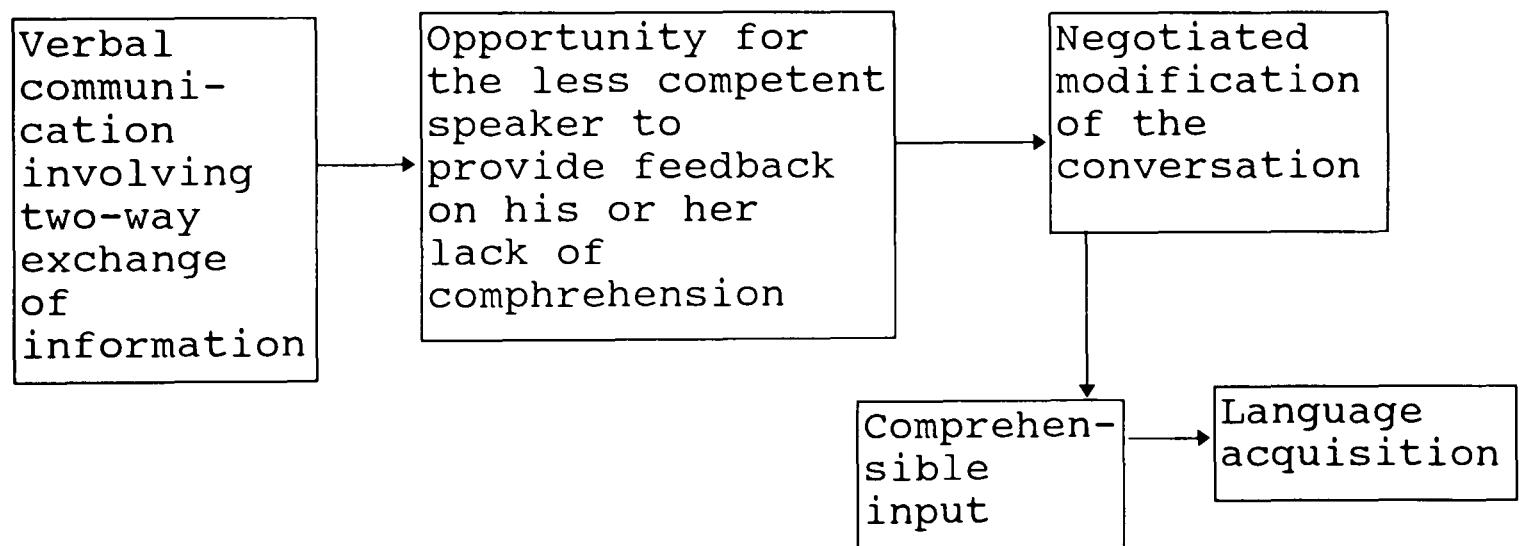
(Pica et al 1989:65)

This process of obtaining input so as to aid acquisition is definitely different from the product-oriented approach adopted in L2 classrooms, in which L2 learners are guided cautiously, by curriculum planners or practitioners, through learning activities and materials with a view to achieving the pre-determined learning outcomes. Long (1983c:212) mentions three methods in which input is made comprehensible. The first one is to use structures and lexis with which the interlocutor is familiar; the second is to use a 'here and now' orientation in conversation, and linguistic and contextual information is used in caretaker speech; and the third is to modify the interactional structure of the conversation. It is believed that the second and the third methods are more likely to aid acquisition, because they can make unfamiliar input comprehensible and allow conversation to proceed. Native and non-native speakers' conversations in tasks provide baseline data for comparison with conversations between non-native and non-native speakers. Comprehensible input can be obtained through '**negotiation of meaning**' and this can aid language acquisition. Negotiation of meaning takes place when native speakers make adjustments in their interaction with non-native speakers. It is glossed by Long and Porter (1985) as the collaborative work which speakers undertake to achieve mutual understanding using strategies of clarification request, comprehension and confirmation checks. Chaudron (1988:106) also glosses negotiation of meaning in a similar way, as reacting to the preceding discourse : clarifying, modifying, asking for clarification and so on.

Negotiation of meaning in communication is believed to be conducive to L2 acquisition because it provides comprehensible input and helps learners to internalize L2 forms and structures. In the process of negotiation of

meaning, native speakers respond to feedback from non-native speakers by making interactional adjustments. On the other hand, L2 learners can negotiate and also gain feedback on their use of the target language. The interactional adjustments used by native speakers include the use of strategies that reflect long term planning and some tactics that reflect spontaneity in order to make sure that the message is comprehensible. The interactional adjustments which affect how the topic is talked about have been identified (e.g. Long 1983a, 1983b). In the following diagram, Long (1983c:214) accounts for the way in which conversations between native and non-native speakers<sup>4</sup> lead to more comprehensible input and then L2 acquisition. This model is assumed to be applicable to all conversations between people at higher and lower levels of proficiency, such as caretakers and young children.

Diagram 1



Long's model has depicted the relationship between conversation and L2 acquisition. It is stressed that input through negotiation is a means to aid acquisition. Nonetheless, messages can still be conveyed and meaning can still be negotiated with inaccurate grammar, limited syntax and lexis and even non-linguistic cues. Native speakers, or people at higher level of proficiency, can also figure out what the non-native speakers or people at lower level

of proficiency want to say by retreating to non-linguistic cues or by using short phrases to confirm the meaning. In such cases, the input is comprehensible to non-native speakers or to people at lower level of proficiency; but the L2 input quality might not be rich. Negotiation of meaning can be achieved at the expense of accuracy and of extension of L2 learners' linguistic knowledge. It is also possible that negotiation of input might be comprehensible to the learner who seeks clarification, but not comprehensible to the others if this is in a group interaction. This comment has been made by Pica and Doughty (1985) when discussing the function of conversational adjustment in making input comprehensible in a teacher-fronted activity.

'It must be emphasized, however, that the presence of any conversational adjustments in a teacher-fronted activity does not necessarily ensure that comprehension is enhanced for all classroom participants. It is possible that conversational adjustments serve to make input comprehensible only to individuals whose comprehension difficulty has triggered such modifications. For remaining students, the input may either be comprehensible in its pre-modified state or incomprehensible both before and after adjustments had been made.'

(Pica and Doughty 1985:246)

Therefore, the causal relationship between negotiation of meaning and comprehensible input that leads to L2 acquisition should be read cautiously. The model might be more comprehensive if negotiation of meaning and comprehensible input could take into account the grammatical, syntactical and lexical use of L2.

Although it is difficult to predict how input will facilitate better and richer L2 input, engaging L2 learners in communicative tasks in which there are more chances for negotiation of meaning and producing more fluent L2 appears

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<sup>4</sup> Non-native speakers, in Long's and other L2 researchers' articles, refer to L2 learners at different levels of proficiency.

to be one of the means to facilitate L2 acquisition. Therefore, some researchers (e.g. Long 1981, 1983a, 1983b, Duff 1986, Porter 1986, Plough and Gass 1993, Pica et al 1987, 1989, 1991) have conducted a fair number of studies, reviewing the relationships among negotiation of meaning, input, contextual variables (e.g. task and interlocutor familiarity) and second language acquisition between native and non-native or non-native and non-native speakers in tasks.

### 1.2 *Producing comprehensible output*

Obtaining comprehensible input that is slightly ahead of one's second language ability (that is the  $i+1$ , in Krashen's term), or in the form of negotiation of meaning between native and non-native speakers, might be one of the plausibly suggested ways for L2 acquisition. Alternatively, there are claims in second language acquisition literature about the role of **comprehensible output**, which means **producing output that is understood by the interlocutor** to supplement input (Swain 1985).

'Of the conclusions I will draw, one that I think is fundamental to our understanding of the role of input in second language acquisition is that although comprehensible input may be essential to the acquisition of a second language, it is not enough to ensure that the outcome will be nativelike performance. In fact, I will argue that while comprehensible input and the concomitant emphasis on interaction in which meaning is negotiated is essential, its impact on grammatical development has been overstated. The role of these interactional exchanges in second language acquisition may have as much to do with 'comprehensible output' as it has to do with comprehensible input.'

(Swain 1985:236)

Swain's claim (1982) is that comprehension of input is not sufficient for the acquisition of forms and structures.

Obtaining comprehensible input through negotiation of meaning is a necessary step to acquire grammar. When the

message is understood, learners can pay their attention to form. Comprehensible input is crucial because it allows learners to focus on form after understanding the message. What is missing in second language acquisition is the consideration of the role of 'output'. She argues that language output from learners assists second language acquisition. It is through the process of manipulation of L2 forms and structures that the second language is enriched. Negotiation is only a trigger for acquisition; when the meaning is clear, learners can pay attention to forms.

Learners can use their linguistic resources meaningfully through output, especially speaking. Learners need to test their input through output, and this is necessary to benefit second language acquisition. Therefore, L2 learners should be given opportunities to produce comprehensible output. Learners can be pushed to use alternative means to get across their message when they receive some negative input. Negative input includes clarification requests, explicit corrections and confirmation checks, which are all indications that the output is not well expressed. She further suggests including the notion of being pushed toward the delivery of a message that is not conveyed precisely, coherently and appropriated.

Swain attributes three roles to output (ibid 248-9, quoted in Ellis 1990:117):

- '1. The need to produce output in the process of negotiating meaning that is precise, coherent and appropriate encourages the learner to develop the necessary grammatical resources.
2. Output provides the learner with the opportunity to try out hypotheses to see if they work.
3. Production, as opposed to comprehension, may help to force the learner to move from semantic to syntactic processing. It is possible to comprehend a message without any syntactic

analysis of the input it contains. Production is the trigger that forces learners to pay attention to the means of expression.'

L2 output is the product of interaction. L2 output, in Swain's definition, seems to focus on syntactical processing, which can include a variety of sentence structures that learners are familiar or not very familiar with but are willing to try in negotiation<sup>5</sup>. In Swain's term, the use of a variety of structures is caused by a pushing effect in interaction and is glossed as an **effort made by the learner to produce coherent and appropriate expression and to ensure that the output is comprehensible to or is understood by the interlocutor**. This form of output is described as '**pushed output**', represented in the form of using alternative syntax and lexis. Nonetheless, the focus of 'output' is primarily on the syntactic category, and not so much on meaning and lexical use<sup>6</sup>.

Recently, some studies (e.g. Pica 1988, Pica et al 1989) have researched how the interaction between native and non-native speakers led to '**pushed output**'. Pica (1988) studied comprehensible output and supported the claim that '**pushed output**' made the language become more grammatical and morphosyntactic but with no new L2 items. It was concluded that negotiation offered the learners models of what output was like, rather than opportunities for producing output themselves. In another research (Pica et al 1989) the role of output in the process of second

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<sup>5</sup> I am aware that Swain's definition of 'output' refers to syntactical processing. It includes sentence structures that learners are familiar or unfamiliar with. In other words, the 'output' is manageable by learners.

<sup>6</sup> I am aware that the focus of the output is on syntactic processing. In the thesis, I would consider output from a broader perspective and take into account the syntactical and lexical aspects of language use, fluency and accuracy of L2. The learner manages to elaborate the L2 system according to the demands of the interlocutor or the task.

language acquisition was further confirmed by focusing on the **modification of L2** used by non-native speakers in response to native speakers' demands about the meaning or the ideas, which were made through clarification request, confirmation checks and comprehension checks. **Modification of L2 made by non-native speakers**, in this research, refers to phonological, semantic, morphological and syntactical modifications. These were made in response to the interlocutors' requests for or checks on the meaning of the utterance, in other words, in response to the interlocutors' demands. Syntactical modifications could be made through embedding and elaboration in clause(s); morphological modifications could be made through addition, substitution, or deletion of inflectional morpheme(s) and/or functor(s); semantic modifications could be made through synonym, paraphrase or example. The researchers found that if native speakers asked the question 'what', non-native/L2 learners would modify their L2 linguistically more significantly. Modification of L2 was made according to the linguistic demands of the interlocutors which in turn benefitted from better linguistic output. In this view, it is generally agreed between Swain (1985) and some researchers who are interested in the role of output in L2 acquisition (e.g. Pica et al 1989) that the focus of output is on the grammatical form, not only on fluency through practice. Learners are more capable of producing native grammatical forms if there are more opportunities for them to 'push' their own language use.

Similarly, Long (1989:13) is also aware of the role of 'output' in linguistic terms, and mentions the idea of 'pushing them [learners] to operate at the outer limits of their current abilities, especially to use (a) as linguistically complex speech as possible, and (b) as much optional syntax as possible'. A new term, '**stretching learners' interlanguages**', is used. What Long advocates is perhaps similar to Krashen's advocacy of providing input that is slightly ahead of learners' second language ability, through the use of more complex and optional

syntax and lexis as far as possible. In other words, he is also looking for the 'i+1' level in output. The chance to 'stretch learners' interlanguage ability', according to Long, is closely related to a task type's potential. 'Stretching' should be done within a context in which there is a need to modify the meaning, and it is this condition that will call for the use of more optional and complex target-like language.

Both Pica et al (1989) and Long (1989) consider output from a linguistic point of view; however, the 'stretching performance' or the 'pushed output' might not be solely dependent on the social context, for instance the task type, it might also vary with the individual learner's risk taking attitude and linguistic resources. Likewise, 'stretching' may be facilitated by using strategies which may result in fluency but not in accuracy. In this view, the notions of 'stretching' and 'pushed output' should be treated with caution, and can be expanded to also include the idea of the individual learner's risk-taking attitude and linguistic resources. 'Output' could be glossed from a broader perspective and could include both the syntactical and lexical aspects of the language, fluency and accuracy of L2. Moreover, it is difficult to tell whether learners have been pushed to produce L2 that is ahead of their current ability, that is at the i+1 level. It is more practical to find out the task type that facilitates the 'stretch', and study what the 'stretch' is like in accuracy, variety of syntax and lexis of L2, in addition to fluency. 'Output' could be glossed to include lexical aspects of the language, fluency, complexity and accuracy of L2. Accuracy, complexity and fluency have been defined by Skehan (1996) in this field. Accuracy of language use means the learners' capacity to handle whatever level of interlanguage complexity they have attained. Complexity of language is related to the stage and elaboration of the underlying system, and fluency means the capacity to mobilize one's linguistic resources in real-time communication to produce and comprehend speech at

relatively normal rates, approaching one's own native-language speech rates. In brief, accuracy mainly focuses on the grammatical correctness of language use; complexity mainly focuses on the formation of an utterance and the various ways the same idea can be presented through language, and fluency mainly focuses on how rapid an utterance is, which can be shown through hesitations and pauses<sup>7</sup>.

In short, output can and needs to play the same role as input in the process of second language acquisition, if it can be found from empirical studies that output can lead to better or higher L2 output quality in terms of more accurate grammar, more fluency and higher degrees of automatization. There are theoretical claims about the significance of 'output' in second language acquisition (e.g. by Swain 1985), but the way and the extent to which 'output' contributes to second language acquisition in terms of accuracy, complexity, fluency and even automatization have not been adequately explored. Perhaps, the contribution of 'output' is made in the way that Ellis (1990:119) describes :

'The real contribution of pushed output may be to encourage learners to make use of these variants in their current interlanguage systems which are more target-like. It may enable them to resolve variability in favor of target language norms. It is in this sense, perhaps, that it contributes to acquisition.'

## (2) Acquisition of L2 in Classroom Settings

The second way of enabling L2 learners to acquire the target language is to interact with L2 teachers and learners in classrooms. There have been several studies about teacher-learner interaction and learner-learner interaction in L2 classrooms (e.g. Long, Adams, McLean and Castanos 1976, Rulon and McCreary 1986, Pica and Long 1986, Porter 1986). In Pica and Long's study (1986), it was

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<sup>7</sup> These are the ways the three words are used in the thesis.

found that the L2 classroom is not an encouraging environment for learners, because teachers dominate the talk due to their power and knowledge of the subject, regardless of their years of teaching experience. There is a pervasiveness of display questions, a high frequency of comprehension checks, but a tiny number of confirmation checks and requests. In other words, there is little negotiation taking place. The way in which teachers talk has already attracted some attention, and some researchers have described what discourse is like in classrooms (e.g. Sinclair and Brazil 1982, Long 1983c).

In the light of this unfavorable environment for L2 learning, some researchers have started to look at learner-learner interaction. The results of these studies are encouraging, showing that L2 learners use interactional modifications, repairs and prompts, and negotiate meaning just as native speakers do, and comprehensible input is generated if pairing is carefully matched (Porter 1986). Moreover, in one study, the number and variety of pedagogic moves and social skills engaged in by students was found to be greater for students working in pairs than in a large group with the teacher (Long, Adams, McLean and Castanos, 1976). In another study, interacting L2 learners were able to cover as much content as learners working with teachers (Rulon and McCreary 1986). Therefore, arranging more learner-learner interactions in classrooms appears to be a valuable means to compensate for the domination of teacher talk.

But the next question is how to push learners to produce or stretch more accurate, more fluent and more complex L2 in classrooms? Using strategies in interactions, and providing suitable tasks seem to be two of the possible means to achieve both fluency and accuracy. The following sub-section will first look in more detail at how strategy use facilitates interaction and L2 acquisition.

**(3) Means to facilitate better interaction and L2 output****3.1 Strategy use**

Strategies always come into play so as to maintain the conversation (e.g. Long 1981, 1983a, 1983b), to modify L2 phonologically, semantically, syntactically and morphologically (e.g. Pica et al 1989) or to repair communication breakdown (e.g. Faerch and Kasper 1983a) in learner-learner or native-non-native interaction. Their use is seen as a common communication feature in both L1 and L2 interactions by some researchers (e.g. Bialystok 1990, Bialystok and Kellermen 1987) whenever L1 speakers or L2 learners anticipate problems in interaction or they have to express themselves in a more clear, precise and appropriate manner. In this view, learners employ in their interactions strategies which are mechanisms for negotiation and communication. In a number of learner-learner interaction or native-non-native interaction research studies, it has been confirmed that learners and native speakers have used such strategies. For example, in the literature of strategies in interlanguage communication, when learners are asked to describe different properties of the referent, namely function, location, size, shape and even color; or to describe the functions of an abstract concept (Paribakht 1985, Chen 1990); a range of strategies, such as circumlocution, foreignizing, or borrowing are specifically used for the prevention of communication breakdown. Similarly, a different set of strategies, namely clarification requests, comprehension checks and confirmation checks, are used by native speakers to proceed in conversation with non-native speakers. Researchers look at strategies from two perspectives : interactional and cognitive. Despite these different interpretations of strategies, what are the functions of strategies in interaction or communication and how do they assist L2 acquisition? Some researchers (e.g. Skehan 1993, Littlewood 1983 and Aston 1986) are dubious

about the way in which strategy use can lead to the extension of L2 linguistic knowledge (for more discussion, please refer to Chapter Two (b)-(2)). The following subsection is going to look first at some functions of strategy in interaction.

### 3.1.1. *Functions of strategy in interaction*

Strategies used in interaction have multiple functions. From the perspective of researchers (e.g. Corder 1983:17) who consider strategy use as a cognitive process to avoid communication breakdown, strategies used for this purpose are known as 'communication strategies', which belong to strategic competence. Teachers should encourage L2 learners to use resource expansion strategies, which correspond to 'achievement strategies' (Faerch and Kasper 1983a) because these are 'success-oriented', though 'risk-running', leading learners to gain more information about what is appropriate or permissible and also benefiting learning. It is further suggested that learners' strategic competence can be developed by helping learners 'to realize and accept the existence of communicative goals and use communication strategies' (Faerch and Kasper 1986:185). All of this can be achieved by raising learners' awareness of being responsible for establishing communicative goals, even in a foreign classroom. (*ibid* p.184). More 'real-world' situations can be brought into the classroom to help learners formulate goals. Some well-known, non-culture specific items which learners are asked to describe or explain can be introduced in the initial stage (*ibid* p.185). The gap between developing classroom competence and outside classroom or real-life competence is then bridged and communicative competence is developed.

From the perspective of researchers (e.g. Long 1981, 1983a, 1983b, Duff 1986, etc.) who consider strategies as discourse strategies in native-non-native interactions, strategies are not only used to repair communication

breakdown but also to modify interactions in response to the interlocutors' linguistic demands and feedback, which in turn lead to richer output. Strategies are employed when there is an 'incomplete understanding' and are used for negotiation of meaning for the sake of obtaining more comprehensible input. Negotiation of meaning is glossed by Long and Porter (1985) as 'the collaborative work which speakers undertake to achieve mutual understanding using clarification request and confirmation request'. Chaudron (1988:106) also explains this term in a similar way.

It is generally believed that the modified input and interaction, resulting from the strategies of checks and requests provided by native speakers or initiated by non-native speakers through negotiation, facilitate second language acquisition : the higher the frequency of checks and requests or the higher the frequency of negotiation of meaning, the more comprehensible input is. The modified input and interaction are achieved through the use of strategies. Similarly, strategies such as paraphrases, giving examples, synonyms are used to make semantic modifications, as shown in the study of Pica et al (1989). It is believed that the L2 modified in response to both checks and requests also promotes the quality of output grammatically and lexically, although the modification of L2 after requests is linguistically more significant than after checks. In a word, it is negotiation that triggers more comprehensible input and output, although the notion of 'comprehensible input' is receiving more attention in the second language acquisition literature.

Taking the view that strategy use is also perceived as a cognitive process, Faerch and Kasper (1983a, 1986) think that the notion of 'problem-orientedness' provides a basis for the use of communication strategies to avoid communication breakdown. It is believed that learners use 'achievement strategies' to form hypotheses about the L2 rule when they are not certain, facilitating the process of automatization, increasing confidence and improving the

secondary area of declarative knowledge. Strategy use enables speakers and hearers to manage not only language but also turn-taking. Hypotheses are tested in face-to-face communication. In other words, only when learners aim at achieving a goal through strategies can they benefit from them. Therefore, Faerch and Kasper (1983a), Haastrup and Phillipson (1983) Chen (1990) and Dornyei (1995) call for the 'teaching' of communication strategies, or 'sensitization' of L2 learners to use communication strategies, for communication and learning purposes, or for bridging the gap between learning in the classroom and the communicative need of the outside world. Strategy use, in short, is the mechanism for negotiation and communication.

'If by teaching we mean passing on new information only, there is probably no need to 'teach' strategies : FL [foreign language] learners no doubt have implicit knowledge about communication strategies and make use of this. But if by teaching we also mean making learners conscious about aspects of their (already existing behaviour, it is obvious that we should teach them about strategies.'

(Faerch and Kasper 1983a:55)

'Basic to a notional/functional approach is the attempt to establish syllabuses which are geared towards very specific communicative needs, something which enables learners to bridge the inevitable gap between classroom interaction and various communicative situations outside the classroom, hereby increasing their communicative competence in a way which is specific for IL [interlanguage] communication. In other words, by learning how to use communication strategies appropriately, learners will be more able to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning situations, between pedagogical and non-pedagogic communicative situations.'

(Faerch and Kasper 1983a:56)

'We are definitely in favour of promoting work in this area [teaching of communication strategies such as achievement strategies] because, as we explain in our concluding paragraph (7.2), we believe that learners can be guided to greater communicative success through strategies. ... We do not see strategy teaching as a substitute for

vocabulary learning, but as a useful supplement, involving attention to a different aspect of the learners' communicative competence.'

(Haastrup and Phillipson 1983:157)

'It might be possible to do something about our teaching method to make it conducive to the development of learners' strategic competence. One expedient would be to teach learners how to use CSs [communication strategies] appropriately and effectively. .... If by teaching through example and practice, we can make learners more aware of the communicative problems they might encounter in communication and the importance and advantages of using various CSs to cope with various problems, they might be able to choose more appropriately.'

(Chen 1990:183)

'Finally, some teachers might have doubts about teaching CSs [communication strategies] such as fillers or topic avoidance, language behaviours normally not encouraged in their own L1s. Why then do learners need them? The answer is that they provide the learners with a sense of security in the L2 by allowing them room to manoeuvre in times of difficulty. Rather than giving up their message, learners may decide to try and remain in the conversation and achieve their communicative goal. Providing learners help towards accomplishing this is, I believe, a worthy objective of communicative language instruction.'

(Dornyei 1995:80)

### 3.1.2 *Domains of strategy use*

Researchers have studied strategy use in two domains : strategies for L2 or interlanguage communication and strategies for learning. Without strategies, L2 learners might not have sufficient L2 lexico-grammatical resources to express opinions and communicate. Strategies are not uncommon procedural skills employed by L2 learners to reach their communication goals. Ellis (1994:396) distinguishes two broad theoretical approaches to strategies used by L2 learners in communication. The first approach is to view strategies used in communication as discourse strategies that are evident in learner-learner interaction. These strategies have been treated as 'tactics' or 'conversation

'maintenance' by some researchers (e.g. Long 1981, 1983a). The second approach is to treat strategies used in communication as cognitive processes.

### 3.1.2.1 *Strategies as discourse process for negotiation*

The first approach is to give an account of strategy use from the social interactional perspective. This perspective is owed to the work of Tarone (1977, 1980, 1983, 1986). The main assumption behind the approach is that an interaction is diachronic. It is a two-way communication, and interlocutors have the responsibility to achieve the communicative goal by agreeing on the same meaning structures. She extends the definition of communication strategies and refers to them as

'a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared. (Meaning structures here would include both linguistic structures and sociolinguistic rule structures). Communication strategies, viewed from this perspective, may be seen as attempts to bridge the gap between the linguistic knowledge of the second language learner, and the linguistic knowledge of the target language interlocutor in real communication situations. Approximation, mime and circumlocution may be used to bridge the gap.'

(Tarone 1983:65)

Interlocutors are then predisposed to be cooperative and to offer help in response to what is interpreted as an explicit appeal. The concern is how interlocutors use strategies to work towards agreement on meaning so as to achieve the communicative goal. Tarone (1983:65) proposes 3 criteria that characterize a communication strategy :

'(1) a speaker desires to communicate a meaning X to a listener; (2) the speaker believes the linguistic or sociolinguistic structure desired to communicate meaning X is unavailable; or is not shared with the listener; and (3) the speaker chooses to : (a) avoid -not attempt to communicate meaning X; or, (b) attempt alternate

means to communicate meaning X. The speaker stops trying alternatives when it seems clear to the speaker that there is shared meaning.'

Based on an interactional perspective, Tarone conceptualizes communication strategies as a means for learners to express their intended meaning clearly so as to achieve a shared meaning and the communicative goal. Learners will use different strategies to bridge the gap according to whether they perceive the gap as either bridgeable or unbridgeable. Strategies of avoidance and message abandonment are used when learners perceive the gap as unbridgeable. Strategies of approximation, word coinage, circumlocution, literal translation, language switch and appeal for assistance are used when learners perceive the gap as bridgeable.

Similarly, working from an interactive perspective, a number of researchers consider strategies used in communication as an evident discourse process in daily conversations between native and non-native speakers, or between non-native speakers (e.g. Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, cited in Ellis 1994). In the research on input and interaction for second language acquisition between native and non-native speakers (e.g. Long 1983a, 1983b, Gass and Varonis 1985, Duff 1986, Shortreed 1993), interactional modifications such as clarification requests, confirmation checks and comprehension checks are described as strategies and tactics used to maintain the conversation or the discourse so as to obtain more input. More detailed categories are used for the study of non-native speakers' outputs in response to the linguistic demands of native speakers (e.g. Pica et al 1989), namely requests for confirmation through repetition, modification, completion or elaboration of non-native speakers' expressions, semantic modifications through synonym, paraphrase or example, and syntactic modifications through embedding and elaboration in clauses. Native and non-native interactions have been studied, but the resulting quality of L2 learners' output is not adequately revealed.

### 3.1.2.2 *Strategies as cognitive process to avoid communication breakdown*

If strategy use is perceived as a cognitive process, it is considered as attempts to explain what is going on in the speakers' minds. A number of researchers (e.g. Corder, Faerch and Kasper, Faerch, Haastrup and Phillipson) are in line with this approach to the study of communication strategies. When learners encounter problems in expressing themselves in L2 communication, they will resort to strategies, and may have to sacrifice the concern for grammatical conformity so as to retain the communicative intent (Richards and Schmidt 1983). One method is to adjust or tailor the message, that is, to reduce the content of the message to meet the ends. Faerch and Kasper (1983:30) argue that strategy is a subclass of plans and can best be placed within the area of the planning process and the resulting plan. Learners may avoid getting into the topic, adjusting the communicative goal by saying less than is intended, giving up their turns in the middle of the utterance, and even talk about the topic in general. Different types of strategies have been identified, namely 'message adjustment strategies' including semantic avoidance, message abandonment (Corder 1983), known as 'functional reduction strategies' (Faerch and Kasper 1983a) or 'meaning replacement' (Varadi 1983). The other method is to attempt to adjust their linguistic resources and to tackle the problem directly by using alternative means, namely using strategies of code switching, interlingual transfer, appeal for assistance and miming. These strategies are labeled as 'achievement strategies' (Faerch and Kasper 1983a).

Supplementing the general definition of communication strategies and the notion that strategies are plans, Faerch and Kasper (1983a, 1984) propose two defining criteria. They are 'consciousness' and 'problem-orientedness' and are

moving into the dimension of psychology, attempting to explain what is going on in the speakers' minds (Cook 1992:68). 'Problem-orientedness' is the primary defining criterion and 'consciousness' is the secondary criterion. The whole concept of 'problem-orientedness' is related to the model of speech production of Leont'ev (1975:153, quoted in Faerch & Kasper 1983a:22, Faerch & Kasper 1986) which reflects one's intellectual behavior. In the face of problems in planning and execution phases, plans will be drawn. L2 learners usually have problems in the planning stage due to insufficient linguistic knowledge, and in the execution stage due to their concern about fluency or correctness. If there are problems in the planning stage, learners may change their communicative goal or avoid getting into the topic; this is known as formal reduction strategy. If there are problems in the execution stage, learners may give up in mid-utterance; this is known as functional reduction strategy. Plans are used when learners anticipate or experience problems (Faerch and Kasper 1983a). It is, however, not easy to uncover such consciously employed plans, firstly because they are related to individual learners' awareness of their internal mental operations (Sharwood Smith 1979, cited in Faerch and Kasper 1983a:35). Secondly consciousness is a matter of degree (*ibid* :35). In this view, strategies are 'plans' that are classified as 'always consciously employed', 'never consciously employed' and 'may be consciously employed by some learners in some situations or may be unconsciously employed by some learners in other situations' to solve problems in L2 communication.

'There are various problems in defining communication strategies as consciously employed plans. First of all, consciousness is perhaps more a matter of degree than of either-or... Second, consciousness is clearly not a constant holding for specific types of plans across all individuals. As pointed out by Sharwood Smith, 'different individuals may be more or less able to become aware of their own internal mental operations' (1979), which implies a consciousness-raising process. Furthermore, the

opposite situation can also be envisaged : individuals may automatize what was at one stage consciously employed plans. This points to the following classification of plans:

1. plans which are always consciously employed;
2. plans which are never consciously employed;
3. plans which to some language users and/or in some situations may be consciously used and which to other language users and/or in other situations are used unconsciously.'

(Faerch and Kasper 1983:35)

Bialystok (1990:130) questions the definitional criteria of problem-solving, intentionality and even consciousness on the one hand; on the other hand, she mentions the fallacies of uniqueness and modularity as assumptions about the classification of communication strategies. She explains communication strategies from the 'language processing' perspective, focusing on the development of two processing components: analysis of linguistic knowledge and control of linguistic processing. She criticizes the classification of communication strategies based on surface structure differences of utterances. Strategies should be classified according to different cognitive processes. Paraphrase and circumlocution are not different strategies because they do not involve different processes (Bialystok 1990:131). A binary classification system of strategies based on cognitive processes is also suggested by Bongarets and Poulisse (1989) in the Nijmegen project<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, Bialystok insists that communication strategies should be seen as a process of ordinary language use; they are used in both L1 and L2 contexts. She supports this claim by referring to the fact that teachers, parents and poets all use strategies to adjust their intended messages to students, children and readers. With all these language

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<sup>8</sup> The Nijmegen project classified strategies into two groups : conceptual and code strategies. Conceptual strategy refers to the manipulation of concept. Code strategy refers to the selection and manipulation of the linguistic system.

users, communication strategies are sometimes left to achieve the balance between intention and expression. Therefore, communication strategies only reflect the ways in which the language processing system extends and adapts to the demands of communication.

Ellis's suggested domains summarize strategy use from two main perspectives : cognitive and interactional. The cognitive perspective focuses on the ways in which an individual learner will process strategy consciously or unconsciously in his or her mind before or during an interaction. The interactional perspective focuses on the co-operation of a speaker and a hearer during an interaction. However, I think the dividing line between the two perspectives is not as clear as suggested. It is difficult to categorize strategy as either a cognitive or an interactional issue. This is because strategy use is a discourse feature prevalent in daily conversation, which is planned and used by a learner to reach his or her intended goal, or when he or she is aware of a problem in interaction. As Faerch and Kasper (1983a) have reminded us of the role of awareness of one's mental operation, we should remember that strategy might be manipulated consciously or unconsciously by different learners. In spite of this, I would perceive strategy use as a pragmatic adjustment to a communicative goal or when a problem arises from the context. It derives from a person's awareness of the goal or problem before or during the interaction in both L1 and L2. Perhaps the frequency of strategy use in L2 is higher than that in L1 due to inadequate linguistic resources. Nevertheless, the intended goal in both L1 and L2 interaction might be for better communication, social rapport, language learning or the prevention of communication breakdown. The purpose of strategy use is difficult for analysts to observe unless the learner makes it explicit. In spite of the ways in which strategies are categorized, they are manipulated by learners and are used in a social context with a purpose. Some strategies, such as clarification, can be initiated by the interlocutor or

the speaker, to avoid coming to a halt due to misunderstanding. Some strategies, such as rephrasing one's idea and giving examples, can be initiated by the speaker or the interlocutor to illustrate the idea more explicitly. Different strategies are used according to the learner's observation of the need in the social context. Interactional and cognitive domains interact with each other in a spontaneous interaction.

In view of this, I would like to argue that strategy use is a spontaneous discourse feature and a pragmatic move. Strategy use is triggered by the interactional context, and it is a plan or a response to the need of the communication. It is used consciously or sometimes unconsciously to bridge the gap between what the hearer wants to know from the speaker, and what the speaker wants to express or the meaning which the speaker wants to repair. Seeking clarification is a strategy to obtain the information that a hearer wants when the hearer finds the speaker's idea unclear. A hearer can also adjust the message he or she has received by repeating the words or checking with the speaker. Giving examples or rephrasing one's expression is a strategy to express one's idea more precisely. Whether a strategy used by the speaker in a social interaction can achieve the purpose the speaker wants partly lies in the hearer's interpretation of the strategy. If the hearer fails to recognize the purpose of the strategy, the conversation will come to a halt.

### 3.2 Communicative tasks

Another suggested way to push learners to stretch beyond their limited linguistic resources is to engage them in tasks. It is believed that tasks can encourage L2 learners to work in pairs or in groups, focusing on meaning and the communication of ideas (e.g. Prabhu 1987, Nunan 1989). A task is defined by Prabhu (1987:24) as:

'an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process.'

Richards, Platt and Weber (1986, cited in Nunan 1989:6) also define a task from a pedagogical perspective. A task that promotes communication in L2 classrooms, or so-called '**communicative task**', in Nunan's terms is defined as

'a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focussed on meaning rather than form'

(Nunan 1989:10).

He further categorizes communicative tasks into two main types : (1) 'pedagogic tasks' that are practiced in the classroom and (2) 'real world tasks' that are used for the purpose of rehearsing future needs (Nunan 1989:44).

Regardless of the different labels for tasks, I think a task could be glossed as a means to enable learners to use the target language, either for practice in the classroom or for future needs. The 'pedagogic' and 'real world tasks' share the same end - to provide chances for learners to comprehend and manipulate the target language, but in different social contexts. Therefore, I would say that tasks that have an end and encourage an exchange of ideas, either from one learner to another, or in groups, or with the text, through language in any context, could be described as '**communicative**'.<sup>9</sup> To me, all tasks vary in the degree of '**communication**', that is, some tasks encourage more interactions while some tasks promote few interactions (for more information, refer to 3.2.1.1 - task types). Focusing only on meaning in communication, however,

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<sup>9</sup> I gloss any tasks that facilitates an exchange of ideas, information or meaning through language as '**communicative tasks**', regardless of the social context.

seems to put accuracy and the chances for the development of linguistic resources aside.

### 3.2.1 *Factors facilitating pushed output or stretching in task*

Despite the fact that tasks seem to be conducive to L2 acquisition, the extent to which L2 learners can be pushed to produce more fluent L2 and accurate L2, or to stretch L2 in tasks might be regulated by a myriad of factors such as task familiarity, interlocutor familiarity, signals given by the interlocutor, grouping, task type and time pressure. A number of researchers have investigated how the factors of gender (e.g. Gass and Varonis 1986, Pica et al 1989, 1991), topic, task and interlocutor familiarity (e.g. Gass and Varonis 1984, Varonis and Gass 1985, Plough and Gass 1993), signal type (e.g. Pica et al 1989), premodified input and interactionally modified input (e.g. Pica, Young and Doughty 1987), grouping (in small group, pairs or teacher-led) (e.g. Pica and Doughty 1985) influence negotiation in tasks.

With regard to gender, men and women interact and manage the conversation in a different way in same-sex and opposite-sex dyads. In the study of Gass and Varonis (1986), men appear to dominate in conversations in mixed-sex dyads. Women provide more opportunities for the interlocutor to produce comprehensible output and initiate more meaning negotiations than men in mixed-sex dyads. Men show more involvement in the conversation in same-sex dyads, and it is argued that this plays an important role in obtaining comprehensible input. In the study of Pica et al (1989) on comprehensible output between native and non-native speakers in three tasks : jigsaw, information gap and discussion, it was also found that female-male dyads promoted more output through morphosyntactic modification. Female native speakers sought clarification in ways which provided male non-native speakers with opportunities for production of more comprehensible output; because male

introduced new but relevant topics in the discussion task. Female native speakers were less inclined to seek clarifications from female non-native speakers. Male non-native speakers also showed a high percentage of morphosyntactic modification in the jigsaw task but not in the information gap task. Morphosyntactic modification was found strongest for mixed-sex dyads on the discussion task. Although the focus of the study is on comprehensible output in face of linguistic demand made by native speakers, the closer analysis of results also reveals the effect of gender on interaction and output quality. Similarly, in the study of Pica et al (1991), the results show that female native speakers were more consistent than male native speakers in working with both male and female non-native speakers in different ways : (1) promoting negotiation, (2) inviting requests for clarification of input, (3) providing signals for native speakers to clarify their output and modify their responses and (4) sustaining the conversation, although the results were not always statistically significant.

Some studies examine the effects of topic and interlocutor familiarity on interaction and L2 acquisition. In one study by Gass and Varonis (1984), topic familiarity facilitates comprehensibility of native speakers' speech to non-native speakers. In another study of Varonis and Gass (1985) on the notion of familiarity, it was found that speakers with similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds promote more negotiation. In the study of Plough and Gass (1993), the subjects of task familiar groups had earlier exits from the process and had fewer instances of negotiation than the subjects of task unfamiliar groups. As for interlocutor familiarity, it was found that the unfamiliar pair used more conversational continuants (e.g. echoes) and they exhibited fewer instances of non-understanding at the beginning of the conversation. Interlocutors who are familiar with each other are more willing to signal non-understanding and negotiate by using the discourse features of confirmation checks and

clarification requests, because they feel secure to express non-understanding in a non-threatening situation. Interlocutor unfamiliarity seems to push interlocutors to be more patient with the conversation while interlocutor familiarity seems to promote involvement. It is suggested that the best way to promote negotiation and L2 acquisition is to combine interlocutor familiarity with task familiarity.

Signal type given by native speakers is believed to have a significant impact on the type or response non-native speakers will make. In the study of Pica et al (1989) on the relationship between comprehensible output and linguistic demand made by native speakers, when native speakers made explicit a need for clarification, non-native speakers were inclined to make linguistic (syntactic, morphological) and semantic modifications more significant than when they were asked for confirmation. A similar study was done by Pica, Young and Doughty (1987) on comprehensible input and acquisition through interaction. It was found that the quantity of rephrased or repeated content was important to comprehension. Complexity of the input seemed to make little difference. This study also supported the theoretical claim that interaction had a facilitating effect on comprehension through the use of confirmation and comprehension checks and clarification requests.

Grouping is also a factor influencing acquisition. Group work has been considered as more conducive to L2 acquisition than teacher-fronted activity (e.g. Long, Adams, Mclean and Castanos 1976, Pica and Doughty 1985, Long 1990). Pica and Doughty (1985) researched the role of group work and teacher-front activity in classroom L2 acquisition. It was found that group work promoted more turns, more completions and corrections, more input to an individual, and facilitated a greater quantity of language produced by an individual learner. But the input provided by the teacher in teacher-fronted activity was more

grammatical than that provided by learners in group work. There were more negotiated interactions in teacher-fronted activity; however, the teacher monopolized the interaction, and so did more fluent L2 learners in group work. Despite the production of ungrammatical input, Pica and Doughty argue that group work is still a useful activity because it enhances development of L2 fluency. The effects of negotiation of meaning on L2 acquisition will be greater if tasks require exchange of information.

Each factor influences interaction and input quality and they are all significant in regulating tasks and L2 acquisition. It is difficult to state which factor is the most significant, because they all interact with one another. In the research described previously, 'tasks' (which might be discussion, decision making or information exchange) serve as a research tool to study the relationship between negotiation of meaning and comprehensible input, or between comprehensible input and L2 acquisition. The focus is not on 'tasks'; however, the results support the influence of tasks on negotiation (e.g. Pica and Doughty 1985, Gass and Varonis (1984). Task types (for instance, discussion or decision-making) appear to be not sufficiently studied. Neither is time pressure. The following paragraphs will consider the way in which these two factors regulate richer or less rich L2 output quality.

### 3.2.1.1 Task types

Tasks that have been used in the literature could be roughly categorized into two types : one-way tasks and two-way tasks, according to Long's first framework (1983c:213). In a one-way task, only one participant of a dyad or triad distributes information, for example, giving instructions and narrative. In a two-way task, each participant has some information or knowledge which is not shared and they have to give and pool information to complete the task; for example, conversation and communication games. Other researchers label the two tasks in other terms, namely

convergent and divergent tasks (Duff 1986), required information tasks (Doughty and Pica 1986) and problem-solving tasks (Porter 1986) etc. Researchers such as Pica and Doughty are not satisfied with Long's classification. They conceptualize and categorize tasks in terms of their products, that is whether or not any mutually acceptable solution is reached. Tasks that require learners to pool and exchange information such as role plays, simulations, discussions and problem solving so as to reach a consensus are known as 'convergent tasks'. On the contrary, tasks such as debates that require learners to exchange information, but no consensus will be reached, are known as 'divergent tasks'. The two tasks are described as complementary in pedagogic and psycholinguistic value (Duff 1986). Learners are often requested to decide on or rank some items and individuals for a particular purpose, such as ranking 5 survivors when a group of people are at the brink of death, or ranking 6 items for survival value and usefulness; and the decision rests on a moral rationale. Learners may be requested to discuss controversial issues that are familiar to them socially, culturally and politically. All tasks are done in a second or foreign language.

Although both task types require learners to exchange ideas and provide information, the goal behind each task is different. Participants in convergent tasks have to reach a mutually acceptable solution. Participants in divergent tasks can have independent goals and they can defend their given positions. It is not necessary for them to reach a mutually acceptable solution. In these tasks, learners are expected to use strategies such as agreeing, disagreeing, explaining their reasons, describing the strengths and weaknesses of the items needed for survival so as to persuade others to accept or reject them.

In addition to these task types, Long (1989) proposes new labels for the classification of tasks, namely 'open task' and 'closed task'. 'Open task' refers to 'a task in

which participants know there is no predetermined correct solution'. 'Closed task' refers to 'a task which in itself requires the participants to attempt to reach either a single correct solution or one of a small, finite set of correct solutions determined beforehand by the designer of the task and again (crucially) known to the participants to have been so determined.' (1989:18) Free conversation, a debate, ranking favorite leisure time activities, explaining how something works and discussing and eventually choosing (individually or by consensus) a few items would all be examples of 'open tasks'. Finding four differences between two identical pictures would be a 'closed task'.

Long (1989: 13-15) has made the claim that two-way tasks produce more useful negotiation work than one-way tasks, which in return produce more useful input for second language acquisition. Gass and Varonis (1985) looked into the effects of one-way tasks and two-way tasks on negotiation. They investigated the frequency of negotiation in non-native dyads and native-non-native dyads. It was found that there were more indicators of non-understanding and therefore more clarifications were sought by subjects in one-way tasks, because interlocutors were not sharing the same piece of information. But the difference between the two task types was not statistically significant. In their second trial, there was a decrease in the number of non-understanding indicators, attributable to the familiarity of the task. Furthermore, the frequency of negotiation sequences in non-native dyads was greater than that in native and non-native dyads. The most negotiation occurred when non-native speakers worked in pairs and they were of different language backgrounds and proficiency levels. It is claimed that pairing non-natives is a useful activity which allows learners to manipulate input in a non-threatening situation. Long also predicts that (ibid:18) all other things being equal, closed tasks will elicit more topic and language recycling, more feedback, more incorporation, more rephrasing and more

precision. Similarly, Duff (1986) finds that convergent tasks prompt more turns than divergent tasks, but the quality of discourse in divergent tasks is more complex, and there are more comprehension checks and clarification requests. Doughty and Pica (1986) also argue that required information exchange tasks facilitate more modified interactions than decision making or problem solving tasks in which information exchange between or among participants is optional. Students talk more in required information tasks. In short, it seems that there is no conclusion on which tasks assist more effective L2 acquisition and why.

### 3.2.1.2 *Time pressure*

Timing is a communicative pressure on interaction which might lead to more or less rich L2 output and acquisition.

Some researchers have started to examine the effects of a contextual factor which is psychological and affects processing - planning time - on accuracy. But the investigation in L2 is rather limited, except some articles from Dechert, Mohle and Raupach (1984) which discussed the role of temporal variables in speech, showing the need of planning time for L1 and L2 productions (Wiese 1984, Lennon 1984, Mohle 1984). Investigation of the effects of planning time on L2 output quality in communicative tasks is particularly scarce.

According to Ellis's study (1987) on the degree of accuracy of past tense use by a group of mixed ability EFL learners in planned and unplanned narrative discourses, the results are consistent with the hypothesis that the amount of planning time available to the learner has a systematic effect on accuracy. The influence of the target language variant is more apparent in planned discourse, where there is an opportunity to attend to form, than in unplanned discourse. Ochs (1979, quoted in Ellis 1987) has made a distinction between unplanned and planned discourse, and

argued that unplanned discourse lacks forethought and organizational preparation, and speakers rely more on morphosyntactic structures acquired early on. Planned discourse is thought out and organized before expression, and speakers make greater use of structures that emerge later. In Crookes's term, time facilitates macroplanning (planning or speech organization) and even microplanning (e.g. syntax and vocabulary).

Similarly, Crookes (1989) found that giving L2 learners time to plan their utterances resulted in more syntactically complex language, more target-like use of particular linguistic forms and use of greater variety of words in the short term than not giving time for planning. Skehan and Foster (1995) also researched the effects of planning time, for three task types, on the fluency of task performance, accuracy and complexity of L2. It was found that planning time did not have the same effects on the fluency, accuracy and complexity of L2 in the three task types. Planning had large effects on fluency, but the effects on accuracy and complexity of L2 were not clear. This was because there was a tradeoff between accuracy and complexity. When L2 learners were ambitious to utter complex sentence structures, they did so at the expense of accuracy. Most results support the view that planned conditions contribute to more organized and syntactically complex language, and a greater variety of lexis, but not necessarily improved accuracy.

**Chapter Two (b)**

After reviewing the relevant literature on L2 acquisition, strategy use, task types and time pressure, the following sections will first focus on the debates about the limitations of communicative tasks, strategy use and time pressure for L2 acquisition, and then look at how strategy use could combine with planning time in communicative tasks that could lead to higher quality of L2 output in learner-learner interaction. Three groups of research questions are posed at the end of the chapter. I hope that the discussion can contribute to the study of L2 acquisition and can throw further light on task design and pedagogy, with reference to Hong Kong L2 learning at university.

**(1) Limitations of communicative tasks for L2 acquisition**

Learning L2 through tasks, or so-called task-based learning, is the current vogue in communicative language teaching and can be perceived as a response to dissatisfaction with the traditional grammar translation and audio-lingual teaching approaches. Task-based learning has been explained by some researchers (e.g. Nunan 1989) as a means to draw the learners' attention to meaning, rather than linguistic structure, by involving learners in a communicative language use context. Learning through tasks also aims to encourage L2 learners to use more target language in face of the demands of different communicative task types, for example discussion and debate. In other words, communicative tasks provide a venue for L2 learners to produce more L2 output. This communicative approach to learning is criticized by some researchers (e.g. Skehan 1996) as primarily achieving the properties of meaning at the expense of accuracy and complexity of L2. **Accuracy**, is the learner's capacity to handle whatever level of interlanguage complexity he or she has attained (Skehan 1996:46); and **complexity of language** is related to the stage and elaboration of the underlying interlanguage

system (Skehan *ibid*). Therefore, it is worth looking at the effects of communicative tasks on L2 acquisition, in terms of using more accurate L2, and a variety of and more complex L2 syntax and lexis in learners' output' or 'stretching'.

Communicative tasks do not lead directly to richer or better L2 output because they are regulated by a number of factors, namely gender, topic familiarity, interlocutor familiarity, planning time and strategy use as described in Chapter Two (a) on the one hand; on the other hand, there is an interplay between communicative tasks and even individual learners' differences, namely risk taking attitude, individual lexico-grammatical resources and level of L2 proficiency. The review in chapter Two (a) has highlighted the significance of strategy use, planning time and task types for richer or less rich L2 output. The factors of strategy use and planning time will be discussed in the following sections separately, in relation to communicative tasks.

## **(2) Strategy use in interaction for L2 acquisition**

The functions of strategies used in interaction described in Chapter Two (a) - 3.1.1 seem to relate especially to the notion of fluency, that is the capacity to mobilize one's linguistic resources in the service of real-time communication in order to produce and comprehend speech at relatively normal rates, approaching one's own native-language speech rates (Skehan 1996:48). L2 acquisition is discussed intuitively without adequate research. Despite Corder's encouragement of the use of resources expansion strategies, some researchers have expressed reservations about their use in L2 communication because there is no research to show how acquisition takes place as a result, particularly acquisition of more

accurate use of language; and more complex L2<sup>1</sup>. Skehan (1993) casts doubt on strategy use which may only enhance 'production' temporarily; and overuse will prohibit the expansion of learners' vocabulary and syntax. He further states that communication strategies (linguistic and cognitive) can be used to handle communicative pressure but might not enable learners to stretch their interlanguage and lead to change. The 'solutions' to problems, that is the use of communication strategies, will be proceduralized and re-used on other occasions, and thus become a stumbling block for change and acquisition in the future (Skehan 1996).

Aston (1986) is also dubious about relationships between the frequency of trouble-shooting procedures (in terms of strategies for checks and clarifications), comprehensible input and learners' acquisition. Frequency of strategy use indicates the difficulty of the interaction, since strategies are used to maintain social rapport. He argues that in some cases, negotiation through trouble-shooting procedures can produce comprehensible input to the learner and lower the 'affective filter', but this does not mean that the more negotiation takes place, the better the social context is, and the merrier the learner is from his or her acquisition point of view. It is the merry social context of negotiation that influences acquisition.

'Turning to the relationship between the frequency of trouble-shooting procedures and acquisition, I have suggested that this frequency may reflect the perceived difficulty of the interaction, without indicating the quantity of suitable input to the learner's acquisitional mechanisms. Trouble-shooting may therefore be at a maximum in 'difficult' interactions, but this does not seem to imply that the more negotiation takes place, the merrier from an acquisitional point of view. ... Finally because the learner needs to develop strategies not just for

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<sup>1</sup> For definitions of fluency, accuracy and complexity in second language acquisition and the way the three words are used in this thesis, see Chapter Two (a) - (1) 1.2.

obtaining comprehensible input but for establishing and maintaining social rapport, we need to develop classroom techniques which focus on the social aspects of language use.'

(Aston 1986:140-141)

Bialystok (1990), who conceptualizes strategy use as a common feature found in first and second language use, also questions the effect of teaching strategies. She argues that what one must teach students is not strategy, but language.

'The strategies observed to be used and found to be effective for adult second-language learners are derived from, and in some cases identical to, the strategies used by children when mastering their first language. The more language the learner knows, the more possibilities exist for the system to be flexible and to adjust itself to meet the demands of the learner. What one must teach students of a language is not strategy, but language.'

(Bialystok 1990:147)

Likewise, Littlewood (1983) has reservations about the teaching of strategy use to expand a learner's linguistic repertoire. He also thinks that learners will raise their consciousness and use strategies when they are aware of a problem in their native language use. He further states that it is difficult to draw a dividing line between speech which is a result of the production of the underlying system and speech which is a result of strategy use. Strategy use might contribute only to fluency, continuation of interaction; but provide little help for L2 acquisition. The relationship between strategy use and learning is not adequately studied. Until teachers and researchers know more about the function of strategies and their effects, the arguments for training or teaching learners to use strategies are not strong.

'However, it is unlikely that we can draw a sharp dividing line - in either practical or psychological terms- between speech which is the

spontaneous output of a learner's underlying system and speech which is the result of a communication strategy. All language use is a response to some kind of communication problem and a person's awareness of the problem is a matter of varying degree.'

(Littlewood 1983:84)

'Another issue about which we have no precise knowledge is the nature of the relationship between communication strategies and learning. Intuitively, we may consider that some of the strategies - such as mime or the use of native language - are unlikely to produce learning, except in the indirect sense that they enable the interaction to continue and perhaps elicit help from the listener. Other strategies - such as paraphrase or adjusting the message - may not help learners to expand their repertoire but help them to become more fluent with what they already possess. Other strategies - such as seeking help or creating new words - may lead learners to gain new information about what is appropriate or permissible in the second language.'

(Littlewood 1983:87)

If we accept these views, the function of strategy use in extending L2 linguistic resources, in grammar and lexis, is questioned. Perhaps the most important thing for L2 learners to do is to improve their linguistic knowledge and proficiency, as some researchers have suggested (e.g. Bialystok 1990) because strategies do not actually seem to assist L2 acquisition, but only continuing interaction.

As Ellis comments (1994:403), the research on strategy use to date has made no attempt to investigate the relationship between strategy use and second language acquisition; specifically, there are few studies which show how strategy use aids L2 acquisition in learner-learner interaction in communicative tasks. The host of taxonomies of strategies identified by different researchers do not throw much light on this issue. Moreover, the functions of strategy use described previously are speculative. Perhaps some discourse strategies might promote more linguistic modification of L2 , lead to the use of more accurate

language and provide opportunities for learners to use as much alternative syntax and lexis as possible or to experience the complexity of L2 (Skehan 1996). According to Swain's claim (1985), learners are "pushed" to produce more output; and the push might be facilitated by strategy use. In contrast, some discourse strategies might promote less syntactic or semantic modification of L2. Nonetheless, strategies cannot be used or learnt by learners in isolation; they must be studied in context; and communicative tasks provide an appropriate context for learners to use strategies and benefit from their use. But the question is how strategy use can combine with communicative tasks and lead to richer or better L2 output quality, in grammar and lexis? This question requires more careful research.

The way in which strategies used in communicative tasks between L2 learners may lead to richer or better L2 output remains to be studied. It seems that previous studies on the role of input and output focus on the interaction between native and non-native speakers. There have been some studies (e.g. Pica et al 1989, Pica 1988) which investigated the relationship between non-native speakers' output and the linguistic demand of native speakers. The linguistic demand is made through strategies of checks, requests and repetition; however, the relationship between communicative tasks and strategy use is not the main concern. In the study of Pica et al (1989), it was found that the 'what' question could lead learners to modify their L2 more significantly than just confirming information by repeating their production with rising intonation. Pica et al (1989, 1991) also concluded that output was more likely to be produced in response to strategies of requests and checks in interaction and negotiation of meaning. Although engaging L2 learners in communicative tasks is a current vogue in communicative language learning, and it is claimed that it promotes comprehension, manipulation and production of L2 (Nunan 1989), there are inadequate studies to show how strategy

use in tasks leads to more accurate language use, more lexis, more and complex syntax, and more grammatical, lexical and semantic modifications. Such research is highly desirable in order to convince academics and practitioners that acquisition takes place through strategy use in tasks. Discourse strategies, as discussed by researchers (e.g. Pica 1988, Pica et al 1989, 1991), might be one of the mechanisms for richer and better quality of output, and assist L2 acquisition.

Discourse strategies are not the most important factor to assist L2 output in interaction. I think the use of strategies in tasks for negotiation of meaning might also be related to the **learners' existing lexico-grammatical resources**, their **willingness to take risks**, and their **interpretation of the task**. In other words, individual learners' differences also contribute to the choice of syntax and lexis in communication. We can assume that if learners have rich linguistic resources, particular in grammar and lexis, they may be more capable of managing the direction of discussion, grasping every opportunity to present ideas more precisely and appropriately. Similarly, if learners are willing to use their resources to take risks with a view to completing the task, they may also be able to benefit from learner-learner interaction by stretching L2, that is using as much variety of syntax and lexis as possible in a risk-taking manner in response to linguistic demands represented through requests, checks, paraphrases and example giving. In this view, both meaning and language acquisition take place. By contrast, if learners have limited linguistic resources and are not willing to take risks, they may employ strategies to avoid going into detailed discussion. Such learners may 'rely on less elaborate interlanguage [L2] systems which are adapted to communicate meaning in such a way that interlanguage [L2] is not pressured for change (Schachter 1974, cited in Skehan 1996:7)'. In Skehan's words, strategies for communication repair 'can be used to handle communicative pressure, but in so doing remove the automatic engagement

that would be repaired to constantly stretch interlanguage [L2] and lead to change.' (1996:41). The extent to which strategy use is actually a stumbling block for L2 acquisition in tasks requires further research.

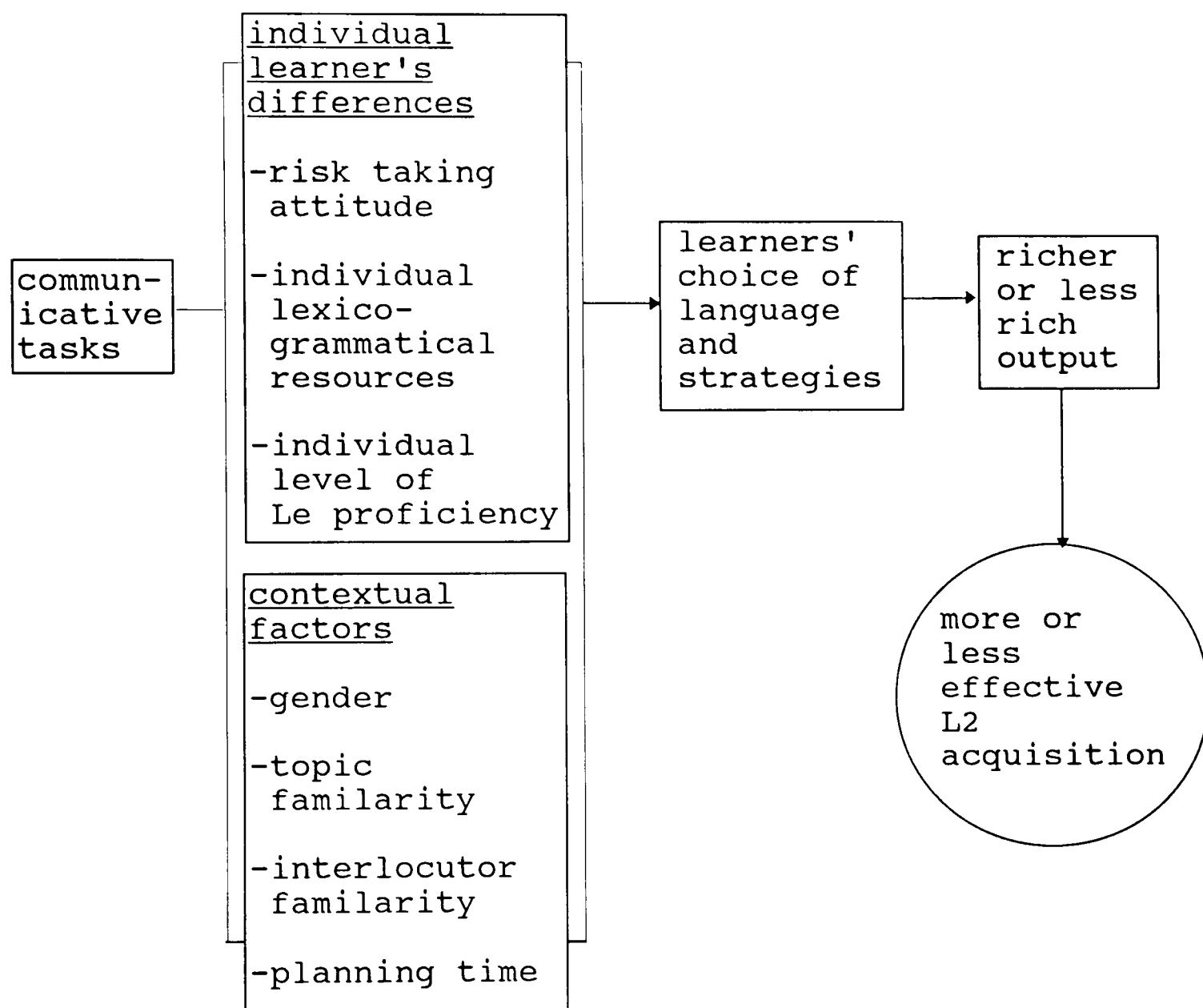
### **(3) Planning time in interaction for L2 acquisition**

The second factor that regulates tasks and leads to richer or less rich L2 output quality is time pressure. Time pressure, when there is no provision of planning time before the task, is a communicative pressure imposed on learners, and it might affect the quality of L2 output, in terms of the use of a variety of syntax and lexis. As reviewed in Chapter Two (a) - 3.2.1.2 (Time pressure), it is generally agreed in different studies that planning time influences second language output, and is a significant determining factor for better language use. Previous studies have shown a vast amount of quantitative data concerning the accuracy of certain morphemes in different discourse types. But the relationship between planning time and the use of better L2 output in communicative tasks is rarely revealed. The temporal variables have been agreed among researchers as indicators of the need for planning time; however, the focus of the temporal variables is on macroplanning, not on microplanning. In view of all this, it is worth studying the relationship of planning time and L2 output quality in communicative tasks to find out the extent to which this factor can lead to richer or less rich L2 output quality.

To conclude, strategy use and time pressure, as well as individual learners' differences might determine the extent to which L2 learners' linguistic ability can be pushed or stretched to the level of  $i+1$  in output, leading to more effective or less effective L2 acquisition. A model showing the relationships among communicative tasks, individual and contextual factors, strategy use and L2 acquisition is suggested as follows. Their relationships still require careful research.

Diagram 2

A model of the relationships between communicative tasks, individual and contextual factors, strategy use and L2 acquisition



#### 4. Research Questions

In the light of the review, I pose the following groups of research questions.

1. Although the use of communicative tasks is the current vogue in communicative language learning and is claimed to enable learners to focus on meaning so that comprehension, manipulation, production and interaction are involved (Nunan 1989), how communicative tasks assist richer and better L2 output in terms of accuracy, complexity and greater use of L2 syntax and lexis, is not certain. How can meaning and acquisition take place in communicative tasks?
2. It is claimed that strategies are used in interactions and some strategies (e.g. clarification request) might promote the modification of L2 more significantly than others (e.g. checks) (Pica et al 1989); but the relationship between strategy use and communicative tasks still requires careful research. In what ways could strategy use in communicative tasks lead to richer and better L2 output quality, that is, more varied and complex syntax and lexis, more accurate language use and greater fluency? What is the relationship between strategy use and L2 output quality in communicative tasks?
3. Although it is found from some studies that planning time promotes acquisition, resulting in more complex syntax, more target-like use of particular linguistic forms but not in more complex L2 lexis (e.g. Crookes 1989, Ellis 1987), the relationship between planning time and acquisition in interaction is still not sufficiently researched. What is the relationship between planning time and L2 output quality in communicative tasks? Will more accurate, more complex syntax and lexis be used, and more fluent L2 speech be found in planned communicative tasks than unplanned

communicative tasks? Will the provision of planning time lead to richer L2 output and more effective L2 acquisition or will it just lead to greater fluency? If planning time can aid richer L2 output and more effective acquisition, how does it work in communicative tasks?

A study was conducted to research these three questions. Two communicative task types were chosen : a divergent and a convergent task. Four factors were also controlled so that the foci of the research would be on **strategy use** and **planning time**. A detailed description of the research design and findings is provided in Chapter Three.

**Abstract of Chapter Three**

In this chapter, I shall present the findings of the study. I start by describing the rationale of the research design, and the methodology. Then, I present the quantitative and qualitative data related to the research questions.

A total of ten subjects were chosen from the 136 first year business students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, the University of Hong Kong in 1995. In order to focus on the effects on L2 output of strategy use and planning time in communicative tasks, the factors of age, sex, level of L2 proficiency, interlocutor familiarity, topic familiarity and task types were controlled. Two convergent and divergent tasks were used as the tools of the research. The ten subjects worked in mixed-sex dyads, and they did one task at a time with a fortnight's interval. They were interviewed and invited to give some comments on their behaviour in retrospect. Some categories of strategies were devised for the analysis, but they were not exhaustive.

The findings of the research are divided into six parts. The first and the second parts report the length of turns, variety and complexity of syntax, variety of lexis and the discourse structures of the two tasks. The third part reports the strategies used in the subjects' discourses, and some examples are taken from the data. The fourth part reports the effects of planning time on L2 use, with reference to the length of turns, strategies used in interaction, variety of syntax and lexis, and accuracy of L2. The fifth and the sixth parts are the interview results and the subjects' retrospections.

## Chapter Three

### Introduction

In this chapter, I will report the results of the research. I first state the rationale of the research design. Then, I describe the method of study. Thirdly, I report the findings. The findings focus on both the quantitative and qualitative data and they are related to the three groups of research questions. Details of the interview results and the subjects' retrospections can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

#### (1) Rationale of Research Design

##### 1.1 *Controlling factors*

As described in Chapter Two (a) - 3.2.1 (Factors facilitating pushed output or stretching in task), the use of L2 in tasks might be regulated by a myriad of factors. With a view to concentrating on strategy use and planning time, four factors were controlled. They were sex, age, level of English proficiency and interlocutor familiarity. I decided that the subjects should be of about the same age. They should have obtained the same grades in the Use of English in the two public examinations (i.e. HKCEE and HKAL) and not be from the same English enhancement group. There should be five males and five females so that they could work in mixed dyads. As a result, the influence of the four factors on L2 use in tasks could be kept to a minimum.

##### 1.2 *Controlling task types*

Since another concern of the research is to study how strategy use could combine with planning time in communicative tasks, two communicative task types were chosen for the research - a divergent and a convergent task. They were chosen because both tasks encourage two-

way communication, but with different end products (please refer to Chapter Two (a) - 3.2.1.1 - Task types, for more details). Moreover, the two tasks were case studies of business management problems which the subjects were familiar with. Familiarity with the content of the task provides a less-threatening environment for discussion (refer to Chapter Two (a)- 3.2.1 about the effects of task familiarity on interaction and acquisition). This enables the analysis to focus on task types and not on topic familiarity.

### 1.3 Categories

The categories serve as a checklist for the identification of strategies used in learner-learner interactions. They are only suggestive features and are not exhaustive. They mix the host of categories identified by researchers who perceive strategy use from interactional (e.g. Tarone, Long, Plough and Gass etc.) and cognitive (e.g. Faerch and Kasper, Bialystok, Paribakht) perspectives.

## (2) Method of study

### 2.1 Subjects' profiles

Five male and five female first year students of the Department of Business Administration at the University of Hong Kong were chosen to be the subjects of the study out of a total of 136<sup>1</sup> in 1995. The ten students agreed to participate in the research and they met the same four factors. The four factors were : age, sex, level of English proficiency and acquaintance with the interlocutor. The ten first-year students were aged between 19-20, and were native speakers of Cantonese. They all finished their

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<sup>1</sup> At first there were 7 female students and 5 male students. Two female students withdrew because they did not have time to participate in the research.

secondary education in local Anglo-English secondary schools and sat for the two public examinations: the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination in 1992, and the Hong Kong Advanced-Level Examination in 1994. They came from different groups of an English Enhancement course entitled English for Academic Communication developed for all first-year undergraduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Hong Kong<sup>2</sup>, and had not met each other before. All of them had obtained 'C' grades in English Language in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination and the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination. They were described as 'outspoken' or 'active members in class or group discussion' by their English instructors. They worked in mixed-sex dyads and completed the divergent and convergent tasks in English. The subjects' profiles are listed as follows.

Pair No.	Name	Sex	Age	Language Proficiency	
				HKCert.	HKA-level
1	Katherine (Ka)	F	20	C	C
	Kelvin (Ke)	M	19	C	C
2	Lin Sze (Lin)	F	19	C	C
	Daniel (D)	M	19	C	C
3	Cathy (C)	F	20	C	C
	Eugene (E)	M	20	C	C
4	Joanne (J)	F	20	C	C
	Alex (A)	M	20	C	C
5	Wendy (W)	F	19	C	C
	Law Chi Kong (Law)	M	20	C	C

## 2.2 Tasks

The two tasks that were used in the research can be categorized as real-life tasks. Since the subjects were business students, the two tasks were also related to the

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<sup>2</sup> The University of Hong Kong is an English-medium university.

subjects' future workplace, and were about management problems.

In management studies, teachers often bring different cases for students to analyze and discuss, with an aim to integrate content with language<sup>3</sup>. The technique of using business cases for pedagogical purposes originated at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration in the 1920s. Under the supervision of instructors, students are able to defend their stance, support or refute other's opinions, argue and rebut irrelevant viewpoints. The content must be business-oriented and the discussion of cases must involve different interactional skills, reasoning skills and problem-solving skills (Johnson 1993:205)<sup>4</sup>. The achievement of negotiation of meaning is expected at the end of the case study.

Therefore, one convergent and one divergent task about management cases in Hong Kong and Mainland China were presented to the subjects. The subjects were required to integrate language with content, and interact in a simulated real-life context; assuming that they were the executives of the companies involved. The title of the convergent task was 'Lakeland Leisure Limited' and the title of the divergent task was 'Community Education Commission'. All of them were taken and adapted from Tang, S.F.Y. and A.M. Whiteley. 1991. (eds) *Management Case Studies in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Longman. For more information about the two tasks, please refer to Appendix 4.

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<sup>3</sup> For further discussion on the use of case method for ESL, refer to Piotrowski, M. V. 1982. *TESOL Quarterly*. Vol 16. No.2. pp. 229-237.

<sup>4</sup> For details, please refer to Johnson, C. 1993. *Business English. Language Teaching*. Vol 26. C.U.P. pp. 201-209.

### 2.3 Data collection techniques

Data were collected in three ways. The first was to record the subjects' discourses during their interactions. The second was to interview the subjects before and after the research. The third was to play the taped interaction to enable the subjects to retrospect their internal state of mind during their interactions.

The reason why the triangular method was used to collect data was to increase 'data reliability'. Recording and transcribing the subjects' discourses present the interaction in the form of text. In order to understand the subjects' behavior in the interaction and the motives behind their interaction, interview and retrospection are two of the possible means to supply more information for analysis. The three methods are complementary. They contribute to this research in different ways.

### 2.4 Procedures

The five pairs of subjects were requested to complete the tasks according to the instructions given on cards. Pairs 1,3 and 4 were given three minutes to read the text and five minutes to plan for the discussion while pairs 2 and 5 were only given three minutes to read the text. All pairs then had to complete the task in 15 minutes. They completed the divergent task in the first week and the convergent task in the third week, with a fortnight's interval with a view to avoiding the rehearsal effect. Their performances were video- and audio-taped. The use of videotape and audiotape was to ensure that the discourses could be recorded, in case there was any technical problem with either one of the means.

Retrospections were done immediately after the completion of the task, and the subjects had been told before the task that they would be invited to comment on their behavior, by watching their videotaped performances.

For instance, they might want to comment on the reason for a long pause or for paraphrasing the speaker's utterance. As argued by Ericsson and Simon (1980), retrospection is a verbal reporting procedure to reveal the internal state of the subject's mind.

'One method frequently used to gain information about the course and mechanisms of cognitive processes is to probe verbally the subjects' internal states.'

(Ericsson and Simon 1980:215)

There are also criticisms on this kind of data collection technique. It is considered to be controversial and there are doubts about its reliability and the effects of knowledge that will be required to retrospect.

'... there are two main points of objection to the use of retrospective data : 1. retrospective data are not reliable; they are incomplete, inaccurate and affected by researcher bias; 2. the knowledge that one will be required to retrospect, influences the performance of the task.'

(Haastrup 1987:217)

In view of the doubts, Ericsson and Simon suggest some conditions : to collect the internal state of mind by providing maximum contextual information; and to avoid researcher bias by minimizing interference, after considering the sequence of the cognitive retrieval process and short term memory. The two main criteria include providing optimal information about the thought sequence with minimal interference (Ericsson and Simon 1987:35). Haastrup (1987) summarizes the conditions again as follows.

1. the data should be collected immediately after task performance, when memory is still fresh;
2. the subjects should be provided with contextual information to activate their memories;
3. all the information asked for must be directly retrievable, i.e. must have been needed during task performance, so that the

subjects are not induced to generate responses based on inferencing and generalizations;

4. for the same reason the information asked for should relate to specific problems, or a specific situation;
5. no leading questions should be asked, to minimize the effects of "researcher bias";
6. the subjects should not be informed that they will be asked for retrospective comments after task performance, so as not to affect their performance on the task.'

(Haastrup 1987:217)

Before the research began, I had told the subjects that their interaction would be videotaped and they could comment on their behavior when the tape was played back. Retrospections were done immediately after the task performance. I hoped that the replay could provide the subjects with relevant contextual information and could activate their short term memory. Moreover, I did not ask any leading questions. The subjects were free to comment on their behavior at any time or when they wanted to comment.

Moreover, the interviews about the subjects' earliest L2 learning experiences and attitudes were conducted at the end of the retrospection. Interview is one of the popular data collection procedures for qualitative research in second language acquisition. A variety of interview types are used, namely open, semi-open, semi-structured and structured interviews. Seliger and Shohamy (1989) have pointed out the limitations of collecting data through interviews.

'There are disadvantages, however. Interviews can be costly, time-consuming, and often difficult to administer. They depend on good interviewing skills that might require extensive training. They may introduce elements of subjectivity and personal bias, and rapport may cause the interviewee to respond in a certain way to please the interviewer.'

(Seliger and Shohamy 1989:166)

Bearing the limitations and the problems of collecting data through interviews in mind, I had prepared a list of questions in order to control the pace and the focus of discussion in the interviews (For more information about the questions, please refer to Appendix 3.). The interviews were conducted in Cantonese since the subjects preferred to be interviewed in their mother tongue. The results were translated into English<sup>5</sup>. I am aware of the advantages and disadvantages of conducting the interviews in the subjects' mother tongue. The subjects may have more confidence in expressing their personal feelings about language learning or describing their previous language learning experiences in L1 than in L2. However, there may be some loss of data during the transcription and translation processes. The transcription problems mentioned by Cook (1989), such as selectivity and subjectivity, might present the results and the thoughts of the subjects with limitations. Even if there was no loss of data, the face-to-face interviews and the alertness of the subjects about the interviews might have generated some 'on-stage' effects. Their answer might not be the true voices of the subjects.

In short, the research method is illustrated as follows.

(1st week) convergent task - retrospection - interview

(3rd week) divergent task - retrospection - interview

## 2.5 Conventions of Transcription

The transcription conventions adopted in the pilot study were mainly those used by Allwright D. in his transcription for classroom discourse (refer to Allwright

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<sup>5</sup> I am aware of the problems inherent in the processes of transcribing the subjects' discourses and then translating them into English. There might be some distortion and loss of data.

and Bailey, 1991) with some modifications. The keys are listed as follows.

- (!) interruption
- X incomprehensible word
- XXX incomprehensible phrase length
- ... pause, give length in seconds in extreme cases
- [ ] commentary of any kind (e.g. to indicate giggle or laugh)
- [= ] translation of a word or a phrase
- [ ] speak simultaneously

I am aware that this transcription convention has its limitations. It replicates the context in which the interaction took place; however, the transcription may not be complete. As argued by Cook (1990), the quantity of context relevant to discourse pragmatics is infinitely delicate and infinitely expandable and is not capable of being transcribed. It is difficult to claim any transcription as 'complete', 'objective' or 'scientific'. There is a limit to the amount of relevant detail that can be transcribed. Sometimes, some data will be selected and ignored by the analyst. In view of the criticisms, I attempted to adopt the signals to show the different linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of an interaction. However, the transcription conventions might still present the context with some limitations and their use represents my interpretation of the context.

## 2.6 Categories

Many studies of communication strategies, the role of interaction and input in second language acquisition have identified a host of categories. The host of categories indicate a wide range of suggestive features for classifications. Some categories emphasize turn-taking

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See Chapter Five - (2) - 2.1.3 : Limitations of the study - data collection techniques.

features (e.g. hesitations, pauses and interruption); some categories emphasize speech acts (e.g. clarification requests, confirmation checks and comprehension checks); and some categories emphasize the semantic aspect of the language (e.g. paraphrase and correction). The categories used in the research followed most of the categories in the literature. However, **the categories tend to mix the different features. They are not prescriptive and are not exhaustive; they only indicate some suggestive features, aiming at describing the linguistic behavior and structure of interaction used by language learners through strategy in a communicative task<sup>6</sup>.** I am aware of the limitations of the definitions and taxonomies of strategies. Additional strategies were expected to come up in the data. The following are the categories used in the research, together with some brief descriptions.

1. *comprehension check*

Refers to a response which follows the previous speaker's utterance immediately, characterized by repetition, with falling intonation of all or part of the speaker's preceding utterance (taken from Pica and Doughty 1985).

2. *clarification request*

Refers to a response which follows the previous speaker's utterance immediately, characterized by utterances such as "pardon"? or "what" (taken from Plough and Gass 1993:40).

3. *confirmation check*

Refers to a response which follows the previous speaker's utterance immediately, characterized by repetition with rising intonation of all or part of the speaker's preceding utterance (Pica and Doughty 1985:120).

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<sup>6</sup> I am aware that the categories are not complete. They serve as a tool to help me understand how acquisition and meaning take place in interaction.

4. *other correction*

Refers to a response in which the listener provides a more accurate piece of information, in terms of grammar, content and vocabulary.

5. *helping out*

Refers to a response in which a word or phrase or whole sentence is provided from one interlocutor for another one.

6. *appeal for assistance*

Refers to a response when a learner asks for the correct item, characterized by expressions such as 'what is this?', 'what is it called?', 'Am I right?', or looks up the item in the dictionary (taken from Tarone, Cohen and Dumas 1983:10).

7. *paraphrase (self)*

Refers to an instance when a speaker expands upon his or her own utterance (taken from Shortreed 1993).

8. *paraphrase (other)*

Refers to an instance when a speaker expands upon another speaker's utterance (taken from Shortreed 1993).

9. *interruption*

Refers to an instance in which a listener expresses his/her opinion before the completion of a speaker's utterance, causing disruption to the speaker's utterance.

10. *language switch (from L1 to L2)*

Refers to insertion of a native language term without bothering to translate. This may involve a single word or a complete turn (taken from Tarone 1983:62).

11. *message abandonment*

Refers to an instance in which a learner begins to talk about a concept but is unable to continue and stops in mid-utterance (taken from Tarone 1983:63, and Faerch and Kasper 1983a:44).

12. *pause*

Refers to a time when a learner stops uttering and remains quiet. Pauses last for a few seconds (taken from Faerch and Kasper 1983b:214).

13. *hesitation*

Refers to a time when a learner hesitates and the hesitation is characterized by words such as 'em', 'er' or 'erm'. (taken from Faerch and Kasper 1983a:215)

### (3) Findings

The findings are all related to the three groups about research questions stated in Chapter Two (b) - 4. This section consists of six parts.

The first part is related to the research questions about how communicative tasks assist richer and better L2 output, as well as how meaning and acquisition take place in communicative tasks. The research questions are :

1. How can communicative tasks assist richer and better L2 output, in terms of accuracy, complexity and greater use of L2 syntax and lexis?
2. How can meaning and acquisition take place in communicative tasks?

The following statistical and ethnographic data show the ways in which the divergent and the convergent tasks contribute to L2 output quality. I would like to state that statistical data are only suggestive data and they should go with the interview results and retrospections. Statistical data should not be taken into account solely.

It was found the two tasks facilitated different discourse structures. The divergent task promoted longer turns, and some turns were made up of more than one subordinate clause. The convergent task promoted shorter turns, and most turns were made up of one main clause and/or one subordinate clause. However, it was not found that the subjects used a greater variety of syntax and lexis in either of the tasks.

3.1 *Divergent Task : Length of turns, variety and complexity of syntax, variety of lexis and discourse structure*

The divergent task promoted longer speaking turns, and more words per turn, but the variety of syntax used in the

utterances of the divergent task was very similar to that in the convergent task. The subjects were inclined to include a main clause and more than one subordinate clause in the discourses in the divergent task. These looked more complicated syntactically. It was also found that the discourse structure of the divergent task proceeded in a linear way. The following sections report the results in more detail.

### 3.1.1 *Length of turns*

It was found that the speaking turns in the divergent task were longer, in terms of both words and seconds, than those of the convergent task. Averages of 36.77 words and 19.90 seconds for each turn were found in the divergent task while averages of 20.45 words and 10.58 seconds were found in the convergent task. The goal of the divergent task apparently required the subjects to take more time in stating opinions and persuading the interlocutor than that of the convergent task. Thus the average length of discussion of the divergent task was slightly longer than that of the convergent task. The former required 8.84 minutes while the latter required 7.906 minutes. Since the divergent task required the subjects to express opinions and persuade, it generated an average of 26.8 turns but the convergent task, with a view to reaching a compromise, generated an average of 46 turns.

### 3.1.2 *Variety and complexity of syntax<sup>1</sup>*

A similar range of clauses, namely that-clause (in reporting personal or other's statements and thoughts, or as a demonstrative pronoun), time clause, conditional clause, relative clause, reason clause, passive voice, and

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<sup>1</sup> The grammatical analysis is based on Quirk, A., G. Greenbaum, G. Leech and J. Svartvik. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.

reported speech were used, and only their frequency varied (refer to table 1). In a quick overview of the types of syntax employed in each type of tasks, qualitative and quantitative differences between them were found. In terms of quality, concessive clauses, the use of rhetorical questions and the use of 'if' for an unreal and imaginary condition were found in the discourse of the divergent task only. The frequency of the use of relative clause, that-clause in reporting statement and 'that' as a demonstrative pronoun, conditional clause, time clause, reported speech in the divergent task was relatively higher than in the convergent task, but not in the use of passive voice. The subjects tended to use more reason clauses in the convergent task. The following tables (tables 1 and 2) provide an overview of the variety of syntax found in the divergent and convergent tasks.

Table 1

Frequency of different types of sentence structures used in the divergent and the convergent tasks

Syntax	divergent (with & without planning time)	convergent (with & without planning time)
<b>That clause</b>		
reporting statement & thoughts	33	22
'that' as a demonstrative pronoun	7	10
'this' as a demonstrative pronoun	46	8
<b>Relative clause</b>		
'that' as a relative pronoun	7	3
'who' as a relative pronoun	2	1
'which' as a relative pronoun	2	2
<b>Conditional clause</b>		
if	21	10
whether/whether or not	4	3
<b>Time clause</b>		
when	7	3
once	2	2
<b>Reported speech</b>		
Rhetorical question	8	1
Passive voice	4	0
<b>Reason clause</b>		
as	18	19
in order to	3	1
since	0	2
because	0	3
because	15	20
<b>Result clause</b>		
so that	2	6
<b>Indirect question</b>		
Concessive clause	4	14
	6	0

**Table 2: A detailed comparison of the types of sentence structures used in the divergent and the convergent tasks.**

Divergent task	Convergent task
<b>That-clause</b>	<b>That-clause</b>
a. as a demonstrative pronoun	a. as a demonstrative pronoun
b. as a relative pronoun	b. as a relative pronoun
c. reporting personal statements and thoughts	c. reporting personal statements and thoughts
<b>Conditional clause</b>	<b>Conditional clause</b>
a. if	a. if
i. real	i. real
ii. unreal	----
b. whether ... or not	b. whether... or not
<b>Concessive clause</b>	
a. although	-----
b. even though	-----
<b>Relative clause</b>	<b>Relative clause</b>
a. who	a. who
b. that	b. that
<b>Time clause : when</b>	<b>Time clause : when</b>
<b>Reason clause</b>	<b>Reason clause</b>
a. because	a. since
	b. as
	c. in order to
<b>Reported Speech (reporting other's thoughts with that/without that)</b>	<b>Reported Speech (reporting other's thoughts with that/without that)</b>
<b>Use of rhetorical questions</b>	----
<b>Passive voice</b>	<b>Passive voice</b>

Two outstanding syntactic features in the divergent task were : (1) the use of unreal and double negative conditional sentences; and (2) concessive clause.

Examples :

**If-conditional : real, double negative**

(group 1)

Mhm if Mr. Ho ... it will happen again.

If er Mr. Ho can..., and then no one will follow

(group 3)

If he really tell the other manager, and they can ...

If Mr. Ho and the er didn't give out, it may not may not ...

If if em we have to have some improvement, we should er we should have the good relationship.

(group 4)

If I am Mr. Smith, I don't have to consult you before I do anything.

And if Mr. Ho do not em find out find out the solution to improve the avoid... there may be in the future there may be ... again and again.

If you phone to him, will you do you think they will agree?

(group 5)

If a companys do such a kind of things from time to time, everyone may be busy with such a kind of emotional speaking.

... there is no doubt that if we put this kind of feeling..., it's a problem...

**If-conditional : unreal and imaginary**

(group 4)

If I were Mr. Mr. Ho, I would let you do it.

Concessive clauses were used thrice in the same group and the words 'although' and 'even though' were used.

(group 1)

Although Mr. Smith haven't informed Mr. Ho er beforehand em when he take out the souvenir, but...

(group 2)

... and so al although em you say that ... , the point is that ...

Though you say that souvenir can be buy..., but sometimes em ... will get er problem.

(group 5)

... Although Mr. Ho, er, use this way, but this is the one part.

Although someone may be put this emotions, that is not the excuse for Mr. Hos to do the same things to Mrs Smith.

Even though he ask someone else to tell Mr. Smith, we has to give the rates, what kind of rates and when can ... something else.

The most interesting feature was that rhetorical questions were built into the discourse. The subjects raised the questions but they did not expect any responses.

(group 2 - divergent)

(T4) Lin : ... Then what can I do? I promise to give ... And who can it do? I just I promise to give ... but I promise to give them a shield. Then how can I collect them back?

(18) Lin : ...And then how can er sometimes can he buy such souvenir immediately? It is not a em a very easy thing to do.

(group 4)

(T27) A : ... So why don't him phone to Mr. Smith or go to his office and talk about his matter right now.

Besides showing a wider range of sentence structures in the discourses, the syntax of the divergent task was found to be more lengthy and complex than that in the convergent task. Complexity, in this study, refers to an utterance in which more than one subordinate clause is involved. Since the subjects would not come to a compromise in the divergent task, they thought of more arguments to demonstrate disagreement, and more evidence to support the rebuttal. Therefore, it was not surprising to find that the average number of words per turn of the divergent task was 39.74 and the average length of each turn was 23.79 seconds. Many utterances in the divergent task were complex, made up of a main clause and more than one subordinate clause. The main and subordinate clauses were joined by the connectives 'and', 'and then', 'because' and 'but'; and the subordinate clauses ran on for some time. For instance,

(group 1 - divergent task)

(T4) Ke : (1) But I think Mr. Ho has done right because if they just stand firm and do nothing, I think both sides will not gain advantage. (2) And in sit this situation, both sides can come to meet and have a meeting and discuss the possible solutions and to find out the best way to solve the problem but not just stand firm and quarrel with each other and and just doing foolish thing.

The turn was made up of two utterances. The first utterance was made up of a main clause and two subordinate clauses, linked by 'because' and 'and' to show the reason

and provide more information. Similarly, the second utterance lasted longer, and subordinate clauses were linked by 'and' and 'but and'.

(group 2 - divergent task)

(T18) Lin :(1) Er may be may be this may be I'll better solution in the future. (2) Er but the question is that (pause : 1.74 seconds) the souvenir is er the souvenirs are gone and Mr. Ho cannot get back. (3) And then what can he do in the present? (4) He will just be very angry and cannot find any solution. (5) Though you say that souvenir can be buy er buy in other areas, but er sometimes em sometimes the time arrangement will be em will will get er problem. (6) Er for example if Mr. er Ho plan to give two hundred souvenir to em a company and then er at tomorrow, and then you now give er get all the souvenir gone. (7) And then how can er sometimes can he buy such souvenir immediately? (8) It is not a em a very easy thing to do.

In this example, one of Lin's turns was lengthy, made up of eight sentences, including (1) a main clause (2) a main clause (that-clause) + a subordinate clause + (and) a subordinate clause (3) a rhetorical question (4) a main clause + (and) a co-ordinate clause (5) (concessive clause) a main clause + (but) a co-ordinate clause (6) (if conditional clause) a main clause + (and) a subordinate clause (7) a rhetorical question (8) a main clause.

### 3.1.3 Variety of lexis

A range of vocabulary (including action verbs and adjectives) was used continuously when the subjects were reiterating their ideas about the same topic. For

instance, in group 2, the two subjects used different action verbs to describe the budgeting issue. For instance, 'give him more budget' (turn 10), 'follow the budget' (turn 11), 'revise the budget' (turn 13), 'make another budget' (turn 15), 'adjust the budget' (turn 18) and 'breaking of budget' (turn 19).

Furthermore, the L2 vocabulary could be elaborated and explained by the subject in the same utterance when he/she was exploring the idea. For instance, Ke in his utterance used another vocabulary item to illustrate the ideas of 'no effect' and 'how to be careful'. The choice of diction was refined when the subjects were exploring or paraphrasing the same idea.

(group 1)

(T9) Ke : ... but there is no effect. So we have to make sure that when we throw each coin into advertisement, we have to make sure that the effect is constructive [emphasized] and obvious... So we have to be very careful when we have to spend money. So we have to monitor or inspect the way the money spend money so that each this will maximize our profit. What do you think?

(T10) Ke : y-e-s [extended] em

(T11) Ke : er ... we can have a good return and do not just waste money in it.

### 3.1.4 Discourse structure

There are different approaches towards the description of the structure of spoken discourse. Different researchers use different kinds of units to indicate discoursally significant information, for instance, speech acts (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975), conversational turns (Levinson 1983) and intonation (Brazil, Coulthard and Johns

1980). In this research, I use strategies as the basic units to describe the discourse structure of the task.

It was found that the discourse structure of the divergent task tended to proceed in a linear way. Since the two subjects were told to take different sides, they disagreed with each other and had to revise their arguments. In order to further develop their arguments, some subjects were inclined to paraphrase and incorporate the other subject's opinion into the first part of their utterances and then to state their rebuttals. During the process of disagreeing, revising and further developing the arguments, the subjects would clarify misunderstanding, confirm and check comprehension, and challenge the former argument. Sometimes, there was a need to negotiate ; sometimes there was a need to rebut directly. However, the extent to which clarification requests, confirmation checks and comprehension checks were used depended on the way the opinion was expressed. The distinction between strategy use in the convergent and the divergent tasks in the research was not as explicit as that described in the literature.

The agreeing-disagreeing pattern of discourse tended to promote a linear discourse structure. This structure, although it seems to be straightforward, requires the subjects to reiterate or elaborate their ideas so as to convince the interlocutor. The need to elaborate opinion compelled the subjects to use more achievement strategies, paraphrasing either their own or the other speaker's utterance, and giving examples. Their communication strategy was to incorporate part of the previous utterance into the first part of their own utterances and thus they achieved a more complex information structure (there is a more detailed discussion of this point in Chapter Four 2.2). Although the subjects sometimes asked for more information before deciding on what to say, this did not happen very often. The use of the achievement strategy of paraphrasing the other's opinion resulted in a 'building

block' effect on the subjects' utterances. As a result, there were longer speaking turns.

In short, the discourse structure of the divergent task is illustrated diagrammatically as follows.

Diagram 3

Discourse Structure of the Divergent Task

St. A gives opinion + reasons

↓

(asks for clarification/checks  
comprehension etc.)

St. B disagrees + gives opinion/reasons

↓

(asks for clarification/checks  
comprehension etc.)

St. A reasserts opinion + gives reasons

↓

(asks for clarification/checks  
comprehension etc.)

St. B reasserts disagreement + gives reasons

↓

(asks for clarification/checks  
comprehension etc.)

St. A expresses opinions + reasons/St. A surrenders

The following extracts show this structure, and how the subjects always checked comprehension and sought clarification in their discussions.

(group 1)

(T2) Ke : ... It's simply destructing the company. I think they should meet regularly and to communicate with each other but not just stand firm and do nothing and just quarrelling with other. I think making concessions are very important in such a situation. (made a suggestion)

(T3) Ka : However, we should we should focus on the case that some of the souvenirs have already

been sent to the guest. Then how can how can we em get back the souvenir? (disagreed with the suggestion and asked for clarification)

(T4) Ke : But I think Mr. Ho has done right because if they just stand firm and do nothing, I think both sides will not gain advantage... (reiterated his initial idea, then disagreed with Ka)

The following examples show that the subjects did not disagree with each other immediately. They would confirm their comprehension before expressing their opinions, or would invite the interlocutor to make further suggestions.

(T5) Ka : ... Em as Mrs Smith has said we can't have er some guests get the souvenirs and some has not. (made a statement)

(T6) Ke : So you think that they should er get the compromise after the event? (checked and confirmed comprehension)

(T7) Ka : Yes, because the event had had already happened. (responded to the check and confirmation, provided an explanation)

(T8) Ke: But do you think er how so er if you disagree with Mr. Ho er does what, can you think for hims to do? (challenged Ka and asked Ka to make a suggestion for Mr. Ho)

(T9) Ka : Em may be em we should talk to Mr. Smith afterwards because em he can't do anything in this case... (made a suggestion)

For more examples, please refer to Appendix 5.

Nonetheless, the discourse structure might deviate from the regular pattern when both the subjects could not think of any further arguments, or when one of them was convinced (this might happen in the middle of the discussion). In such cases, one of the subjects would surrender, and they came to an agreement immediately. The debate would end with a compromise. For instance, in the following examples, when Lin and C did not have anything to say or any opposing idea, they accepted their partners' suggestions immediately. The divergent task ended with a compromise.

(group 2 - divergent)

(T24) Lin : is the best solution in the present

(T25) D : Err

(T26) Lin : xxx

(T27) D : I think the solution is to buy some buy some souvenir

(T28) Lin : Mh

(T29) D : and set up the rules

(T30) Lin : Mh

(T31) D : that avoid the similar patterns

(T32) Lin : Mh (pause : 1.49 seconds). Yes it's will be a em will be best solution at present.

(group 3 - divergent)

(pause : 14.72 seconds)

(T10) E : So, so I agree em if if erm we have to have some er improvement in the

communication, we should er we should have the good relationship first.

(pause : 2.05 seconds)

(T11) C : Yes, em (pause : 2.91 seconds) [xxx

(T12) E : [ and I think some compromise should be made in this case. Aha.

(pause : 4.59 seconds)

(T13) C : Then I agree with you.

(T14) E : Ah.

### 3.2 Convergent task : Length of turns, variety and complexity of syntax, variety of lexis and discourse structure

The convergent task tended to promote shorter speaking turns. The discourse structures of the two tasks were different. But each of them had their contributions to make to language use in interaction. The convergent task proceeded in a spiral way, whereas the divergent task proceeded in a linear way. The frequent use of checks and clarifications in the convergent task provided more chances for learners to make meaning more clearly and precisely; but the structure of the utterances in the convergent task was not as complicated as that in the divergent task, in which less complex syntax was involved in the utterances.

#### 3.2.1 Length of turns

It was found that the subjects took less time but more turns to reach a compromise. They needed an average of 7.906 minutes and 46 turns to complete the task. However, the average length of each turn in the convergent task was shorter than that in the divergent task. The former required 10.58 seconds, which was 9.32 seconds less than the latter. Likewise, the average number of words for each

turn in the convergent task was 20.45 but 36.77 in the divergent task.

### 3.2.2 Variety and complexity of syntax

The range of sentence structures found in the convergent task was similar to that in the divergent task, but the convergent task seemed to favour the use of certain sentence structures : reason clause and result clause. Conditional sentences with 'if' and 'whether... or not' were also found in the convergent task, but with lower frequency than in the divergent task. Unreal and double negative sentence structures, and concessive clause were not found in the convergent task. Moreover, utterances in the convergent task were relatively shorter, and the structure of the utterances was less complicated than in the divergent task.

Utterances in the convergent task were made in several ways, listed below :

- (1) a sentence made up a main clause and a subordinate clause

For instance,

(group 4)

(main)

(T41) A : I I think Mr. Kwok can fight for more budget  
 (Subordinate)  
 . . . because there's not so much budget.

- (2) several main clauses linked up causally by connectives of 'and', 'because' and 'and then'

For instance,

(group 5)

(main)

(T7) Law : It should em may be take some investigation to the market to know what is the needs of

(subordinate)

the customers and then to plan another and to have another plan for advertising.

(main)

(T21) W : Maybe. About the research, I think we can use some we can employ not using not

(main)

use ... Or we can employ some part-time workers ... or the housewife.

(main)

(main)

However, er it cost a lot. So, I think there should be another plant.

(3) a subordinate clause

For instance,

(subordinate clause)

(T20) J : Er because you cannot ad adjust the effect only in a few months.

### 3.2.3 Variety of lexis

The process of reaching a compromise in the convergent task provided opportunities for the subjects to modify the meaning of their expressions in response to another subject's demand. The following examples show how the subjects manipulated lexis. Some subjects used the same lexis, and some made very slight modifications of the modal verb. Some provided additional and alternative lexical items to describe the same situation. Some manipulated the different parts of speech. For instance,

(group 1 - convergent)

small budget, enlarge budget

(T2) Ka : ... and may be enlarged his budget.

(T3) Ke : okay... the budget should be enlarged.

(T2) Ka : ... budget may be too small.

(T3) Ke : ... because is in fact very small.

*effective advertising company --- effective advertisement and efficient*

Ka used 'effective advertising company' and this idea and language was picked up by Ke and extended to 'effective advertisement'. Ka used an alternative word 'efficient' which seemed to be interchangeable with 'effective' in his dictionary.

(T13) Ka : it is not it's found that it's not em proportio er not positively proportion (= 正比), then it is not worthy em to employ this company and may be we have to change a a more effective ad advertising company.

(T16) Ka : ... if we employ em a more em efficient er advertising company that it produces er more quality advertisements maybe the sales will grow more.

(T17) Ke : Yes, I see your point and you say that you say that er the growth might go with some advertising company. But if we can employ an im more effective ad advertising company which provides er effective advertisement,...

(T18) Ka : So that the company will provide good and efficient advertisement that to help us to earn much more money.

When Law and W were discussing 'promotions' of the company's products, a series of related words such as 'promote', 'promotion' 'demonstrations' and 'exhibitions' was found.

(Group 5 - convergent)

(T10) W : ... to promote our goods.

(T11) Law : ... for promotion or give them some demonstrations to our products.

-----

(T17) Law : ... can have an demo or an exhibition so that er other companies can have a look and got the products they want.

-----

(T35) Law : to use another kind of promotion.

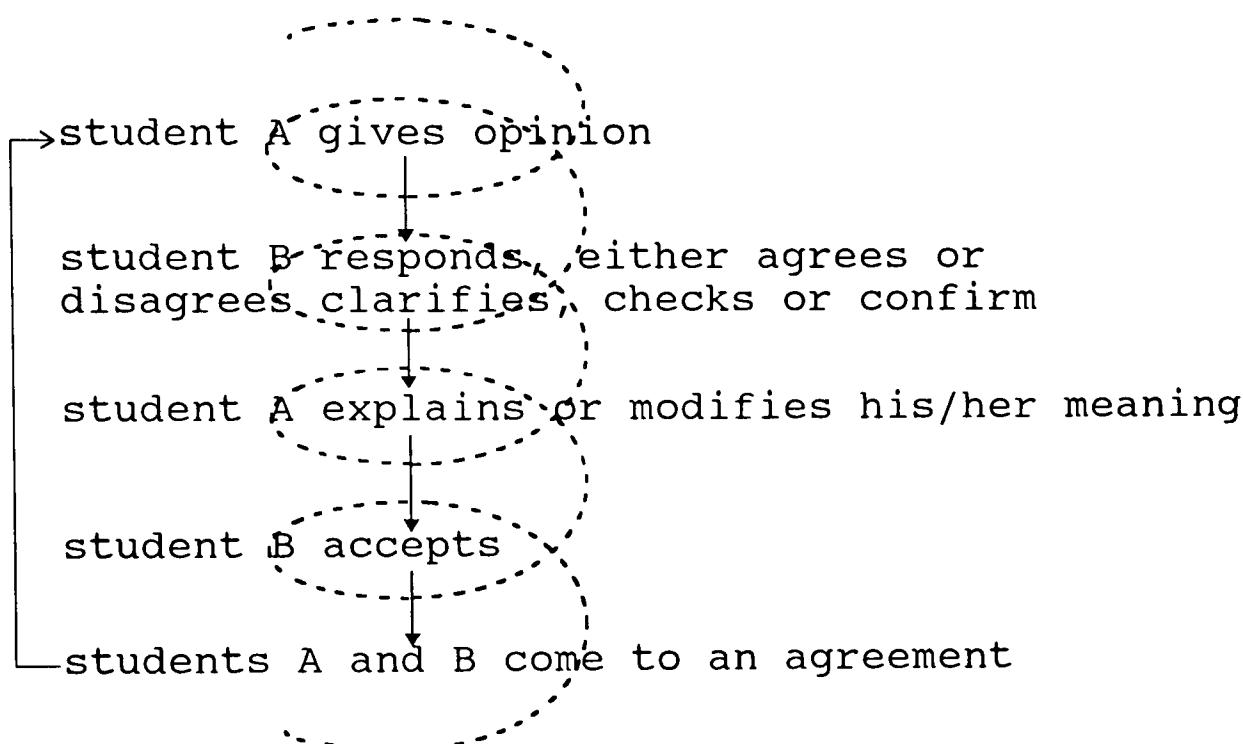
### 3.2.4 *Discourse structure*

The discourse structure of the convergent task tended to proceed in a spiral pattern, appearing to be more complicated than that of the divergent task. But since the subjects were asked to decide on three pieces of advice, the same discourse structure was used and was repeated thrice. The structure was that : subject A gave an opinion , subject B responded, subject A revised the opinion or invited another opinion, subject B responded and finally subjects A and B reached an agreement. This structure offered more chances for negotiation because in A's and B's responses, they usually asked for more information, and confirmed their comprehension of another subject's opinion before agreeing with him or her. The subjects were inclined to check and summarize their agreed opinions and have them confirmed constantly throughout the discussion. Summary was sometimes achieved by means of paraphrasing the

other subject's opinion. Therefore, there were more turns in the convergent task; but the turns were short. The discourse structure of the convergent task is illustrated in the following diagram.

Diagram 4

Discourse Structure of the Convergent Task



For instance,

(Group 4)

(T22) J : No, no, but just an and to give and to pleasurable them. To want the advertising company to give us a more concrete plan of their advertising.  
**(reiterated the first suggestion)**

(T23) A : I agree with you, that is I I I the first advice of mine is also about er (pause : 2.57 seconds) I suggest Mr. Kwok to (pause : 1.15 seconds) to have the proposal of the advertising company about what will be [ about what will be (agreed with J and summarized his own suggestion)

(T24) J : [ And the estimated result I think.  
(made an additional point)

(T25) A : Mhm

(T26) J : That is my our first advice.  
(confirmation)

x x x x x x x x

(T31) A : Aha, and then the second one (pause : 2.27 seconds). I suggest that er although there is a proposal given to Mr. Ho in advance, I suggest Mr. Kwok has the advertising to (pause : 1.66 seconds) stop them from using any money. (made the second suggestion)

(T32) J : Of course. (showed agreement)

(T33) A : That means er if the company wants to spend any money, (paraphrased and confirmed the second piece of advice)

(T34) J : Mh (acknowledged)

(T35) A : er he should they should (pause : 1.51 seconds) get the approval from the Mr. Kwok (continued the paraphrase and confirmation of the second piece of advice)

(T36) J : Yes okay. (agreed)

(T37) A : before. Aha,

(pause : 1.13 seconds)

(T38) A : Er (pause : 1.92 seconds)

(T39) J : That will be the second advice?  
**(confirmed comprehension again)**

(T40) A : Yeah and then the last one, do you have any opinion? **(agreed and moved to the last suggestion)**

x x x x x x x x

(T57) J : [ but you may not have the money.  
**(made a comment)**

(T58) A : for the next year. That is the next financial year. You can hire consult another advertising company to see whether their planning of advertise advertisement can be more effective than this one. (pause : 2.34 seconds) That means the third advice of us is to em (pause : 1.38 seconds) to (pause : 1.27 seconds) see (pause : 1.88 seconds) other to budget is possible but the the first step which is see there is advertising company is more effective than this one. **(paraphrased J's comment and summarized the suggestion)**

In group 4, A summarized the three pieces of advice in turns 23, 33 to 39 and 58.

(group 2)

(T19) D : Aha, I I I think adjusting the budget is possible but the the first first step which is look [slowing down] the planning that no more money will be given if er breaking of budget again.

That That will guarantee the the er process or procedure of accounting and I think em em starting en this project will will will bring em a profitable year but erm if (pause : 2.02 seconds) there any suggestion about ? (made a point and invited further suggestions)

(T21) D : that that that we have compromised is that em to to look er er year plan and and adjust the budget, and what's the other advice ? (summarized the suggested point and invited Lin to suggest another point)

x x x x x x x x

(T20) Lin: Ahmm. (showed an acknowledgement and was thinking about other suggestions)

(T24) Lin : Em (pause : 1.56 seconds) may be [emphasized] er but who will be the person ?

(T25) D: em, I think er some someone in the accounting department should should be should be on this em pro-ject to to monitor the use of money, I I think xxx [unclear words] is not not er very concerned about. (gave an opinion)

(T26) Lin: Emm so em you suggest that our next step will be em er find someone er who in charge of the accounting department to em monitor em em the present er work. (paraphrased D's opinion for the sake of checking her comprehension)

(T27) D : Yeah, I I think. (**agreed**)

(T28) Lin : Em then er

(T29) D : What's the last one ? (**asked for the third suggestion**)

(T30) Lin : the last one. (**repeated the words**)

(T31) D : Mhm (pause : 3.77 seconds)

(T32) D : Do you you think em a communicator

(T33) Lin : Mhm (**acknowledged**)

(T34) D : between Mr. Kwok and xxx [unclear words] is necessary ? (**asked for comments**)

(T35) Lin : Mhm, why ? (**asked for clarification**)

x x x x x x x x

(T47) Lin : Mhm (pause : 3.20 seconds). Then em you have just said [quick] to find a co-ordinator and then what is the work of the co-ordinator. (**paraphrased D' idea and asked for clarification**)

x x x x x x x x

(T58) D : be'cos it would only be useful once xxx [unclear words] has over the budget. So I think er no no extra personal. (**mentioned the advantage and gave an opinion**)

(T59) Lin : extra xxx [unclear words] okay.

(T60) Lin : erm (pause : 1.81 seconds). Okay, we can just appoint someone to be the co-ordinator. (**agreed and repeated the idea**)

(T61) D : Okay. (**accepted**)

(T62) Lin : Mhmmm. (**acknowledged**)

In group 2, D summarized the first and the second pieces of advice in turns 21 and 26. Lin summarized the third piece of advice in turn 60. There were some checks, requests and discussions about the work of a co-ordinator between turns 29 and 57.

For more examples, please refer to appendix 6.

In conclusion, the divergent task promoted longer turns and more words per turn than the convergent task did. However, it was not found in the data that the subjects used a greater variety of syntax and lexis in the divergent task than in the convergent task. The syntax of the utterances in the divergent task seemed to be more complex than in the convergent task. The discourse structures of the two tasks were also different, and enabled the subjects to use the target language to discuss different topics in a different manner.

### 3.3 Strategies used in the discourses of learner-learner interaction

To investigate the claim of Pica et al (1989), that some strategies (e.g. clarification requests) might promote the modification of L2 more significantly than others, the following section aims to report how the six strategies, which are frequently used by the subjects in the two tasks, lead to more varied and complex syntax, as well as more lexis. The six strategies are : paraphrase, example giving, clarification request, comprehension check, confirmation check, helping out and correction. The findings are related to the two research questions raised in Chapter Two (b) - 4. They are :

1. In what ways could strategy use in communicative tasks lead to richer and better L2 output quality?
2. What is the relationship between strategy use and L2 output quality in communicative tasks?

It was found that the six strategies contributed to L2 output in different ways.

#### 3.3.1 *Paraphrase and example giving : for modification of the intended meaning initiated by the interlocutor*

Paraphrase is glossed as a response to the demand of the interlocutor about the meaning of the utterance, and is used to modify the intended meaning for better and more precise expression. It was found from the data that the subjects used more paraphrases in the L2 convergent task than in the L2 divergent task. Paraphrase was frequently used by the subjects in two ways : they paraphrased their own ideas and paraphrased another speaker's intended meaning in the utterance. Both paraphrases required the use of an alternative syntax. In paraphrasing one's own intended meaning, conditional sentences, the clauses 'that

'is' and 'when' were commonly used. In paraphrasing the other speaker's intended meaning, reported speech was frequently found.

**3.3.1.1 Modification of the intended meaning through paraphrasing one's utterance (self-paraphrase)**

(group 4 - divergent)

(T29) A : Mhm er (pause : 1.85 seconds). It is depends on what their manner in especially Mr. Ho. If he is in a good manner, in a xxx, he is trying to find out some improvement in the company in the community. That's okay. I I I don't see they may they may have a rigorous argument.

(group 1 - convergent)

(T4) Ka : Mm, that is we can we can link em the sales amount and the advertising budget together. That is when the sales increase, we can increase more adv advertising and er the other way round.

(group 1 - convergent)

(T14) Ke : Yes, I think you are right because some advertising company may not be may not suitable to our products and this will simply waste our money. So we have to mon to inspect the the effect of the advertisement and see if the advertising company suits our taste or our style.

**3.3.1.2 Modification of the intended meaning through paraphrasing the speaker's utterance (other-paraphrase)**

(group 2 - divergent)

(T8) Lin: Er then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy some er substitutes for example some sh er er another shield em to substitute the one ...

(group 1 - convergent)

(T16) Ka : Yes I see your point and you say that you say that er the growth might go with some advertising company but [emphasized] if we can employ ....

**3.3.1.3 Modification of one's intended meaning through example giving**

Modification of one's intended meaning could be made by giving examples for illustration. The strategy of 'example giving' helped the subjects to express the same idea more clearly and precisely . For instance,

(group 2 - divergent)

(T18) Lin : Er may be may be this may be I'll better solution in the future. Er but the question is that (pause : 1.74 seconds) the souvenir is er the souvenirs are gone and Mr. cannot get back.... ... But er sometimes em sometimes the time arrangement will be em will will get er problem. Er for example if Mr. er Ho plan to give two hundred souvenir to em a company and then er at tomorrow, and then you now give er get all the souvenir gone. ....

**3.3.2 Clarification request, comprehension check, confirmation through check and helping out : Modification of the intended meaning triggered by the interlocutor**

In the convergent task, there were more uses of comprehension check, clarification request, confirmation check and helping out than in the divergent task. The following table is a summary of the four strategies used in these interactions.

Table 3

strategies	convergent task	divergent task
comprehension check	8	3
clarification request	8	2
confirmation check	7	3
other completion/ helping out	3	1

Strategies of checking and requesting enabled the subjects to clarify arguments, and confirm comprehension and interpretation of the speaker's meaning in the process of negotiation. These strategies were not mutually exclusive in the convergent task. In the divergent task, the subjects required these strategies but they were relatively less frequently used. For instance,

#### **Clarification request**

(group 4 - divergent)

(T2) J : But *what* do you think he has to do with this situation?

(T3) A : ... But I I do think that er he should discuss this matter with em Mr. Smith and not just to say sorry and to do nothing.

(group 2 - convergent)

(T24) Lin: em (pause : 1.56 seconds) may be er but who will be the person?

(T25) D : Em I think er some someone in the accounting department should be should be on this em project to to monitor the use of money. I I think xxx is not not er very concerned about.

(group 2 - divergent)

(T8) Lin : Er then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy some er substitutes for example some sh er er another shield em to substitute the one er the ones given to the guest. Then why can Mr. Smith buy another kind of s er shield to the guest and return the original one to Mr. Ho?

(T9) D : Oh I I think it's so very embarrassed and it will affect the image of the company once you withdraw the souvenir.

(group 1 - divergent)

(T3) Ka : However, we should we should focus on the case that some of the souvenirs have already been sent to the guest. Then how can how can we em get back the souvenir?

(T4) Ke : But I think Mr. Ho has done right because if they just stand firm and do nothing, I think both sides will not gain advantage. And in sit this situation, both sides can come to meet and have a meeting and discuss the possible solutions and to find out the best way to solve the problem but not just stand firm and quarrel with each other and and just doing foolish thing. I think communication is not enough in this case. So to solve the problem, I think to have a to gain an access for communication is very important.

According to A's response, A's interpretation of the question was that J would like him to further specify the way he (the manager in the text) should act. A reinforced the idea by using the modal verb 'should', in contrast to apologising and doing nothing. In answering the 'who' question, D provided a person's name or a person who was responsible for the decision. In answering the 'why' question, D provided a reason and a result to convince L; the noun clause 'it's so very embarrassed' and two main and

subordinates clauses, 'it will affect the image of the company', and 'once you withdraw the souvenir' were uttered. D could have finished his utterance at 'it's so very embarrassed', but he decided to elaborate his argument. Responding to the requirement of a 'how' question, Ke further illustrated how both sides could gain advantages. The expressions 'meet', 'discuss' 'do nothing', 'stand firm' were reused, and presented in alternative linguistic expressions. 'Come to meet' became 'have a meeting'; 'stand firm and do nothing' became 'stand firm and quarrel with each other and just doing foolish thing'; 'communication is not enough' was extended as to have to gain an access for communication is important'. Thus, the interlocutor's demand triggered the speaker to modify the intended meaning using alternative syntax and lexis.

### Comprehension Check

Comprehension could be confirmed by repeating the word in a rising tone, paraphrasing the intended meaning in a declarative mood, completing the utterance for the speaker, or helping the speaker to finish the utterance. For instance,

(group 1 - divergent task)

(T5) Ka : Yes, may be the the must have some er they must have compromise each other after this after this case. That em I think em in this case xxx is still wrong. This I I emphasize on some souvenirs that has already been sent. Em as Mrs Smith has said we can't have er some some guests get the souvenirs and some has not.

(T6) Ke : So you think that they should er get the compromise after the event.

(T7) Ka : Yes, because the event had had already happened.

(group 5 - convergent task)

(T19) W : Er (pause : 1.16 seconds) the last advice [slowing down] I want to mention is that, we can have an open house. That means invite others companies, similar company com similar company. She come to our company and see what and have a visit. Maybe er maybe we can promote our products to them at that time.

(T20) Law: That means competitors? [high pitch]

(T21) W : You can see you can treat them as a competitor when you are in the same market [emphasized]. But competitors also can be treated as friends.

(group 2 - convergent task)

(T25) D : Em I think er some someone in the accounting department should should be should be on this em project to tot monitor the use of money. I I think xxx is not not er very concerned about.

(T26) Lin: Emmm so em you suggest that our next step will be em em find someone er who is in charge of the accounting department to em monitor em em the present er work.

(T27) D : Yeah, I I think.

(group 5 - divergent)

(T10) W : But you, you, you can see the situation is not so

(T11) Law: Urgent

(T12) W : Serious

(T13) Law: Serious of

(T14) W : It's not so serious, so Mr. Ho can, can have this way to let Mr. Smith knows, em  
 (L laughed)

In confirming comprehension, Lin used a phrase, 'so you suggest that', to confirm, followed by a rephrased expression, 'find someone who is in charge of the accounting department', to replace 'someone in the accounting department should be on this project to monitor the use of money'. Lin's clause was more clearly expressed, more precise and thus better than D's. In the process of searching for the right lexis or expression for the interlocutor, the subjects often offered help, and the suggested word was incorporated into the subsequent utterances. In the following extracts, W took the word 'distributing' and the clause 'it costs less' to complete and elaborate the meaning.

(group 5 - convergent)

(T14) W : No, I mean that about in investigation part [emphasized], we should use our own staff to investigate and an analysis our result of the research. But when we go when we conducting a research, we should em employ some other part time workers for us to go to the em

(T15) Law: distributing?

(T16) W : Ha, may be distributing the questionnaire er so so such this untech, use less techniques work.

X      X      X      X      X      X      X      X      X      X      X

(T8) W : May be we can [emphasized] er okay the er your suggestion of research is very useful. May be we can er (pause : 2.24 seconds) we can see the point of the advertising. We can use the we can use the advertising in a [slowing down] lower

lower proportion or in a lower budget that means that em [giggled]

(T9) Law: It costs less.

(T10) W : It costs less. We we put a little proportion of our budget in the advertising or we can use er other method to promote our (pause : 1.16 seconds) s promote our goods.

3.3.3 *Correction : Modification of the intended meaning and linguistic expression through substitution of morphemes and key words.*

Correction in terms of grammar and intended meaning was frequently found when the subject was hesitating. Similar to paraphrase, correction was sometimes initiated by the speaker himself/herself and was sometimes made by the interlocutor through substitution of the word or deletion of the morphemes immediately, resulting in a more accurate and precise expression. In the following extracts, Ka included the word 'positively' in his utterance to make her intended meaning clear. Ke was conscious of correcting the use of the article. Law suggested the word 'urgent', but this was corrected to 'serious' by W.

(Group 1 - convergent)

(T14) Ka : it is not it's found that it's not em proportion er not positively proportion law, then it is not ...

(Group 1 - divergent)

(T24) Ke : ... I think just I think a a an access for communication.

(Group 1 - convergent)

(T3) Ke : ... So we have to took look at the close side and see if the sales does increase due to advertising effect.

(Group 1 - convergent)

(T11) Ke : ... er we have to inspect the sales and to and to have a clos closer look how people spend it amount of money.

(group 5 - divergent)

(T10) W : But you, you, you can see the situation is not so

(T11) Law: Urgent

(T12) W : Serious

(T13) Law: Serious of

(T14) W : It's not so serious, so Mr. Mo can, can have this way to let Mr. Smith knows em.

(Law laughed)

To conclude, strategies used in interaction contributed to L2 output in different ways. A more detailed discussion about the effects of strategy use on second language acquisition is offered in Chapter Four - 2.2.

### 3.4 Planning time in interaction

As described in Chapter Two (a) - 3.2.1.2 (Time pressure), planning time seems to promote acquisition. But the relationship between planning time and L2 acquisition is still not sufficiently researched (refer to Chapter Two (b) - 3 (Planning time in interaction for L2 acquisition). The following data show the effects of planning time on the length of turns, strategies used in interaction, variety of syntax, accuracy of L2 and variety of lexis. More detailed data on accuracy of L2 and variety of lexis are taken from three subjects' discourses. The data address the research questions about planning time, as stated in Chapter Two (b) - 4. The research questions are:

1. What is the relationship between planning time and L2 output quality in communicative tasks?
2. Will more accurate, more complex target-like syntax and lexis be used, and more fluent L2 speech be found in planned communicative tasks than unplanned communicative tasks?
3. Will the provision of planning time lead to richer L2 output and more effective L2 acquisition or will it just lead to greater fluency?
4. If planning time can aid richer L2 output and more effective acquisition, how does it work in communicative tasks?

Planning time was found to be an important factor in affecting the greater use of different lexical items, and it facilitated organization and fluency in speech. Greater use of L2 lexis seemed to vary with an individual's lexical resources. Planning time appeared to inhibit syntactic development in the divergent task, but not in the

convergent task. There is no guarantee that planning time will promote more accurate grammar.

### 3.4.1 *Length of turns*

It was also found that when planning time was given, the subjects took less time and fewer words to discuss or come to a decision. The subjects who were given planning time completed the convergent and divergent tasks in 7.6 minutes and 7.64 minutes respectively. In contrast, the subjects who were not given planning time completed the convergent and the divergent tasks in 8.36 minutes and 10.63 minutes respectively. The planned groups completed the convergent and the divergent tasks in 41.67 turns and 27 turns respectively while the unplanned groups completed them in 52.5 turns and 26 turns. The difference in number of turns between planned groups and unplanned groups in the divergent task was very small (27 Vs 26); but difference in the convergent task was much greater (41.67 Vs 52.5). In addition, the unplanned groups hesitated a lot more than the planned groups in their discussion. The former had an average of 83.50 and 83 hesitations (e.g. erms, ems, aha) in the convergent and the divergent tasks. The latter only had a total of 42.33 and 34.67 hesitations in the two tasks respectively.

However, the unplanned groups used 15.15 more words in each turn and needed 5.07 more seconds per turn in the divergent task than those in the planned groups. In contrast, the unplanned group used 6.96 fewer words and 3.37 fewer seconds in each turn in the convergent task than those in the planned groups. The unplanned groups were not less efficient than the planned groups in the convergent task. A comparison of performance in the two tasks is shown below:

	<u>convergent task</u>	
	<u>with planning time</u>	<u>without planning time</u>
length of discussion	7.60 mins	8.36 mins
no. of words	884.67	1024.5
no. of turns	41.67	52.5
no. of pauses	21.33	14
no. of hesitations	42.33	83.50
words per turn	26.72	19.76
seconds per turn	13.36	9.99

	<u>divergent task</u>	
	<u>with planning time</u>	<u>without planning time</u>
length of discussion	7.64 mins	10.63 mins
no. of words	826.33	1224
no. of turns	27	26
no. of pauses	8.67	5
no. of hesitations	34.67	83
words per turn	33.68	48.83
seconds per turn	21.76	26.83

### 3.4.2 *Strategies used in interaction*

In terms of quality, it was found that the groups with no provision of planning time used relatively fewer strategies in their tasks. The qualitative difference with and without the provision of planning time in the convergent task was minimal. In terms of quantity, the frequency of the use of the same types of strategies by the groups with no provision of planning time was less than that of the groups with planning time. In the convergent task, the frequency of comprehension checks and confirmation checks between the groups with and without the provision of planning time was three compared to one; the frequency of language switch was one to zero. In contrast, the frequency of helping out between the two groups was

zero (with planning time) to one (without planning time). Interestingly, the subjects did not employ the strategy of appeal for assistance. A summary of the average frequency of different types of strategies in the 3 groups with planning time and 2 groups without planning time in the convergent and the divergent tasks is presented in table 4<sup>1</sup>.

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1 I would like to reiterate the notion that statistical data are only suggestive data and they should not be taken into account solely. Ethnographic data such as interview results and retrospections complement statistical data. Please refer to Chapter Five - 2.2 Data collection techniques for more information.

**Table 4**

**Different communication strategies used by the groups with and without the provision of planning time in the divergent and the convergent tasks**

communication strategies/group	Convergent					Total		Divergent					Total		Total	
	1 PL	3 PL	4 PL	2 no PL	5 no	PL	no PL	1 PL	3 PL	4 PL	2 no PL	5 no PL	PL	no PL	Con.	Div.
comprehension check	0	1	4	1	2	5	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	8	3
clarification request	0	2	0	5	1	2	6	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	8	2
confirmation check	0	2	2	2	1	4	3	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	7	3
other correction	1	2	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	2
helping out	0	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	1
appeal for assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
paraphrase (self)	3	1	3	0	2	7	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	9	1
(other)	2	1	0	2	0	3	2	0	1	0	1	2	1	3	5	4
interruption	2	2	6	0	1	10	1	1	2	4	0	2	7	2	11	9
language switch	1	0	0	0	3	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	1
message abandonment	0	2	1	1	0	3	1	0	0	2	0	1	2	1	4	3
pauses	7	30	27	18	10	64	28	1	16	9	10	0	26	10	92	36
hesitation	42	67	18	144	23	127	167	32	41	31	119	47	104	166	294	270
exemplification	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

When the subjects were asked for their comments after the completion of the tasks, they mentioned the provision of planning time. Groups 3 and 4 (with planning time) thought that they could converse with fewer hesitations if planning time was given. It enabled them to plan the content and prepare some language. Group 5 (without planning time) did not agree with the claim that the provision of planning time would make a great difference to their discussion. The groups' responses are summarized as follows<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Group 3*

They thought they could respond with fewer hesitations if planning time was given. They felt that too many hesitations disrupted their fluency. They also felt that planning time enable them to plan what to say and prepare some useful expressions. For example, in the planning stage, Eugene put down 'small things' first but it was changed to 'small conflicts'. Having said that, they would use the expressions they were familiar with. They said that the tasks (discussion and compromise) were useful because they might have to discuss or negotiate with potential clients in the workplace. The tasks also trained them to think.

#### *Group 4*

They felt that if the five minutes' planning time was taken away. they would not perform well. They said that if they agreed with each other, there would be no problems; but if they had to argue, they had to do their best. Planning time helped them prepare the

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<sup>2</sup> Comments were made in Cantonese. They were translated into English and edited. I am aware that translation and transcription might lose some of the data, as commented by Cook (1990). I am also aware that the comments on planning time might not be very reliable because the groups did not experience the effects of completing the task under different timing conditions, that is both with and without the provision of planning time. For discussion about the limitations of translation, transcription and task design, please refer to Chapter Five - (2) Limitations of the study.

content and useful expressions in English; otherwise, it was more difficult to argue. They used almost all the ideas that had been planned, but sometimes they simply said whatever came to their minds, for instance, the word 'rigorously' in the discussion. Sometimes some of the points could not be mentioned because the interlocutor did not raise them, for example, the point about 'cultural difference'.

#### *Group 5*

The provision of planning time did not make any difference in performance because discussion depended on the topic. If the topic was interesting and stimulating, they would talk more.

#### **3.4.3 Variety of syntax**

The range of sentence structures employed by the groups without the provision of planning time was similar to that employed by the groups with the provision of planning time. In the L2 convergent task, both groups employed 'conditional clause', 'reason clause', 'result clause', 'time clause' and 'that clause in reporting statements and thoughts'; however 'that as a relative pronoun' was found in the groups without the provision of planning time. Likewise, both groups employed 'that clause in reporting statements and thoughts' 'that as a relative pronoun', 'conditional clause', 'time clause' and 'rhetorical questions'; however, 'concessive clause' was found in the groups without the provision of planning time and 'reported speech' was found in the groups with the provision of planning time. Table 4 (refer to p.120) shows the range of syntax identified from the data and their frequency of use. In fact, the groups with the provision of planning time did not generate a wider range of syntax than the groups without the provision of planning time. The groups without the provision of planning time could generate the same range of syntax.

The average rate of frequency of different types of sentence structures used by the groups without the provision of planning time in the divergent task was even higher than that used by the groups with the provision of planning time. The rate of frequency of sixteen sentence structures in the 'no planning time' groups was higher than that in the 'planning time' groups. Planning time, these findings suggest, may inhibit syntactic development in the divergent task, particularly in terms of frequency of use. In contrast, the average rate of frequency of the sentence structures used by the groups with and without the provision of planning time in the convergent task was quite evenly distributed. The results did not conform to the claim of Long (1989) that groups with the provision of planning time 'stretch' L2 further. Neither did groups without the provision of planning time enjoy any form of advantage. Rate of frequency might be related to the task type (For further discussion on this point, refer to Chapter Four - 3.3). Table 5 shows the variety of sentence structures found in the utterances in the divergent and the convergent tasks, with and without the provision of planning time.

Table 5

Frequency of sentence structures used by the groups with and without the provision of planning time in the divergent and the convergent tasks

Syntax/group	Divergent					Average					Convergent					Average		Div.	Con.
	1 Pl	3 Pl	4 Pl	2 no Pl	5 no Pl	Pl	no Pl	1 Pl	3 Pl	4 Pl	2 no pl	5 no Pl	PL	no PL	tot.	tot.			
that -reporting thoughts & statements	8	4	8	6	7	6.7	6.5	6	3	3	4	6	4	5	33	22			
as a demo. pronoun																			
1. that	1	0	0	1	5	0.3	3	1	3	2	2	2	1.3	1.5	7	10			
2. this	14	0	7	4	21	7	12.5	0	3	2	0	3	1.3	1.5	46	8			
relative clause																			
1. that	2	0	1	2	2	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	0.6	0.5	7	3			
2. who	0	0	0	1	1	0	0.5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.5	2	1			
3. which	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0.5	0.5	2	2			
conditional clause																			
1. if	5	3	4	7	2	4	4.5	4	0	2	4	0	2	2	21	10			
2. whether/whether or not	0	0	2	0	2	0.6	1	0	1	0	2	0	0.3	1	4	3			
concessive clause	1	0	0	2	3	0.6	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0			
time clause																			
1. when	1	0	0	2	4	0.3	3	1	0	1	0	1	0.6	0.5	7	3			
2. once	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0.3	0.5	2	2			

reported speech	1	1	1	5	0	1	2.5	1	0	0	0	0	0.3	0	8	1
rehetorical question	0	0	1	3	0	0.3	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
passive voice	3	3	0	11	1	2	6	11	3	1	3	1	5	2	18	19
reason clause																
1. as	0	1	1	0	1	0.6	0.5	0	0	1	0	0	0.3	0	3	1
2. in order to/so as to	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	2
3. since	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0.6	0.5	0	3
4. because	6	0	1	0	8	2.3	4	9	4	2	4	1	3	2.5	15	20
result clause																
1. so that	0	0	1	0	1	0.3	0.5	4	1	0	1	0	1.6	0.5	2	6
indirect question	0	0	1	1	2	0.3	1	1	6	3	2	2	3.3	2	4	14

Key : PL = with planning time

no PL = without planning time

1 - 5 = group number

Div = divergent task

Con = convergent task

tot. = total

3.4.4 *Accuracy of L2*

In addition to assessing the variety and complexity of L2, a more detailed analysis was made by comparing the accuracy of L2 of individual subjects, with and without the provision of planning time. Ke represents the subjects with the provision of planning time and Lin represents the subjects without the provision of planning time.

Ke made some mistakes with the plural form, but he could use the articles of 'a', 'an' and 'the', the use of 'plural form', 'subject-verb agreement' and tense' more accurately than Lin, who was not given any planning time.

**Ke (from Group 1 - with the provision of planning time)**

*Identified mistakes in plural form and subject-verb agreement*

*convergent task*

(T1) Ke : ... in changing the image of the company from a conservative one [company] to a new one trendy one, I think some money [slowed down] should be spent [emphasised] on the advertising but from the above case we realize that too much money have been spent on advertising.

*divergent task*

(T2) Ke : I think a in such a situation both side should accept that there is a cultural difference between the two sides and I think just quarrelling is not constructive... I think making concessions are very important in such a situation.

(T12) Ke : But I I think em in this situation if both side do not make concessions, I think ...

*Identified correct use of articles**divergent task*

(T2) Ke : I think a in such a situation both side should accept that there is a cultural difference between the two sides and I think just quarrelling is not constructive... I think making concessions are very important in such a situation.

(T14) Ke : I think the best thing is to sit down and have a talk and to find out the best solution but not just but not just to follow the things that they are put into. So the best way is to of course to have a good access for communication.

(T4) Ke : ... And in sit this situation, both sides can come to meet and have a meeting and discuss the possible solutions and to find out the best solution to solve the problem but not just stand firm and quarrel with each other and and just doing foolish thing. I think communication is not enough in this case. So to solve the problem, I think to have a to gain an access for communication is very important.

(T12) Ke : ... And I think the best way is to act in a in a sensible way, and to have a peaceful meeting so that they can work in a harmonious manner.

**Lin (from Group 2 - without the provision of planning time)**

Lin made more obvious grammatical mistakes than Ke, and some of her utterances did not make sense because of the syntactical and grammatical errors.

*Identified mistakes in plural form and subject-verb agreement*

*divergent task*

(T2) Lin : ... before Mr. Ho know that the souvenir will be given to anyone em the souvenir. Then no one will inform er no one inform Mr Ho em in advance. ... The point is that it is not em (pause: 1.27 seconds) it is not the right thing to do. Em (pause : 1.85 seconds) the arrangement of the souvenir is er have some problems em ...

(T4) Lin : ... then if Mr. Ho em sou souvenir em will given to someone else, ...  
 ... And who who can it do? ... And then I you em you tell me that er I can get some em some substitute ... Then why can em er Mr. Mr. Smith buys another ...

(T10) Lin : ... If Mr. Ho em allow the happening of this event

(T14) Lin : Erm but the fact is that em this em this this situation er is erm happen er which concern about Mr. Ho, Mr. Smith and his assistant ...

(T18) Lin : ... Though you say that souvenir can be buy er buy in other areas, but sometimes em sometimes the time arrangement will be em will will get er problem. Er, for example if Mr. Ho plan to give two hundred souvenir to em a company and then you now give er get all the souvenir gone ...

(T22) Lin : ... So er (pause : 1.95 seconds) may be now MR. Ho can do thing and just accept the fact. Er and in the future may be as you say that em

all the souvenir that em er that is going to  
er to be given to the guest ...

### 3.4.5 Variety of lexis

It was difficult to argue that the subjects with the provision of planning time could use a wider range of lexis in the convergent and divergent tasks. The range of lexis used in the discussions depended on the lexical resources of the subjects. This can be demonstrated by studying the discourses of individual subjects closely. The range of lexis used by the subjects with the provision of planning time was found to be much wider than that used by the subjects without the provision of planning time in the divergent task, but not in the convergent task. The following analysis focuses on how the two subjects - Ke and Lin again, exploited different lexical items in the divergent task.

#### **Ke (from Group 1 - with the provision of planning time)**

When he was asserting that Mr. Ho had made the right decision, Ke used a great variety of adjective phrases and adjective clauses to describe the causes of the problem and the solution. He always mentioned the importance of recognising different working styles and of negotiation with a view to providing a good working atmosphere. The following phrases and clauses were identified from a chain of utterances.

##### *Phrases and clauses for the causes of the problem*

###### *divergent task*

(T2) Ke : ... I think a in such a situation both side should accept that there is a cultural difference between the two sides and I think just quarrelling is not constructive.

(T10)Ke : But I think em (pause : 1.52 seconds) the most important point is that er they should respect that or accept that there is a cultural difference or mentally difference between the two sides.

(T24)Ke : But I think the root of the problem is that there is basically a cultural difference between the twos and the working style of the two is totally different or mutually exclusive, so in this case, its a its the result of this problem.

*Phrases for the description of the solution*

*divergent task*

(T4) Ke : ... And in sit this situation, both sides can come to meet and have a meeting and discuss the possible solutions and to find out the best solution to solve the problem but not just stand firm and quarrel with each other and and just doing foolish thing. I think communication is not enough in this case. So to solve the problem, I think to have a to gain an access for communication is very important.

(T12)Ke : ... And I think the best way is to act in a in a sensible way, and to have a peaceful meeting so that they can work in a harmonious manner.

(14) Ke : I think the best thing is to sit down and have a talk and to find out the best solution but not just but not jest to follow the things that they are put into. So the best way is to of course to have a good access for communication.

(T22)Ke : Open meeting.

Although the same ideas were repeated throughout the chain of utterances, Ke employed a great variety of lexical items for the same expression, stretching his L2 lexical resources to a certain extent within the time constraints. He succeeded in making his meaning clear.

**Lin (from Group 2 - without the provision of planning time)**

Lin, who also played the same role as Ke in another pair, did not use an adequate range of lexical items to talk about the solution, and she did not say anything about the causes of the problem either. Her partner mentioned the causes of the problem. Lin's expressions were lengthy, clumsy and vague compared to those of Ke. Relevant clauses and phrases were transcribed as follows.

*Phrases and clauses for the solution*

*divergent task*

(T10)Lin : Mh, if Mr. Ho em allow the happening of this event and then in the future the same kind of event will happen em again. If er Mr. Ho can take action at this moment and collect er the whole situation and then no one will em follow such a situation in the future and it is a problem that if if once it has done and then er later may be another kind of event like this will also be em done in the future.

(T14)Lin : ... Then if Mr. Ho can take the action, and the whole company will know what is what's happening and so they won't em follow. And so I think Mr. Ho's decision is correct.

(T22)Lin : ... So er (pause : 1.95 seconds) may be now Mr. Ho can do nothing and just accept the fact... And so now (laugh) Mr. Ho will just em give the souvenir out and take no action.

Likewise, Ke, the subject with the provision of planning time, outperformed in range of lexis another subject, D, without the provision of planning time when they talked about the budget and the company in the convergent task. Ke used a wide selection of adjectives, verbs and even adverbs to describe and discuss the company, the budget and the profit, as shown in the following transcription.

**Ke (from Group 1 - with the provision of planning time)**

*convergent task*

*company*

(T1) Ke : ... in changing the image of the company from a conservative one [company] to a new one trendy one ...

*budget, expenditure, profit*

(T1) Ke : ... in changing the image of the company from a conservative one [company] to a new one trendy one, I think some money should be spent on the advertising but from the above case we realize that too much money have been spent on advertising. I think we should be controlled because if we spend money inadvertently, I think, the the account of the whole company will not be healthy. Is

(T2) Ke : okay I I I agree with you that the budget should be enlarged because the existing budget can is in fact is very small and accordings to the case we given, the budget should allow flexibility and that is it can be enlarged as as soon as possible because the existing budget is very small...

(T5) Ke : that is the budget will allow allow flexibility

(T9) Ke : ...and so I think em a department should be set up to to monitor the money being throw out to advertising because ... So we have to be very careful when we have to spend money so we have to monitor or inspect the the way the money spend money so that each this will maximize our profit. What do you think?

(T11)Ke : So er if er you have er some points, er the budget can be settled it for flexibility, er we have to inspect the sales and to and to have a clos closer look how people spend it amount of money so that we can make sure that er we can have a good return and do not just to waste money in it.

(T17)Ke : ... so that we can make sure that the amo money is spent worthwhilely and and the last point we can employ an effective advertise

As for D, he used only the following expressions to talk about the budget, with little illustration.

**D (without the provision of planning time)**

*convergent task*

*budget, expenditure, profit*

(T1) D : I think the problem is that the use of budget is too much in this first few months.

(T13)D : em I suggest to to revise it [budget].

(T19) D : Aha, I I I think adjusting the budget is possible ... and I think em em starting en this project will will will bring em a profitable year but erm if is there any suggestion about?

(T25) D : Em I think er some someone in the accounting department should should be should be on this em project to to monitor the use of money...

In terms of grammatical accuracy, Ke made slightly fewer mistakes than D did; however, the difference was not great.

**Ke (from Group 1 - with the provision of planning time)**

*Convergent task*

(T1) Ke : ... in changing the image of the company from a conservative one [company] to a new one trendy one, I think some money should be spent on the advertising but from the above case we realize that too much money have been spent on advertising. I think we should be controlled because if we spend money inadvertently, I think, the the account of the whole company will not be healthy. Is

(T3) Ke : okay I I I agree with you that the budget should be enlarged because the existing budget can is in fact is very small and accordings to the case we given, the budget should allow flexibility and that is it can be enlarged as as soon as possible because the existing budget is very small...

D

*Convergent task*

(T5) D : Emمم er may by may be Mr. Kwok should em  
 (pause : 1.01 seconds) firstly take a look on  
 the candidates budget on the the em  
 advertising in the whole year.

(T15) D : Or em em make another budget I if if if he  
 want (pause : 1.84 seconds) in advertising or  
 any other place.

(T19) D : Aha, I I I think adjusting the budget is  
 possible but the first first step which do is  
 look look the planning that no more money will  
 be given ...

(T23) D : Ahamm do a helper or a monitor is necessary  
 for for this marketing besides xxx?

(T38) D : Ah, that's we we that I I has say that er a  
 medium or a communicator is necessary to put  
 into that position.

(T50) D : and to judge to judge whether xxx should  
 launch the campaign or not once once he spend  
 more than the budget.

(T52) D : em maybe maybe em maybe some executive,  
 marketing or or or the Mr. Kwok appoint  
 people.

In conclusion, the range of lexis used in the discussions varied with the subjects' lexical resources. Provision of planning time did not seem to promote more accurate grammar. Since the subjects were under time pressure to organize and produce both content and language, their unprepared speech carried slightly more grammatical

mistakes than the prepared speech. However, accurate use of L2 is related to individual learners' grammatical resources. In short, planning time was found to be an important factor in affecting the greater use of different lexical items; it facilitated organization and fluency of speech. But these results suggest that there is no guarantee that planning time will promote the use of more accurate grammar.

### 3.5 Interviews

In the following section, I summarize the results of the interviews with the ten subjects. The interviews were conducted in Cantonese (the subjects' mother tongue) as requested. The responses were translated into English and edited.

Before presenting the results of the interviews, I would like to reiterate the limitations of the data and of this method of data collection. As stated in Chapter three - 2.3, interviewing is one of the popular data collection procedures for qualitative research in second language acquisition. A variety of interview types are used, namely open, semi-open, semi-structured and structured interviews. Similar to Cook's argument on the incompleteness and subjectivity of transcription (1989) (see Chapter Three - 2.4), Seliger and Shohamy (1989:166) also point out the limitations of collecting data through interviews, such as subjectivity and researcher bias, and the problem that the rapport between interviewers and interviewees may cause the interviewee to respond in a certain way to please the interviewer.

The interviews comprised three parts (refer to Appendix 3 for the questions). The first part aimed to obtain more information about the subjects' personal language learning feelings; the second part aimed to discover more about the subjects' past language learning experiences; and the last part focused on their reflections on their performance and comments on the two tasks. The first and the second parts had been completed before the research began; the subjects were interviewed individually. The last part was completed after the subjects had finished the tasks. They were interviewed in pairs. The following gives a summary of the subjects' responses. The summary only provides a profile of the ten subjects. For the responses of every individual subject, refer to Appendix 1.

3.5.1 *Interviews - Part I**The subject's personal language learning experience**(i) Type of language learner*

Nine subjects out of ten thought that they were risk avoiders and rather passive in language learning. They preferred to listen and were not inclined to express very much. They were afraid of making mistakes. However, their attitude might be open to change, depending on contextual factors such as the theme of the discussion. One of the subjects, Law, claimed that his passive attitude in oral interaction was due to the examination pressure on him to speak in front of the whole class.

*(ii) Ways to handle problems in expressing ideas in first language*

When the subjects encountered problems in expressing their ideas or opinions, they would handle them in three ways.

The first way was to try to rephrase the idea or to look for a substitute word and expression to let the interlocutor get the idea. This is the way most of the subjects preferred to use. One of the subjects illustrated the method with the following example.

'tape recorder' - rephrased as - 'thing that records your voice'

The second way was to repeat the unsophisticated idea several times so that the interlocutor could get the idea.

The third way was to switch to English.

(iii) *Ways to handle problems in expressing ideas in second language*

When the subjects encountered problems in expressing their ideas or opinions, they would handle them in four ways.

The first way was to keep on expressing the idea in incomplete sentences and wait for assistance from the interlocutor. The second was to paraphrase what the interlocutor had said, but in longer utterances. The third was to pause and look for a substitute word or use an appropriate description to describe the meaning of the word. The fourth way was to avoid expressing the idea.

(iv) *Language use attitude*

Most subjects felt somewhat uncomfortable in using English and did not have enough confidence to use it in the classroom. If English was used with peers, it would be considered as 'show-off' and 'funny'. But one of the subjects felt that if the topic and vocabulary were familiar, he would find the discussion easier to handle.

All of them felt that they could express ideas with more comfort and eloquence in their first language than in the second language.

(v) *Use of English*

English was primarily used for study and work. But some subjects pointed out that they learnt English because English was a compulsory subject; they were forced to learn. A few of them would use English to express their feelings in writing because they did not know how to express them in Cantonese.

3.5.2 *Interviews - Part II**The subjects' previous language learning experiences**(i) Language learning at schools*

It seemed that the teaching approach in junior forms was different from that in senior forms. More oral activities were arranged in senior forms. Most activities were still centred around writing and relatively few teachers arranged limited discussion and role-play activities in matriculation classes, because there was an oral examination in the university entrance examination. Teachers had to prepare students for the examination. The subjects' opinions on their English teachers were mixed. Some subjects were not satisfied with their teachers' teaching methods. In general, students' language learning experience was examination-oriented.

*(ii) Language activities at schools*

Oral activities were arranged for the purpose of meeting the requirement of the university entrance examination. The subjects had more opportunities to do oral activities in senior forms than in junior forms. The task for oral activities were taken from the study guide. Some teachers provided them with some useful language repertoire for agreeing, disagreeing and transition. Students were asked to have discussions in front of the class after practice so that classmates and the teacher could observe and give some comments. But some teachers would not give comments. A variety of oral activities was provided, including discussion, individual presentation, role play, debate and speech. Some subjects mentioned that they communicated in English when the teacher was around. However, when the teacher was not around, they would use little English and would even shift to Cantonese.

(iii) *Teaching method and medium of instruction*

Some teachers mainly used Cantonese to teach English in junior forms. Some teachers used English in senior forms. Although English was not used consistently as the medium of instruction throughout junior and senior forms, some teachers encouraged students to read books, to listen to the radio and do many grammar exercises.

(iv) *Opportunities to use English to express ideas in the classroom*

All ten subjects thought that they were not given enough oral activities to practise English. There were a few oral activities before the university entrance examination. The focus of learning was on writing. Even though there were some voluntary oral activities, the rate of student participation was very low.

3.5.3 *Interviews - Part III*(i) *The subjects' reflections on their L2 output in the tasks*

These interviews took place after the completion of the tasks. The subjects were interviewed in groups, mainly in Cantonese. They were asked about their comments on their performance in the two tasks.

All five groups said that they had encountered both task types in their English enhancement course (for information about English enhancement course, refer to Chapter One - 6.4) and in their matriculation course. They believed that there would be many discussions in daily life, tutorials and for project presentations. One group said that the divergent task was easier than the convergent task because they could discuss anything about the topic, as slight digressions were acceptable.

*(ii) Behavior in research and real life*

While some subjects could not see the difference in their behavior between the research and real life settings, others could feel the difference. The latter felt that they were nervous and the atmosphere was formal in the research setting. It was not easy for the subjects to ask questions explicitly. There were not many interruptions in the research setting. This was probably due not only to the need to be polite but also to the time factor.

*(iii) Comments on performance*

The subjects thought that they could manage the tasks as they planned. Although there was digression, the discussion would continue in the right track. Occasional misunderstanding was due to the fact that the two interlocutors focused on different ideas.

*(iv) Overall comments*

The subjects commented on two main aspects. The first was planning time. Groups with the provision of planning time felt that planning time was significant to their discussion, enabling them to plan what to say and brainstorm some relevant language. They could use almost all the ideas that had been brainstormed. Moreover, since they had prepared for the discussion, there were fewer hesitations. Hesitations disrupted fluency.

### 3.6 Retrospections

Retrospections were required immediately after the completion of the task, and the subjects had been told that they would be invited to comment on their behavior. As described in Chapter Three - 2.3, I was aware of the criticisms of retrospections made by researchers (for instance concerns about reliability, subjectivity and

bias). Therefore, retrospections were arranged immediately after the task performance. The subjects watched the taped interaction with me; in this way, they could be provided with relevant contextual information which could activate their short term memory. Moreover, I did not ask any leading questions. The subjects were free to comment on their behavior at any time they wanted. The following paragraphs give a summary of the subjects' retrospections. For detail, refer to Appendix 2.

### 3.6.1 *Summary of retrospections*

The subjects commented on seven aspects of behavior and discourse strategies in their retrospections. They gave some reasons for their behavior and strategies. These reasons are summarized below.

#### (i) *Other correction*

The subjects corrected each other for the sake of content and more appropriate vocabulary.

#### (ii) *Pause*

The subjects paused for four main purposes : thinking about the idea, waiting for the interlocutor's responses, searching for a more appropriate word or expression, wondering about the grammar of the language.

#### (iii) *Hesitation*

The subjects used hesitation, for instance the use of 'ers' and 'ems' to gain some time to search for the right word.

#### (iv) *Paraphrase*

The subjects rephrased the interlocutor's previous utterance in order to confirm their understanding, clarify

the meaning, check comprehension and facilitate the elaboration of the idea.

(v) *Repetition*

The subjects repeated utterances because they wanted the expression to be grammatically correct, to clarify the interlocutor's meaning before continuing the conversation, or to look for a better expression.

(vi) *Interruption*

The subjects interrupted each other because they felt that their ideas were misinterpreted.

(vii) *Giving up the message*

The subjects gave up the message mid-way because they had forgotten what they intended to say.

### Abstract of Chapter Four

In this chapter, I discuss four issues. They are : (1) the relationship between communicative tasks and their discourse structures; (2) the relationship between communicative tasks and strategy use, and how strategy use contributes to L2 acquisition; (3) the relationship between planning time and L2 acquisition; and (4) some factors that are beyond the control of task design and curriculum planners, but will affect acquisition.

Firstly, the discourse structure of a task is closely related to the goal of the task. A divergent task is likely to encourage a linear discussion structure, whereas a convergent task is likely to encourage a spiral discussion structure. It is believed that each structure has its contribution to make to L2 acquisition. Therefore teachers may consider to set both divergent and convergent tasks. Nevertheless, whether the discourse structure of a task actually follows the pattern described previously might also be subject to how learners manipulate the discussion.

Secondly, strategy use is motivated by the goal of the task. The contributions of strategies to L2 acquisition are made in different ways. The extent to which strategy use can lead to more L2 output, and richer L2 output quality, could also be affected by individual learners' differences.

Thirdly, it seems that there is no direct causal relationship between planning time and L2 acquisition. Planning time contributes to more extended lexical use and fluency in L2. But it does not promote greater use of different sentence structures and strategies, or even more accurate grammar. The rate of frequency of some sentence structures used by the no planning groups in the divergent task is higher than that used by the planning groups.

Individual learners' existing lexicogrammatical resources might be a more important factor affecting the range of lexis and grammar.

Fourthly, there are some factors that are beyond the control of task design and curriculum planners. Most of these factors are related to individual learners' differences. These factors are : (1) choice of topics; (2) task instructions; and (3) the limits of learners' linguistic ability and confidence in manipulating L2.

## Chapter Four

### Discussion

#### Introduction

In this Chapter, I will discuss four issues. They are:

- (1) the relationship between communicative tasks and discourse structures;
- (2) the relationship between communicative tasks and strategy use, and how strategy use assists L2 acquisition;
- (3) the relationship between planning time and L2 acquisition; and
- (4) some factors that are beyond the control of task-based learning and curriculum planners.

I hope the discussion can make some contribution to task design and can throw further light on pedagogy.

#### (1) Relationship between communicative tasks and discourse structures

The first issue is about the relationship between communicative tasks and their discourse structures.

As shown in the last chapter, a divergent task is likely to encourage a linear structure and a convergent task is likely to encourage a spiral structure. The different discourse structures seem to promote distinctive ranges of sentence structures. It is feasible to claim that the two communicative tasks lead to *different discourse structures, and both of them have contributions to make to L2 acquisition*. Let us look at each task and its discourse structure in detail.

In the divergent task, one of the interlocutors starts with an opinion that is either for or against the

proposition being discussed; and the other listens and states his or her contrary opinion. Since the discussion focuses on the opposing sides of the same topic, and the interlocutors do not want to give up their positions too quickly in the process, what they can do and will do is to take risks to elaborate or reiterate the same idea. This results in lengthy utterances. Actually, greater use of unreal and double negative conditional sentences, concessive clauses with 'although' and 'even though', and reported speech with 'that' clause were found in the divergent task. Most of the utterances included more than two subordinate clauses. Each turn was comparatively longer than those in the convergent task. Although eight out of nine subjects stated in the post-task interview that they were risk-avoiders and passive learners, their attitude was somewhat changed due to the demand of the task. Perhaps the task "encourages" or "pushes" the subjects to make more effort to have their utterances understood by the interlocutor, through the use of a variety of syntax and lexis. This, in turn, benefits acquisition.

In contrast, the goal of the convergent task is to agree on three pieces of advice within 15 minutes. This demand leads to the spiral way of discussion (for the spiral structure of discussion, please refer to Chapter Three - 3.2.4). With a view to agreeing on three pieces of advice within the designated period, there were more frequent checks and requests. These promote the use of more reason clauses with 'because', 'so that' , 'since' and 'in order to.' Fewer attempts were made to paraphrase and give examples, because they would take up a lot of time. The turns in the convergent task were relatively shorter than those in the divergent task. Since the subjects had to move to another piece of advice once the first one was agreed on, within a designated period of time, there were fewer opportunities for them to argue about an idea for very long. As revealed in the quantitative data, the

strategies of example giving and paraphrase were not frequently used.

In view of all this, the goal of the task appears to be a cause of the discourse structure, in which opportunities to use a variety of syntax and lexis are embedded. If there is no need to agree on three pieces of advice within a designated period of time, there will be no spiral development of discussion. If there is no need to argue from two opposing sides, the structure of the discussion will look different. Thus, the opportunities for learners to use L2 are indeed related to the goal of the task. As suggested by Nunan (1989:10), 'goal of the task' is one of the key components for analyzing a communicative task, and in this case, its role has been substantiated. The structures of different communicative tasks promote different routes for second language acquisition. They also engage learners in a learning process that is different from the traditional one-way teacher-learner interaction.

Nevertheless, it is hard to state categorically that there is a causal relationship between task goal and discourse structure. The structure of a divergent or a convergent task cannot guarantee that interactions will go in such a way. Interaction is manipulated by individual learners. Individual learners' differences, such as their personality or confidence in using the target language, may directly or indirectly influence the way learners handle the discussion, even though the goal of the task or interaction is clear to them. This has been revealed in Chapter Three - 3.1.4 (Divergent task - discourse structure) and 3.2.4 (Convergent task - discourse structure). Some learners might come up with a compromise in a divergent task because they could not think of a stronger argument to rebut against the interlocutor. Some learners might not be able to decide on a certain number of items in a convergent task because they found it difficult to make the choices. Therefore, the terms 'spiral' and

'linear' might not be adequate to describe the discourse structure of the tasks in different contexts, manipulated by learners of different speech styles, personality and language confidence. The discourse structure, the spiral or linear form, as suggested in Chapter three, might have some deviations. Deviation might be caused by the way in which an individual learner manipulates the interaction. Thus, the goal is a cause of discourse structure; but the goal does not guarantee any fixed discourse structure. Whether the discourse structure follows the pattern described previously is also subject to learners' manipulation of the task.

## **(2) Relationship between communicative tasks and strategy use for L2 acquisition**

The second issue is about the relationship between communicative tasks and strategy use, on the one hand, and the way in which strategy use is conducive to L2 acquisition on the other.

*The goal of the task may motivate strategy use, which in turn influences the process of L2 acquisition. Learners use strategies to modify their L2 output semantically, grammatically and lexically. It is also found that task-based learning not only gives meaning primacy, but also promotes the use of different strategies in learner-learner interaction. All of this encourages the use of a variety of syntax and lexis. In the following sections, I will discuss the causal relationship between communicative tasks and strategy use, and the ways in which the six strategies, identified from the results of the study, assist L2 acquisition.*

### **2.1 Causal Relationship between communicative tasks and strategy use**

Communicative tasks and strategy use are inter-related. This is because the purpose of the task, which is

interpreted by learners as having a convincing or a shared purpose, leads them to use different strategies.

As has been explored by many researchers, different goals for the tasks promote different strategies (For more information, refer to Chapter Two (a) - 3.1.2). The results of the study also show that the subjects needed more turns in the convergent task than in the divergent task. But the turns in the convergent task were relatively short, and with fewer words per turn than those in the divergent task. There were more comprehension checks, clarification requests, confirmation checks and instances of helping out. The reason why the subjects had to make the checks and requests frequently might be because they had to agree on three pieces of advice within a designated period. This calls for frequent checks and confirmations before moving to the next point.

In contrast, the divergent task, which is open-ended, demands that learners hold different perspectives and argue about an issue, and thus encourages longer turns. It was found that the subjects concentrated on explaining their ideas in L2. The divergent task in the research led to relatively fewer turns, but the turns were longer, with more words per turn, more use of paraphrases (of both the speaker's and the interlocutor's ideas) and more use of examples to modify the meaning of the utterance than those in the convergent task. Similar to Duff's findings (1986), there were fewer checks, requests, queries about opinions or ideas and examples of helping out in the divergent task. But there were more examples of paraphrases and illustrations. Although the two tasks are likely to promote different strategies, this does not mean that the strategies which evolve from the convergent task are entirely excluded. There is also a need to request and check whenever there is a problem in understanding and comprehending the idea in the divergent task. The hearer still needs to mediate his or her systemic and schematic knowledge by realizing the illocutionary act of the

speaker, when there is a communication problem. In other words, learners can manipulate their strategy use, according to their interpretation of the context or their communicative needs.

In short, the goal of the task provides 'space' for learners to use strategies to modify their intended meaning in a better way. The 'space' encourages different strategies, and they come into play for more effective communication of ideas. Nevertheless, strategy use is also manipulated by "learners". Learners might decide on the extent to which paraphrases should be made or examples should be given in the task. They might adjust the frequency of strategies used in the task according to the context.

## *2.2 Assisting L2 acquisition in learner-learner interaction through strategy use*

In this section, I will focus on how the six strategies which are most frequently used in the study assist L2 acquisition. I will also look at how these strategies are manipulated by individual learners, causing different effects on interaction and acquisition. The six strategies are : clarification request, comprehension check, helping out, paraphrase (self and other paraphrase), example giving and correction (self and other correction).

### *2.2.1 Functions of clarification request and comprehension check*

Clarification request and comprehension check contribute to L2 acquisition in two ways. Firstly, they may trigger more L2 output from the interlocutor, and some output was found to be linguistically improved when rephrased. Secondly, they call for the use of different question forms. The following paragraphs will discuss the two contributions in more detail.

### 2.2.1.1 *Triggering more L2 output*

As described in the results section, the subjects modified or adjusted their meaning in two ways: either initiated by themselves in their discourses, or triggered by the demand of the interlocutor. The demand of the interlocutor for more comprehensible input is represented through the strategies of clarification request, comprehension check or confirmation check. The request and comprehension check always trigger more and better L2 output (which may consist of more variety of syntax, or more fluent L2). This is the reason why requests and checks are significant in assisting L2 acquisition. The results of the study showed that the subjects were inclined to modify their L2 more significantly in response to clarification requests than in response to confirmation checks. This is consistent with the study of Pica et al (1989). For instance,

(group 1- divergent task) - clarification request

(T3) Ka : However, we should we should focus on the case that some of the souvenirs have already been sent to the guest. Then how can how can we em get back the souvenir?

(T4) Ke : But I think Mr. Ho has done right because if they just stand firm and do nothing, I think both sides will not gain advantage. And in sit this situation, both sides can come to meet and have a meeting and discuss the possible solutions and to find out the best way to solve the problem but not just stand firm and quarrel with each other and and just doing foolish thing. I think communication is not enough in this case. So to solve the problem, I think to have a to gain an access for communication is very important.

(group 2-convergent task) - clarification request

(T32) D : Do do you think em a communicator

(T33) Lin: Mhm

(T34) D : between Mr. Kwok and xxx is necessary?

(T35) Lin: Mhm, why?

(T36) D : Em because em M-r. Kwok only only er looks into the budget or the project er it among but er I think it's too late for xxx to advice since em most can most er procedure or process or campaign has been launched. So em if there is a mon communicator or [emphasized] there is a - more [emphasized] frequent regular meeting between them is - better.

(group 1-divergent task) - comprehension check

(T5) Ka : Yes, may be the the ['the' was pronounced as 'de'] must have some er they must have compromise each other after this after this case. That em I think em in this case xxx is still wrong. This I I emphasize on some souvenirs that has already been sent. Em as Mrs Smith has said we can't have er some some guests get the souvenirs and some has not.

(T6) Ke : So you think that they should er get the compromise after the event?

(T7) Ka : Yes, because the event had had already happened.

(group 5-convergent task) - comprehension check

(T36)W : Er, (pause : 1.16 seconds) the last advice I want to mention is that, we can have an open house. That means invite others companies, similar company com similar company to come to our company and see what and have a visit. Maybe May be we can promote our products to them at that time.

(T37)Law: That means competitors?

(T38)W : You can see you can treat them as a competitor when you are in the same market. But competitors also can be treated as friends.

The following example shows a subject's response to a request triggered by the demand of the interlocutor. The response is found to comprise more complex syntax, that is it includes more than one subordinate clause. A noun clause, 'it's so very embarrassed', and two subordinate clauses, 'it will affect the image of the company' and 'once you withdraw the souvenir' were used.

Clarification Request

(group 2-divergent)

(T8) Lin: Er then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy another shield em to substitute the one er the ones given to the guest. Then why can Mr. Smith buy another kind of s er shield to the guest and return the original one to Mr. Ho?

(T9) D : Oh, I I think it's so very embarrassed and it will affect the image of the company once you withdraw the souvenir.

### 2.2.1.2 *Facilitating the use of different question forms*

Besides prompting the interlocutor to use more L2 to modify meaning, the strategies of clarification requests and comprehension or confirmation checks **also facilitate the use of different question forms**. When the subjects asked for clarification, they practiced different 'wh' 'interrogative' questions. The question form was always envisaged as an open-ended question by the subjects, thus stimulating them to modify L2. The subjects used a variety of syntax, such as (1) reason clauses with 'because' , 'when', 'since'; (2) conditional clauses with 'if', 'whether or not' and (3) 'that' clauses in response to clarification requests and sometimes to confirmation checks, as shown from the subjects' discourses below. In contrast, when the subjects wanted to confirm their comprehension, a close-ended question or a statement with rising intonation was used. The motive was to get a short and quick answer from the interlocutor. The hearers also interpreted the question in this way. Thus, their responses were short.

Although comprehension check and clarification request seem to push learners to use the language to explain and describe more precisely, as discussed previously, these strategies do not always guarantee that learners will be pushed to elaborate and produce more language. Some learners may simply give a 'yes' or a 'no' answer. Individual learners' differences play a role in strategy use. In the following examples, subjects E and J gave only a 'mhm' and a 'yes' after confirmation checks.

(group 3- convergent task) - comprehension check

(T9) C : Your your advice like my second advice but xxx combining combined together that is er to increase the communication and understanding of

(T10) E : Mhm

(T11) C : each other?

(T12) E : Yeah.

(group 4-convergent task) - comprehension check

(T27) A : Is it er the (pause : 2.10 seconds)

(T28) J : er

(T29) A : suggest the company to give a proposal before in advance and including the result they expect?

(T30) J : Yes.

(T31) A : Aha, and then the second one (pause : 2.27 seconds). I ...

The response of the interlocutors is actually dependent upon many other factors such as their willingness to continue, their linguistic ability and the extent to which the topic is envisaged as 'worth discussing'. There are always some factors which are not under the control of the task design (refer to 4.4 for more discussion about this point). Thus, demands for clarification or comprehension check might not always trigger greater use of the target language. Similarly, modifying one's or the other's intended meaning through paraphrase might be just a substitution of the morpheme, without generating alternative or more complex syntax. Learners as individuals are an important factor. For instance,

(group 1 - convergent)

(T2) Ka : budget may be too small.

(T3) Ke : ... because it is in fact very small.

2.2.2 *Functions of helping out*

Another way to confirm comprehension is to complete the utterance for the interlocutor, that is through the strategy of 'helping out'. Helping out not only provides the interlocutor with an appropriate word to complete the turn, but also enables him or her to elaborate the meaning, based on the provision of the word. In the following extracts, W picked up the word 'distributing', and he elaborated on it. Similarly, the clause 'it costs less' enabled W to reiterate the same idea using a different structure, and to elaborate the subsequent utterance. The clause 'it costs less' was rephrased as 'it costs much lower', regardless of grammatical inaccuracy. It is 'interaction' that gives the learners an opportunity to use different forms and structures.

(group 5 - convergent)

(T14) W : ... But when we go when we conducting a research,  
we should em employ some other part-time workers  
for us to go to the

(T15) Law: distributing?

(T16) W : Ha, may be distributing the questionnaire er so  
so such this untech, use less techniques work.

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(group 5 - convergent)

(T8) W : May be we can er okay the er your suggestion of  
the research is very useful. May be we can er  
(pause : 2.24 seconds) we can see the point of  
the advertising. We can use the we can use the  
advertising in a lower lower proportion or in a  
lower budget that means that em

(T9) Law: It costs less.

(T10)W : It costs less. We we put a little proportion of our budget in the advertising ....

(T11)Law: Yes, such as introduce this to other boutiques? and and also talk ...

(pause : 2.24 seconds)

(T12)W : Maybe. About the research I think we can use some we can employ not using not use our own staff or we can employ some part time workers such as the er (pause : 1.68 seconds) undergraduates in university or some part time workers from the secondary school or the housewife. It may cost much lower.

### 2.2.3. *Functions of paraphrasing one's idea or the interlocutor's idea and example giving*

In contrast to the modification of meaning triggered by the interlocutor, modification can be initiated by the subject himself or herself. This might be because he or she is not satisfied with the precision and clarity of his or her expressions. Modification, as shown from the subjects' discourses, could include modification of the intended meaning and the accuracy of the linguistic expression. Modification of the intended meaning could be initiated by the subject through the strategy of paraphrasing one's own or the interlocutor's idea and through example giving. For instance,

(group 4 - divergent)

(T29)A : Mhm er (pause : 1.85 seconds). It is depends on what their manner in especially Mr. Ho. If he is in a good manner, in a xxx, he is trying to find out some improvement in the company in the community. That's okay. I I I don't see they may they may have a rigorous argument.

(group 2 - divergent)

(T18) Lin: Er may be may be this may be I'll better solution in the future. Er but the question is that (pause : 1.74 seconds) the souvenir is er the souvenirs are gone and Mr. cannot get back.... But er sometimes em sometimes the time arrangement will be em will will get er problem. Ex for example if Mr. er Ho plan to give two hundred souvenir to em a company and then er at tomorrow, and then you now give er get all the souvenir gone... And then how can er sometimes can he buy such souvenir immediately? It is not a em a very easy thing to do.

The meaning of the phrase 'what their manner is' is illustrated with the use of the conditional clause 'if he is in a good manner, ... '. The meaning of 'sometimes the arrangement will be in trouble' is also illustrated with an example, using the real conditional clause 'if Mr. Ho plan ... '. Besides the use of a conditional clause, a when-clause is also found in paraphrasing the meaning. For instance,

(group 1 - convergent)

(T4) Ka : Mm, that is we can we can link em the sales amount and the advertising budget together. That is when the sales increase, we can increase more adv advertising and er the other way round.

(group 5 - convergent)

(T19) W : Er (pause : 1.16 seconds) the last advice I want to mention is that, we can have an open house. That means invite others companies, similar company com similar company...

Ka attempts to use the 'when' clause to paraphrase the original idea and make the meaning more precise. The lexis 'together' is modified as 'the other way round'. W

paraphrases the meaning of 'open house' as 'invite other companies'.

Sometimes, the intended meaning of the previous utterance made by the interlocutor is also modified through paraphrase, for the purpose of confirming comprehension. It was found that in paraphrasing the interlocutor's intended idea, some of the previous utterances were rephrased at a more sophisticated level, with clearer and more effective expression.

Nevertheless, the use of this strategy seems to be related to an individual learner's speech style. Ke's discourses (from pair one) are particularly characterized by this speech style. Ke expressed in the interview that he was used to incorporating part of the interlocutor's utterances. This was because this strategy could help him search for ideas and elaborate his argument. He further stated that it was his 'plan' to elaborate his utterances (For information, please refer to Appendix 1 - interview results).

In fact, Ke unfolded three significant aspects of this strategy. Firstly, paraphrasing the interlocutor's opinion, followed by an expression of one's opinion and examples, enables learners to scaffold the discourse in a logical manner. This allows some space to explore L2 and to search for the appropriate word or syntax. Secondly, learners could gain more time to search for ideas, and avoid having 'dead silence' or 'hesitations for too long' in their discourse. All of this contributes to greater fluency. For example,

(group 1-convergent task) - paraphrase (other + self)

(T17)Ka : yes I see your point and you say that you say that er the growth might go with some advertising company but [emphasized] if we can employ an im more effective ad advertising company which

provides er effective advertisement then the grow will increase more and more, and this what we want is to earn much more money and of course this is one this can be one of my advice to to employ more effective advertising company. (pause : 2.68 seconds) So the point is we have to allow flexibility to inspect the sales to to see the sales increase or decrease and to adjust the amount of advertisements and thirdly to to monitor the money the our employees spend on so that we can make sure that the amo money is spent worthwhilely and and the last point we can employ an effective advertise

Thirdly, looking from the structural aspect, Ke's discourse started with a paraphrase of some known information, and then he proceeded to some suggestions he would like to make. In this context, what is more important, besides the information structure, is the paraphrase of the known information. The paraphrased expression was also rich linguistically and the contribution of this kind of experience to L2 acquisition should not be overlooked.

A similar example is taken from Lin's discourse.

Clarification request  
(group 2 - divergent)

(T8) Lin: Er then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy another shield em to substitute the one er the ones given to the guest. Then why can Mr. Smith buy another kind of s er shield to the guest and return the original one to Mr. Ho?

(T9) D : Oh, I I think it's so very embarrassed and it will affect the image of the company once you withdraw the souvenir.

In Lin's discourse, Lin paraphrased the interlocutor's idea before making a request. The information structure, from known to unknown, encourages greater use of L2.

#### 2.2.4 *Functions of 'self-correction' and 'other correction'*

Modification can be made concerning the linguistic aspect of the expression through substitution and addition of morphemes or key words; and this was found to be either initiated by the subject himself/herself or modified by the interlocutor in the subsequent utterance. This aspect of modification, or in more specific terms 'self correction' and 'other correction', results in more accurate or appropriate use of language and content. 'Self correction', in the subjects' discourses, concerns both linguistic and semantic aspects, such as subject-verb agreement, tense and meaning. As revealed by two subjects, C and E (group 3) in their retrospections, they would like their discourses to be more grammatically correct. They knew that there was something wrong in grammar while they were producing the language. E (in turn 8) used 'both of', 'each other' and 'each of them' consecutively in his discourse; while C felt that there was a confusion in the use of the prepositions of 'on', 'to' and 'towards' (in turn 1) (For detail, refer to Appendix 2 - retrospection).

However, linguistic correction might bring a change in the semantic aspect. The semantic meaning of 'both of' and 'each of them' is different.

(self-correction)

(group 3 - convergent task)

(T8) E : and the xxx and the advantages is that em they know exactly both of each other each of them and they know ...

x x x x x x x x x x x x

(group 3 - convergent)

(T1) C : ... With this research, it can er increase its understanding of the market and concentrate its advertising on em on on to towards this young lady executive. (pause : 1.65 seconds)

Likewise, 'other correction' concerns not only the linguistic aspect but also the semantic aspect. Subject Ka, in her retrospection, stated that she corrected Ke because she wanted him to use her idea. On another occasion, subject Ke corrected Ka, because he believed that 'consider' was a better word (For detail, refer to Appendix 2 - retrospection). Both corrections are a good indication of the awareness of linguistic and semantic aspects of an utterance when it is being articulated, through interaction.

(other-correction)

(group 1 - convergent)

(T17) Ka : ... so that we can make sure that the amo money is spent worthwhilely and and the last point we can employ an effective advertise

(T18) Ke : consider, consider to employ a more effective advertising company.

x x x x x x x x x x x

(group 1 - convergent)

(T13) Ke : er I think it's quite a good way to

(T14) Ka : [it is not it's found that it's not em proportion er not positively proportion (=o<sup>¶</sup>), then it is not worthy em to employ this company and may be we have to change a a more effective ad advertising company.

In short, strategy use assists L2 acquisition. The results of the study have shown how acquisition can evolve from learner-learner interaction in communicative tasks

through strategies. This finding complements some researchers' comments, that strategies only help learners become more fluent with the linguistic resources that they already possess. Most importantly, the goal of the task stimulates strategy use. But the way in which strategies are used is affected by individual learners' differences.

### (3) Planning time and Second Language Acquisition

The third issue is about the effects of planning time on L2 acquisition.

Planning time seems to contribute to better lexis in L2, but its role in generating greater variety of sentence structures and strategy use, and more accurate grammar, is still uncertain. Therefore, it is not obviously the primary cause of better quality L2 output. Individual learners' existing lexical and grammatical resources might be a factor affecting the range of lexis and grammar. Planning time plays the role of giving 'space' for brainstorming points for argument and persuasion. Lexis and grammar might not be the interlocutors' main concern in preparation. There seems to be no direct causal relationship between planning time and the quality of learners' language. The following paragraphs discuss the contributions of planning time to L2 acquisition in detail.

#### 3.1 Effects of planning time : from the subjects' responses<sup>1</sup>

Firstly, responses from the two different types of groups (i.e., groups with the provision of planning time and groups without the provision planning time) on the effects of planning time on their performances are divergent and inconclusive.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to state that the five pairs of subjects did not have an opportunity to experience the two different timing conditions. Their comments should be treated with caution.

It was agreed among the three groups which were given 5 minutes planning time that they could respond with fewer hesitations, and could refine their plans and sometimes language. Their minds were not so busy with figuring out what to say and how to say it simultaneously. The provision of planning time helped them in the tasks because it was more difficult to argue or communicate in English than in Cantonese. They also admitted that they could use almost all of their planned ideas in the discussions. This was proved to be correct by referring to the notes that they had made in their five-minute planning time : the groups with planning time followed their written plan, and sometimes language was refined, for instance, the idea of 'small things' (group 3) in the planning stage was rephrased as 'small conflicts' in the execution stage. However, not every point could be brought into the discussion if it was not close to the focus of the discussion. For instance, the notion of 'cultural difference' was dropped by J (group 4) because A had never mentioned it.

In contrast, the two groups which were not given the five minutes for planning had some reservations about the use of planning time. As stated by Law and W (group 5), planning time did not make any difference because discussion was dependent on the topic; if the topic was interesting and stimulating, they could talk more (For information, please refer to Appendix 1 - interview results). The inconclusive responses on the effects of planning time on second language acquisition and learners' language quality in communicative tasks suggest an area which needs to be further researched. Although the subjects' responses are divergent and they do not all see the benefits of planning time, it is undeniable that the provision of planning time allows the subjects to concentrate on the content of the discussion, and to put down some useful linguistic expressions either in chunks or in complete sentences (refer to appendix 9 : students'

drafts). The linguistic expressions would then be built into the subjects' discourses when they were following the planned idea. Planning time, in this light, is conducive to the generation of ideas and some relevant L2 expressions.

### 3.2 *Effects of planning time : from quantitative and qualitative data*

Quantitative and qualitative analyses throw light on the effects of planning time on L2 acquisition. A review of the quantitative data concerning the different performances of the groups with and without the provision of planning time in both tasks shows that, in terms of the total length and the length of each turn, the groups without the provision of planning time required longer time to complete their discussions. Moreover, they used more words, turns and hesitations than the groups with the provision of planning time, except in the strategy of pauses. It is difficult to explain why there are more pauses in groups with planning time than in groups without planning time. Perhaps the subjects with planning time cannot adjust their plans so quickly when an unexpected spontaneous response is given; while the subjects without the provision of planning time are prepared to react to any unexpected spontaneous reactions. In addition, the groups without planning time had greater frequency of hesitation than the groups with planning time. This means that the amount of planning time contributes to fluency, indicated by the frequency of hesitation.

### 3.3 *Effects of planning time on the use of a variety of syntax*

With regard to the variety of syntax used in the subjects' discourses, the groups with and without the provision of planning time used similar sentence structures in the convergent and divergent tasks, juxtaposed with varied length per turn. As reported in the results of the

research, the subjects without the provision of planning time in the divergent task were more adventurous in using different types of syntax, and the frequency of using these was relatively higher than those with the provision of planning time. The difference in the frequency of use of different structures between the two groups was, however, slight in the convergent task. The reason why the subjects who were given planning time were less adventurous might be their pre-determined written plan and language choice. (Sometimes a phrase was written for reference. For detail, please refer to Appendix 9). Thus, they were less flexible in responding to changes. In contrast, the subjects who were not given any planning time were more willing to experiment with a variety of syntax. This might be because they were not bound by the pre-determined language choice, and so had more flexibility in manipulating syntax.

In addition, it appears that there is a relationship between syntactic development, planning time and task types. As described previously and in Chapter Three - 3.4.3, the frequency of sixteen sentence structures used by the 'no planning time' groups in the divergent task was higher than in the case of the 'planning time' groups. Planning time seems to inhibit syntactic development. However, this did not happen in the convergent task. The frequency of sentence structures used by both the planning and the no planning time groups was more evenly distributed. The frequency of sentence structures seems to be related to the task type, and is not simply caused by planning time.

### *3.4 Effects of planning time on the use of a variety of lexis and accuracy*

With regard to the use of lexis, the subjects with planning time could use a wider range of lexis than the subjects without planning time. However, the subjects with the provision of planning time did not out-perform the subjects with no planning time in grammatical accuracy.

These inconsistent results can be explained by the reason that the use of more accurate and complex syntax is dependent on individual linguistic resources, and therefore will not be solely affected by the time factor. The analyses of the qualitative and quantitative data substantiate the views of Ochs (1979), Ellis (1987) and Crookes (1989), that planning time contributes to better language to a certain extent. Nevertheless, some data do not conform to Long's claim (1989:14) that learners produce syntactically more complex language when given more planning time than without planning or less planning time.

It should be noted that some social and contextual factors had been controlled before the research began, namely subjects' age, sex, level of L2 proficiency, interlocutor and task familiarity (For information, see Chapter Three - (1)). Mixed-sex dyads were used and the members of each pair were not taken from the same English class. Their age range was from 19 to 20 years old, and the topics for discussion were some case studies of business administration problems. Although the selected subjects had been learning English as a foreign language for over 10 years and had the same level of English proficiency ('C' grades in the two public examinations), their existing lexico-grammatical resources contribute to a variety and complexity of syntax, and lexis. Although the effects of planning time are still inconclusive, it is still true to say that, if there is no planning time, L2 learners will interact in a more stressful frame of mind, by attending to content and language simultaneously. This results in fewer words and shorter turns.

### 3.5 Effects of planning time on strategy use

It was shown in the results that the difference in strategy use, between the groups which were given and not given planning time, was very small. As discussed previously, strategy use is motivated by the goal/purpose of the task (refer to Chapter Four - 2.2). Although it is difficult to provide an explanation for the inconsistent

behavior of the subjects, several patterns of strategy use, employed by the subjects with and without the provision of planning time in convergent and divergent English tasks, are worth discussing.

The subjects with the provision of planning time are more inclined to paraphrase their own ideas or messages; whereas the subjects without it are more inclined to paraphrase the other's ideas and clarify messages. Since the subjects with the provision of planning time have made a written plan, and have thought about the language they can use in the discussion, they are eager to explain their plan in detail with a view to convincing the interlocutor in the first place. In contrast, since the subjects without the provision of planning time have to think about the idea and search for appropriate language simultaneously, they are not eager to explain too much. Paraphrasing the other's ideas and messages may help the subjects to develop their own arguments, and the strategy of paraphrase gives them time to look for words and ideas. This was acknowledged by one of the subjects, Ke, who said that he would apply the strategy of paraphrasing the other's ideas and words when he anticipated a problem in expressing his ideas. He said that if it was his turn but he could not think of an idea, he would repeat or paraphrase what the interlocutor had just said. He hoped that through the expansion of another subject's idea, he could be clear about what he wanted to say (refer to Chapter Four -2.2.3 for more discussion). On the other hand, the subjects with no provision of planning time may want to request more information, and clarify the idea before making statements or counter-arguments. I suspect that this might be due to the lack of a written plan. Clarification helps them to understand the motive and the meaning of the utterance, and this stimulates the subjects to think of a response which would be made through language. Although comprehension check and confirmation check cannot provide new information, they allow the subjects to concentrate on form after checking.

Therefore, it is still feasible to say that planning time is conducive to L2 acquisition in communicative tasks in three ways. Firstly, planning time may enable L2 learners to concentrate on reaching the goal of the task. Secondly, planning time may enable L2 learners to prepare the language to articulate their thoughts and arguments. Thirdly, since learners have been given time to plan the content and to decide on some relevant language choices, they are able to get their messages across more fluently (with fewer hesitations), with better organization and more efficiently (although accuracy and variety of syntax are not directly related to the provision of planning time). When L2 learners are encouraged to complete a task in a process-oriented classroom, it is necessary to consider the time factor.

#### **(4) Other factors Influencing the use of L2 in communicative tasks**

There are some factors influencing the use of L2 in communicative tasks which might not be under the control of task design. Most of these factors are related to individual learners' differences. In this section, I focus my discussion on three factors that are related to L2 use in tasks, and the role of individual learners' differences. It is significant that, they were mentioned by the subjects in interviews and retrospections. The three factors are : (1) choice of topic; (2) learners' linguistic ability and confidence in manipulating L2; and (3) task instructions. (1) and (2) are related to individual learners' differences while (3) is related to the role of teachers. I also discuss the role of individual learners' differences and the role of teachers. I hope the discussion will throw further light on task design and pedagogy.

#### 4.1 Choice of topics

Firstly, looking for some topics that learners might be interested in is a difficult task for curriculum planners. It was found from J's and C's retrospections that they did not have much to say about the topic (For information, please refer to Appendix 10 - Transcription). This was because they did not find the topic interesting and stimulating enough to discuss for fifteen minutes. Nonetheless, it might be difficult for curriculum planners to choose other topics that learners at different levels of L2 proficiency will be interested in. When learners themselves choose a topic for discussion, they might take account of their existing lexico-grammatical resources. So, to remedy this situation, teachers, who know their learners better than curriculum planners, could mediate discussion in two ways. The first way is to modify the topics, which are suggested by curriculum planners, for their own learners. The second way is to find out from learners the topics they are interested in, or to negotiate with learners on topics. Teachers are thus in an important position to facilitate L2 acquisition through process learning.

#### 4.2 Limited linguistic ability and confidence in manipulating L2

Secondly, as mentioned by the subjects in the interviews about their past learning experiences, they were inclined to be more cautious about what they would say if the task was discussed in English. They dared not drag on for too long and would not say very much when compared with their contributions in L1. In other words, they were very cautious about their limited linguistic ability and confidence in manipulating L2. Their level of confidence might partly be influenced by their limited lexico-grammatical resources, but it might partly be caused by individual risk-taking attitudes. Ke and Ka, who stated in the interview that they were risk-avoiders and passive

learners, took the initiative to talk. Their change in learning attitude might be attributable to the task, but I think it might also be attributable to the way they were willing to take risks in interaction. Another subject C, who also claimed that she was a passive learner, did not take the initiative to talk in interaction. Her partner, E, made a comment in the retrospection that he paused because he wanted to wait for C's response (For information, please refer to Appendices 1 and 2). C's attitude in the activity was consistent with her description of herself. Risk-taking attitude is closely related with linguistic ability, as was suggested in Chapter Two (b) - 2. Therefore, engaging learners in communicative tasks seems to be only one of the ways which may be suggested to enhance their confidence in using L2. The extent to which learners can benefit from the process is subject to individual different risk taking attitudes and confidence.

#### 4.3 Task instructions

Thirdly, it was found from C's remarks that she had some difficulties in understanding the instructions for the task. Unfortunately, this point was not further explored in the retrospection. I suspected that her difficulty in understanding the task instructions might have been caused by the ambiguity of instructions and short preparation time; or it might have been due to the way in which she interpreted the instructions. C, who found the topic uninteresting and the instructions unclear, finished the discussion with E (pair 3) in 10 minutes for the convergent task and 6 minutes for the divergent task; despite the fact that they were given planning time. Instead of attributing the problem of 'understanding task instruction' to learners, it can be tackled by improving the quality of instruction from teachers. Teachers, who know their learners well could modify instructions so as to suit their learners' level of proficiency. Instructions that are

comprehensible to learners might promote greater L2 use in learner-learner interaction.

#### 4.4 *Role of individual differences*

As shown in the results, strategy use and planning time promote language use to a certain extent. Individual learners' linguistic ability can determine the extent to which a variety of sentence structures, and a wide range of lexis and strategies are used, as well as accuracy of L2.

The analysis of this study reveals the relevance of three aspects of individual differences with language use. Firstly, learners' linguistic ability determines the complexity and variety of syntax, the range of lexis, and L2 accuracy in a natural or an experimental context (For information, please refer to Chapter Four - (2) and (3)). Secondly, learners' learning or cognitive strategies influence the use of strategies to clarify, paraphrase and exemplify for the sake of better communication and expression. Thirdly, learners' speech style determines their risk-taking attitude, which might encourage longer speaking turns, more language and strategy use, for instance, Ke's strategy. (For discussion, please refer to Chapter Four - 2.2.3). The context which learners are in and the conditions which are imposed on them (e.g. in an experimental setting like this research) might have some effects on these factors. An interplay between individual differences and social context should not be ignored.

The study of individual differences is an important area in L2 acquisition. The influence of individual differences on L2 acquisition has attracted a number of studies (e.g. Fillmore 1979, Oxford 1990, Crookes and Schmidt 1991) on cognitive style, learning strategies and motivation. There are two views on the role of individual differences in second language acquisition (Fillmore 1979). The first view is that individual differences play a vital role, and different people acquire a second language in

different ways. Most of the research supporting this view focuses on adults or adolescents. Some researchers (e.g. Gardner 1989) also investigate the reasons behind different performances, such as motivation and attitudes. The second view is that individual differences are trivial in L2 acquisition. Most of the research supporting this view focuses on relatively young children in naturalistic settings. Cognitive style, learning strategies and personality have been considered as explanations for individual differences. For instance, researchers have studied the learning strategies of good and bad language learners. Researchers succeed in drawing some generalizations; however, as commented by Skehan (1989) the entire picture is still presented in pieces and has not been put together. Skehan suggests studying individual differences on a larger scale and controlling as many variables and conditions as possible.

It is not easy to draw any conclusions about acquisition simply from an individual learner's behavior in interaction. According to this research, it seems that the factors of individual linguistic ability, learning strategies and personality play an active role in L2 acquisition. But individual differences have to interact with the nature of the task, the setting or the environment (naturalistic or experimental), and the person whom one is interacting with. The subjects showed how they have adjusted their linguistic ability and strategies according to the nature of the task, the response of the interlocutor and timing. But positive or less positive behavior of learners in interaction might be indicated from their strategy use. Rubin (1975, cited in Ervin 1979) has described communication strategies used by talented language learners to motivate communication and enhance language development. The talented language learners are inclined to use more achievement strategies such as paraphrase and description. Therefore, I think it is useful for researchers to study learners' strategies used in different social contexts, for instance, language

activities in the classroom, and interactions with more proficient learners or native speakers of the target language outside the classroom. In other words, there is a need for the different performances of an individual in different social situations.

Learners' behavior could be further explored by comparing how individuals behave in different conditions, and how they describe themselves. In the interviews, many subjects described themselves as passive learners and they did not have much confidence in using English, in comparison with Cantonese. However, Ke's performance was not consistent with his low self-perception of himself as a language user. He expressed his ideas at length by using different strategies. He used a greater variety of syntax and lexis and more accurate grammar than Law, regardless of the provision of planning time (refer to Chapter Four - 3.4). His performance was better than his own account of it. In contrast, C, who described herself as a passive learner and is a diffident language user, was consistent in her self-perception and performance. The discrepancy between performance in the research and self-description before the research might be caused by two reasons. The first reason might be the effect of the experimental setting. Although the subjects did not have adequate knowledge about the rationale of the research, they felt that they were invited to speak as much as they could in the task. The second reason might be related to 'modesty'<sup>2</sup>, when they were asked to describe themselves. They would not present themselves in a high profile.

Skehan (1989) suggests matching the effectiveness of the materials and instruction with individual differences. I think that this helps teachers to understand their students' potential and to devise an appropriate pedagogy to develop it. In addition to this suggestion, I would think that matching the same or different materials and

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<sup>2</sup> Modest behavior is typical of Chinese students.

instructions with the different performances of the same learner in different social contexts. The latter might be more difficult to achieve than the former because it involves the teacher's careful observation of the discrepancy in performance.

#### 4.5 *Role of teachers*

4.1 and 4.3 have highlighted the role of teachers in tasks. The role of teachers shifts in accordance with the change of pedagogy. According to Widdowson (1990:119) there are two types of pedagogy. The first pedagogy is informed by the 'medium' view, which focuses on transmitting syntactic and semantic properties of the language and looking for ways to transmit them. The second pedagogy is informed by the 'mediation' view, which focuses on creating conditions for negotiation and engaging learners in activities designed to achieve purposeful outcomes by means of language. Exercises for practices are examples of the first pedagogy; and tasks which require learners to solve problems are examples of the second pedagogy. The teacher's task in the first view is to transmit. The teacher's task in the second view is to facilitate, and learners will draw on their past experience and procedures to develop their language. As Widdowson (1990:121) says,

'In the medium view, the learner is dependent on the teacher as a source of information. The teacher's task is to transmit, the learner's to receive what is transmitted. The process of transmission is seen as the same as the process of learning. ... But if one takes a mediation view, the matter is altogether different. Learners already know how to use language to mediate meaning. They can draw on their own experience and employ the same sort of procedures to achieve meaning in the new language as those they use to achieve meaning in the mother tongue. The learner experience is not now an interference to be eliminated but a resource to be exploited.

Accordingly, the learner assumes a more positive role. Learning is not now seen as conformity to the conditions of transmission controlled by the

teacher but as a self-generating process by the learners themselves.'

Although learners are given more responsibility in tasks or in terms of mediation view, teacher authority and pedagogy remain significant. An important insight from the research is that the teacher has to share the process of learning with learners; to guide and facilitate learning which is different from the approach which focuses on practice exercises. The teacher needs to play an active role in (1) selecting the topic for learners; (2) providing relevant linguistic expressions; (3) rephrasing instructions that are difficult for learners to comprehend and (4) giving feedback on performance. However, it does not mean that the teacher dominates, he or she should guide the learning process by taking account of his or her learners' needs and the teaching condition. In Widdowson's terms (1990:188), the teacher is not a 'professeur' but an 'enseignant', who exercises his or her professional knowledge for learners.

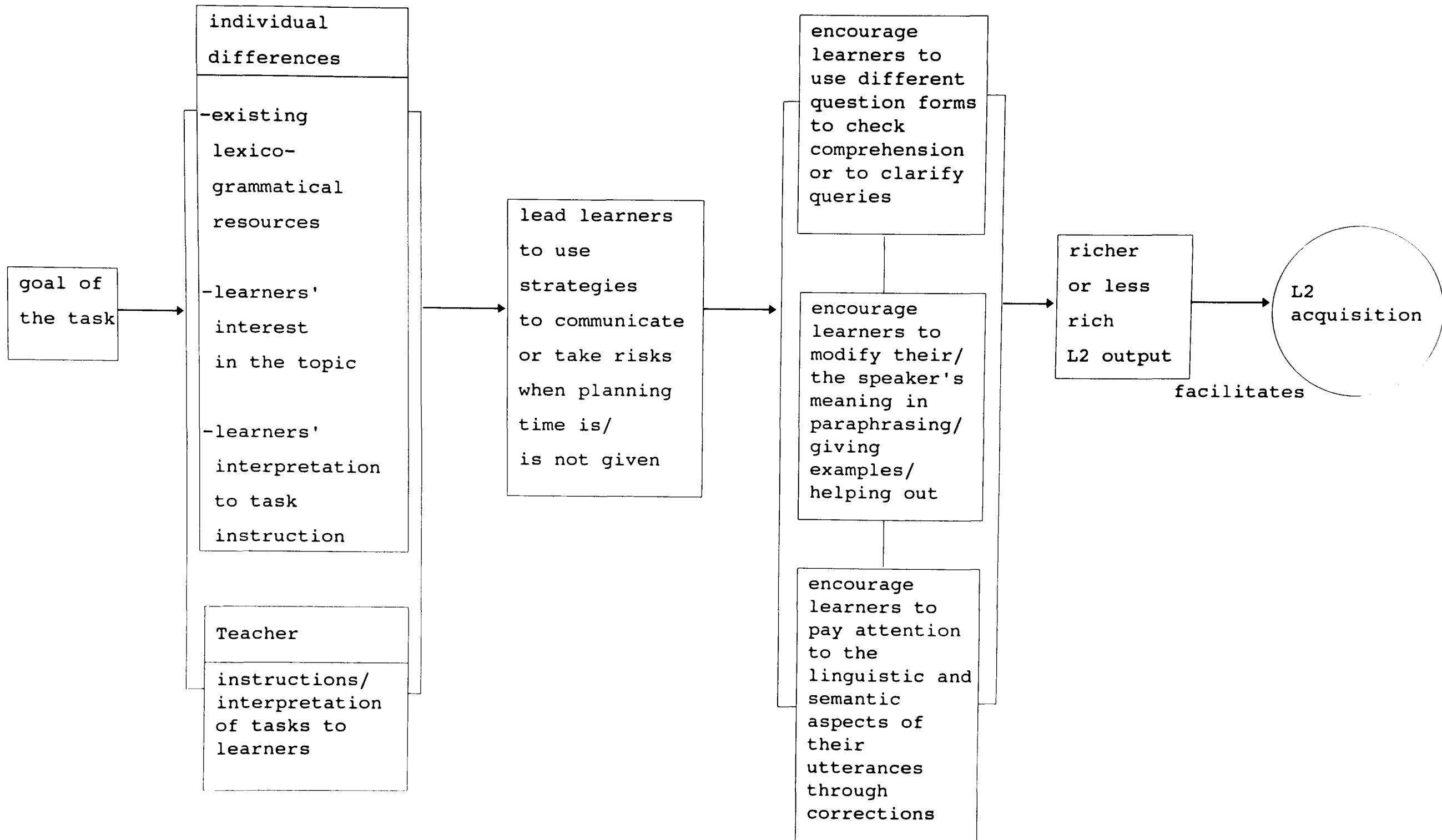
'For no matter how we view pedagogy, no matter how much initiative we believe should be allowed to the learner, the teacher as enseignant must surely retain an undiminished authority. The increase in learner-centred activity and collaborative work in the classroom does not mean that the teacher becomes less authoritative. He or she still has to contrive the required enabling conditions for learning, still has to monitor and guide progress.'

(Widdowson 1990:189)

After analyzing the data and discussing the relationships among strategies, tasks and planning time, I now attempt to link up their relationships in the following diagram how tasks lead to richer L2 output through the use of strategy and planning time. I think that the process of interaction, strategy use and L2 acquisition could be influenced by other factors which are related to individual learners' differences and the role of teachers. All these

factors will contribute to richer or less rich output, and will facilitate or hinder L2 acquisition.

## Diagram five



**Abstract of Chapter Five**

This chapter is divided into four sections :

- (1) Theoretical reflections on task-based learning and L2 acquisition,
- (2) Limitations of this study,
- (3) Practical reflections in the Hong Kong context, and
- (4) a final comment on the study.

In the first section, I examine the implications of this study for task-based learning theory, concerning the interdependent relationship between task types, planning time, strategy use and L2 output, and the role of teachers and individual learners in mediating task-based learning. This study also sheds some light on the way in which L2 acquisition could be explored from a discourse perspective and from an output approach, and on the need to examine the effects of planning time on syntactic development in task-based learning.

In the second section, I suggest some ways to improve the applicability of this study, from two main aspects : (1) research design and (2) data collection techniques.

In the third section, I make some pedagogic recommendations for Hong Kong L2 learning at university. I recommend using different task types in the classroom, but the focus should be on improving lexico-grammatical resources and not simply on the completion of the task. Tasks could be used in conjunction with varied length of planning time. Strategy use could be further encouraged by providing a context for manipulation.

Finally, I make a concluding remark about the study, summarizing the interdependent relationship between the contextual factors, the role of teachers and individual learners in mediating learning, and the role of output in L2 acquisition.

## Chapter Five

### Introduction

In the first section of this chapter, I will examine the implications of this study for task-based learning theory and applied linguistics. It appears that tasks may not automatically lead to more effective L2 acquisition or higher L2 output quality. L2 acquisition is affected not only by the goal of the task, but also by planning time and strategies. The three factors interact with one another and influence L2 output quality. More importantly, L2 acquisition can be mediated by the two social agents in the classroom : teachers and learners. Therefore, it may be a gross exaggeration to claim that task-based learning directly leads to higher L2 output quality and more effective L2 acquisition. In addition, this study also sheds some light on the possibility of exploring L2 acquisition from a discourse approach and from an output perspective, and on the need to study the effects of planning time on tasks.

In the second section, I suggest some ways to increase the degree of reliability and applicability of future studies by improving the research design and data collection techniques. In the third section, I recommend some pedagogic implications for Hong Kong L2 learning at university. In the last section, I make a concluding remark about this research.

#### (1) Theoretical Reflections

##### 1.1 *Implications of the study for task-based learning theory*

In this section, I examine the implications of this study for task-based learning theory by referring to

- (1) the interdependent relationship between task types, planning time, strategy use and L2 output, and
- (2) the role of individual differences and teachers in mediating task-based learning.

#### 1.1.1 *Interdependent relationship between task types, planning time, strategy use and L2 output*

I would like to reiterate the notion that task-based learning may not promote automatically higher L2 output quality (refer to Diagram 5 in Chapter Four). L2 output quality is affected not only by task types, particularly the goal of the task, but also by planning time and strategy use. The three factors are interdependent. They interact with one another and influence L2 output quality and L2 acquisition.

It seems that no single major factor can contribute directly to L2 acquisition. Task types, planning time and strategy use are all interdependent and interact in a subtle way. For instance, convergent tasks are likely to promote the use of clarification requests and checks, whereas divergent tasks are likely to promote the use of paraphrases and exemplifications. These strategies contribute to L2 output in different ways (refer to Chapter Four). Planning time, as well as task types and strategy use has effects on the use of lexis, the frequency of sentence structures used in different task types, and fluency (refer to Chapter Three). In view of all this, I would argue that the three factors are subtly interdependent in the sense that uses of strategies are the outcomes of task interactions, and planning time imposes a communicative pressure on learners to use their limited lexico-grammatical resources and on their patterns of strategy use in task interactions. However, learners' linguistic resources also influence L2 output quality (i.e. variety of sentence structures, range of lexis and strategies, fluency and accuracy).

### 1.1.2 *Role of individual differences and teachers in mediating task-based learning*

The three factors might impose some difficulties for learners in the learning process; however, the learning process could also be mediated by learners themselves. As discussed in Chapter Four, the discourse structures of the divergent task and the convergent task are not fixed, because the discussion is manipulated by learners. The divergent task may end with a compromise between the two interlocutors, while the convergent task may not always proceed in a spiral structure. Similarly, individual learners' lexico-grammatical resources may determine accuracy, syntactic variety and complexity, and lexical use. Learners mediate the learning process in a delicate manner. They adjust their existing lexico-grammatical resources and even their behavior according to the demands of the task, the interlocutor and timing constraints. For instance, most of the subjects in this study claim that they are passive and do not take much initiative to interact in English. However, their performance shows that in fact they take the initiative to talk and attempt to sustain the talk within the designated period of time, using several achievement strategies. The underlying causes leading to the discrepancy between their perception of their ability and their actual performance are worth pursuing. It is important for teachers to understand their students by finding out any such discrepancy, and to devise an appropriate pedagogy to develop their potential.

The second social agent who is indispensable from task-based learning is the teacher. The teacher should mediate task-based learning by selecting the topic, giving explicit instructions and relevant linguistic expressions before the task begins, and giving feedback (in language and ideas) after the task is completed. Teachers should observe and evaluate the tasks and task-based learning continuously.

I believe that the role of teachers should not be undermined through use of the process-learning approach. Teachers should not lie back and expect learners to use varied sentence structures and lexis accurately. It is important for teachers to observe and evaluate learners' performance continuously in order to better understand the theory and their learners' potential. It is also important for teachers to be aware of the effects of task types, planning time and strategy use on L2 output quality, and for them to observe how learners mediate their learning in interactions. In this research, planning time facilitated fluency but not accuracy and the use of a variety of sentence structures. Individual learners' grammatical resources and strategy use patterns can determine accuracy, and the use of a variety of sentence structures and of strategies. It follows that, teachers have the responsibility to mediate the gaps between task design and individual learners' differences, for example by providing linguistic feedback on accuracy and different linguistic expressions, whenever necessary. Nevertheless, the precise ways in which teachers mediate the gaps rests on their understanding of the approach. They have to recognise that any particular study of L2 acquisition and its implications in L2 classrooms only represents one version of reality. They have to adjust any approach according to their actual teaching situations (Widdowson 1996).

## *1.2 Implications of the study for L2 acquisition*

### *1.2.1 Exploring L2 acquisition from a discourse approach*

The outcome of the research has revealed that ethnographic study of the subjects' discourses enables a more detailed study of the use of language. Statistics could not show the discourses at a microscopic level. Quantitative research is inclined to provide a macro level of how much can be acquired,

for instance, in terms of frequency and figures. By contrast, qualitative research is inclined to give a micro level description of how language is used, for instance, in terms of the learners' discourses. The qualitative method of research has been widely used in analyzing classroom discourses, daily conversations and foreigner talks. It deserves more attention because it complements the risk of over simplifying the course of interaction. It enables an in-depth study of language use, documenting the complicated relationship between language use and language acquisition, and complementing the statistical approach.

#### 1.2.2 *Exploring L2 acquisition from an output perspective*

There have been a number of theories about classroom interaction and language learning. The input and the interaction hypotheses are receiving more attention and attract more research (e.g. Long 1983a, 1983b, 1983c etc.) than the output hypothesis. The first two hypotheses belong to the reception-based theories and the remaining hypotheses belong to the production-based theories. Swain (1985) and Schachter (1983, 1984, 1986 quoted in Pica et al 1991) argue for the contribution of pushed output in second or foreign language acquisition. As argued by Swain (1983, quoted in Brock 1986:55) in her paper reporting the results of a study of the acquisition of French by Canadian children in immersion classrooms in elementary schools, output may be an important factor in successful L2 acquisition. This is because learners can comprehend the input through attention to vocabulary or extralinguistic information. When learners have to produce the target language, they have to pay attention to the means of expression, namely the choice of syntax and lexical items, after negotiating meaning. This enables learners to convey the intended meaning successfully. Swain's argument stems from an assumption that learners will learn from their output when they produce the target language. However, there is not sufficient research to support the claim. As

revealed in the research analysis, task types provide relevant contexts for learners to produce output, and by adopting a risk-taking attitude, to stretch L2 syntactically and lexically; despite that, output quality is determined by many other factors as well.

I am not against the view that comprehensible input is necessary for second language acquisition. Children and learners simply could not produce anything meaningful even in L1 without any linguistic input. But the accumulated linguistic knowledge, knowledge of the world, and relevant communication and learning strategies require a context to test the hypotheses. Output which is comprehensible to interlocutors, in terms of speaking and writing, complements the notion of comprehensible input. The role of output is also significant in second language acquisition, as summarized in diagram five in Chapter Four.

### 1.2.3 *Exploring the effects of planning time on L2 syntactic development*

The results of this study show that planning time facilitates fluency as indicated by hesitations, but there is no guarantee that planning time will promote the use of more accurate grammar. Considering the range of sentence structures and the variety of lexis used by the 'planning' and the 'no planning' groups, similar types of sentence structures and lexis are used. However, the frequency of sixteen sentence structures used by the 'no planning' groups outnumbers use by the 'planning' groups in the divergent task. This does not happen very obviously in the convergent task. The frequency of sentence structures used by both the 'planning' and 'no planning' groups in the convergent task is more evenly distributed. It seems that planning time inhibits syntactic development in the divergent task but not in the convergent task. These controversial results appear to suggest the need to further explore the effects of planning time on L2 syntactic development of adult L2 learners, despite the fact that the

findings of most L2 research favour the use of planning time. Perhaps this factor works differently in different classroom cultures, and with different task types. The results of this study would be more generalizable if more research could investigate the relationship between planning time, task types and L2 syntactic development, particularly the way in which syntax is used by the same subject in the same task type under different timing conditions<sup>1</sup>. Such research would enable a comparison of the syntactic development of individual subjects to be made.

## **(2) Limitations of the study**

After examining theoretical reflections on task-based learning and applied linguistics, I am going to suggest some ways to increase the reliability and applicability of this study, from two main aspects : (1) research design and (2) data collection techniques.

### *2.1 Research design*

As stated in Chapter Three - (1) Rationale of research design, four factors were controlled. They were sex, age, level of English proficiency and interlocutor familiarity. In addition, a divergent and a convergent task were chosen, and planning time was controlled. The controlled factors interact with the two task types, and their interaction reveals one of the ways in which L2 could be acquired from learner-learner task-based interaction. The research results have shown how L2 is used in the divergent and the convergent tasks under different timing conditions. The research design also sheds some light on pedagogy. If teachers want to apply the same research design or to modify it in their daily teaching, they may be able to predict the learning process by referring to the research

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to reiterate that according to the research design of this study, the five pairs of subjects did not have an opportunity to experience the two different timing conditions. Their comments on planning time should be treated with caution.

results.

I would argue that the results of this study are more applicable to Hong Kong teaching situations than to those in other countries, because this study is about L2 learning of Hong Kong undergraduates. This does not mean that the results will lose their value when learners of another cultural background work on the two task types, or when the controlled variables are changed. There might be some systematic variability in the results when the research design is modified. For instance, the L2 output of 'A' grade learners in the two task types with or without planning time might be different from that of the subjects in this study. What is significant is that the results have, at least, made some predictions on the use of L2. For example, it is found that planning time appears to contribute to fluency in both tasks. However, planning time is not likely to produce syntactically more complex language, and it does not guarantee the use of more accurate L2. All of this enables teachers to better understand the inter-relationship between L2 output quality, the use of tasks, the use of planning time and strategies in communicative classrooms. It also helps teachers to consider some measures to facilitate task-based learning.

## 2.2 Data Collection Techniques

Besides research design, data collection technique is another crucial element that influences the applicability of the results. The data of this study was collected from three sources : learners' discourses, interviews and retrospections. Learners' discourses were videotaped and audiotaped. Interviews were done in the subjects' L1 because they preferred to be interviewed in their mother tongue. Retrospections were audiotaped while the subjects were watching their recorded performance. The data were turned into graphics through transcription and translation. These data collection processes are necessary in any

ethnographic and qualitative studies. Their absence, or relying on only one source (e.g. statistical data), might result in limited reliability and systematic variability. In fact, ethnographic and statistical data complement each other. In this section, I would like to discuss the ways in which the data collection techniques used in this study could support the applicability and reliability of the results.

*(i) Discourse transcription*

As argued by Cook (1990), there might be some problems in the process of transcription and translation due to the preference of analysts, for instance, in the selection of phonetic information that will be required for pragmatic interpretation. I am aware of the shortcomings, and I do not claim that the transcription and translation of the subjects' discourses present an absolutely accurate picture of the interaction. I do believe that the transcription can provide an overview of what has happened in the interaction, which is significant to the understanding of the thoughts of the subjects and which contributes to the analysis.

*(ii) Interview*

Reliability of data collection through interview relies on the researcher's interviewing skills. The interviews in this research were structured. The prepared questions prepared for the interviews compensated somewhat for my lack of sophisticated interviewing skills; however, they sometimes elicited rather brief responses (For information, see Appendix 1). So, a structured interview has its limitations.

'The nature of the interview will determine the type of data obtained. Specifically, more structured interviews will elicit brief and concise data in the form of checks, marks and short responses, while open interviews will

elicit generally more elaborated data in the form of impressions, descriptions and narratives obtained from interviews.'

(Seliger and Shohamy 1989:168)

In addition, since the interviews were conducted in Cantonese, the process of translation might create similar problems to that of transcription described previously. I am aware of the advantages and disadvantages of conducting the interviews in the subjects' mother tongue (refer to Chapter Three - 2.4). The translated data presented the thoughts of the subjects with my interpretation. Thus, the data should be treated with caution.

*(iii) Retrospection*

Retrospection is a useful tool to gain insights into the subject's mind. As suggested by Poulin et al (1987), reliability of retrospective data could be increased by the following six conditions: (1) immediate retrospection after task performance, (2) provision of contextual information for retrieval, (3) all information must have been heeded during task performance, (4) all information asked should relate to specific problems, (5) no leading questions and (6) the subjects should not be informed before task performance of the retrospection. I am aware of the disadvantages of each research tool and the unfavourable research conditions. I followed the first five conditions; however, the subjects had been told that they would watch their videotaped interaction with me before the research began. This, I think, might generate some side effects on the subjects' performance. They might be inclined to please me or guess what I wanted, during task performance and retrospection.

Moreover, the presence of a video camera also made some subjects nervous. To minimize nervousness and familiarize the subjects with the condition, I suggest arranging some activities in the room with the presence of

a video camera before research begins.

### **(3) Practical Reflections**

#### **3.1 *Pedagogic implications for L2 learning at university in Hong Kong***

This study has shed some light on the pedagogy which can be advised for Hong Kong L2 teachers teaching at university. In the following sections, I recommend some methods to Hong Kong L2 teachers at university, with a view to encouraging undergraduates to take an active role in their learning and to develop their lexico-grammatical resources.

##### **3.1.1 *Encouraging undergraduates to produce more L2 output and stretch lexico-grammatical resources***

Despite the fact that Hong Kong undergraduates have been learning English for over 13 years, there are limited opportunities for them to produce output in classrooms. They are used to teacher-centred and examination-oriented approaches. Therefore, I believe that one of the responsibilities of English teachers at university is to provide a context for undergraduates to use English interactively. The context needs to encourage them to stretch their existing lexico-grammatical resources in a meaningful way. But the question is how to achieve this aim. It seems that one of the possible ways is to use divergent and convergent tasks in conjunction with planning time, so that learners can have an opportunity to develop their linguistic resources and strategies to express themselves.

##### **3.1.2 *Using tasks in the classroom***

According to the results of this study, the two task types contribute to L2 development in different ways. Their contributions have been revealed through the analysis

of the subjects' strategies and the discourse structures of the tasks. As revealed in the analysis, different task types facilitate a similar range of syntax, but different degrees of syntactical complexity and lexical use, and different discourse structures. Length of turns in the convergent task is relatively shorter than that in the divergent task. Most of the turns in the convergent task are not as complex as those in the divergent task, in which fewer subordinate clauses are involved. Different lexical items are used in different tasks, and different discourse structures promote different discussion patterns. The convergent task is likely to promote a spiral structure of discussion, whereas the divergent task is likely to promote a linear one. This finding suggests that what Hong Kong English teachers at university could do is use the two task types frequently. More importantly, the focus of learning should not be on the completion of the task, but on the process in which undergraduates can enrich their lexical resources and can improve accuracy. In order to increase the linguistic competence of undergraduates in their process of learning, teachers can provide some relevant linguistic expressions before the task begins, and give feedback on the accurate use of L2 after the completion of the task.

### 3.1.3 *Manipulating planning time*

When Hong Kong English teachers manipulate task types, they should take into account the relationship between task types and planning time (refer to Chapter Five - 1.1.1). For instance, they can ask undergraduates to do a divergent task without any planning time so as to promote greater use of syntax (refer to Chapter Three - 3.4.3 and Chapter Four - 3.3).

Planning time, as validated in this study, is conducive to assisting the subjects to plan the content, prepare some useful expressions and express fluently; but there is no guarantee that planning time is conducive to

accuracy and complexity of L2. Despite this, it is still a pedagogic device which is worth manipulating by Hong Kong teachers, despite some controversial phenomena. For instance, planning time inhibits the frequency of use of some sentence structures. This is because many Hong Kong undergraduates are inclined to adopt a reticent behavior in L2 learning. However, it is necessary for them to prepare for impromptu communication, both for study and work. It is also necessary for them to attempt to stretch their existing lexico-grammatical resources. After all, they have been learning English for over 13 years. In view of all this, I recommend providing planning time for undergraduates so that they can try to take risks in order to produce better L2 output in the learning process. If undergraduates are asked to complete the task without any planning time, they may experience some difficulties in searching for ideas and expressing the ideas simultaneously. Providing planning time for undergraduates could help them to prepare the content and ideas, and could give them confidence in adopting a risk-taking attitude to the use of some complex sentence structures to talk about the topic in an accurate manner. This might ease the trade-off problem between accuracy and complexity of L2 in task-based learning, which has been pointed out by Skehan and Foster (1996). The length of planning time could be reduced progressively, according to the needs of the undergraduates. But the ultimate goal should be a spontaneous interaction with little or even without any planning time.

### 3.1.4 *Encouraging strategy use in context*

According to the analysis in this study, strategy use is closely related to the goal of the task when planning time is or is not given (refer to Diagram Five in Chapter Four). There seems to be a causal relationship between strategy use and the goal of the task. The convergent task promotes the use of checks and requests more frequently than the divergent task. The divergent task encourages

greater use of paraphrases and exemplifications than the convergent task. Moreover, strategies are also conducive to L2 acquisition in different ways. For instance, strategies of checks and requests encourage hearers to use different question forms to check comprehension or to clarify queries, to modify their or the speaker's meaning and to pay attention to the linguistic and semantic aspects of their or the speaker's utterances. The subjects indicated in the interview that they employed these strategies when they encountered problems in expressions in their L1. But there might be a quantitative difference in the use between L1 and L2. This is confirmed by a survey (Littlewood et al 1995) which showed that Hong Kong tertiary learners are not inclined to adopt communication strategies which they would normally use when they use their L1. Since undergraduates have the schematic knowledge of strategy use in their mother tongue and the knowledge of L2 (regardless of the fact that they might be good at some aspects of language use, for instance receptive skills), I believe that what undergraduates lack is neither strategies nor any overt instruction on strategy use. What undergraduates lack is a context to encourage them to use strategies for higher L2 output quality (refer to the functions of strategies discussed in Chapter Four - 2.2), and to alert them to their pattern of strategy use.

### 3.1.5 *Requiring a re-interpretation of teachers' and learners' roles and a re-distribution of responsibility between teachers and course-designers*

Encouraging undergraduates to interact and learn from interaction requires a re-interpretation of teachers' and learners' roles and a re-distribution of responsibility between teachers and course-designers, as well as between teachers and undergraduates.

In a communicative and process-oriented classroom, the traditional one-way didactic interaction is replaced by a

two-way mutual interaction. Teachers may have to play different roles : summarizing the main points, bestowing praise upon learners' comments and discussing the problem with them. The teacher's assistance is necessary. But the change of the role of teachers may lead to a change of classroom discourse pattern between teachers and undergraduates. This is because teachers no longer enjoy absolute power and control in interaction; but they are still in the position to introduce the target language in an interactive way. Although Hong Kong English teachers at university may be aware of this, they are inclined to fall back on one-way interaction or teachers' dominance in talk, due to the reticent behavior of undergraduates. Hong Kong English teachers at university should be encouraged to become more aware of the change in their roles and should be patient with the reticent behavior of undergraduates.

Similarly, undergraduates who are exposed to this process-learning environment may find that their previous reticent behavior is likely to put them in a disadvantageous learning position in a communicative classroom. They may soon be aware of the rule of the game, that is, that a low rate of participation may lead to fewer learning opportunities and little output. They may have to adjust their learning behavior, for instance from reticent to dynamic, in the new learning environment. The change in the interaction pattern between teachers and undergraduates may also facilitate the use of L2 by undergraduates.

The change in the teacher's role not only happens at the classroom level but also at the course design level. In HKU where I teach, some enhancement courses are project-based or skills-based. Course materials and teaching schedules are provided for teachers (refer to Chapter One - 6.4). Using divergent and convergent tasks more frequently in these enhancement courses might require teachers to adjust the existing materials, and maybe to re-schedule their teaching plans. Even if some tasks are provided by course-designers, they may not be suitable for

undergraduates of different levels of proficiency. Teachers may have to mediate the gap between materials and individual differences. It would be better if course-designers could allow more space in the courses for teachers to use different task types.

To conclude, the pedagogic implications are not absolute recommendations. Hong Kong English teachers at university have to consider these implications according to their actual teaching situations, classroom cultures and undergraduates' performance. They have to understand the limitations of using the two task types, strategy use and planning time in L2 learning. In the case of HKU where I teach, the majority of undergraduates obtained 'D' grades or above in the HKAL. They should be given ample opportunities to produce L2 and should be encouraged to stretch their existing lexico-grammatical resources. They are capable of using the L2, but they do not have enough confidence in using it. They are capable of expressing their ideas in L2, but with limited lexical resources and inaccurate grammar. I believe that it is through learners' manipulation of L2 that teachers could provide relevant linguistic input and correct grammar mistakes for better performance.

#### **(4) Final Comment**

In the final section of the thesis, I would like to summarize the four significant issues about task-based learning theory and L2 acquisition which are raised by the results of this study. The four issues are : the interdependent relationship between task types, strategy use and planning time, the role of output in L2 acquisition, and the role of teachers and individual learners' differences in task-based learning and L2 acquisition.

Firstly, the relationship between the three factors investigated in this study is interdependent. They all

interact with one another in the process of L2 acquisition, and contribute to the quality of L2 output in different ways. A task provides a context for learners to use L2, and different task types and goals are likely to promote different discourse structures and strategies, and a variety of sentence structures and lexis. The use of lexis and the frequency of sentence structures promoted by different task types seem to relate to planning time. The relationship of task types, strategy use and planning time is significant in L2 research, and no single factor can influence directly L2 acquisition.

Secondly, although the results of this study have led to the corollary that strategies and communicative tasks could facilitate more language output, I am not suggesting that output through interaction or negotiation is superior to input through interaction or negotiation in second language acquisition. The notion of output complements the notion of input in L2 acquisition. In the case of Hong Kong and other countries in which the teaching emphasis is on obtaining input, learners are still not able to produce accurate and varied L2 at the university level. What I recommend is that learners should be encouraged to make more output when they, like the subjects of the study, have been learning English for a number of years. In contrast, I do not advise pushing elementary language learners, particularly those whose learning environment is monolingual, to put the emphasis on output, because this will make them resort to avoidance or reduction strategies. Teachers or curriculum planners should take into account the stage where greater quantity of output can be encouraged.

Thirdly, the decision on when to encourage learners to produce output, and how learners have to produce it, seems to rest with teachers. Based on observation, teachers should organize activities and mediate learning in a gradual manner so as to encourage output. During the decision process, teachers should consider individual

learners' differences, the constraints of the teaching and learning environments (for instance, syllabus or examinations) and second language learning theory. I strongly believe that the role of the teacher is indispensable in communicative language teaching. Teachers cannot simply lie back and expect that learners can use varied syntax and lexis, and achieve high level of accuracy by themselves in tasks. Engaging learners in tasks is one of the alternative means to facilitate L2 acquisition and its value should not be exaggerated. There is a certain degree of learning autonomy; however, teachers should not shake off the responsibility of providing linguistic input (in syntax and lexis) and correcting language mistakes. Learners will acquire L2 more effectively in tasks with the assistance of teachers. In addition, teachers can better understand their learners' potential and language learning theories if they observe and investigate the effects of task-based teaching continuously. The significance of learners' learning autonomy and teachers' teaching responsibilities should be recognised by teachers and they should not follow task-based learning or process-learning method blindly.

Fourthly, the research analysis has also highlighted the role of individual differences. This is an interesting area for further research, and many researchers have investigated its influence on cognitive strategies and learning strategies (e.g. Oxford 1990). Researchers succeed in proposing some generalizations; however, as Skehan (1989) comments, the entire picture is still presented in pieces and has not been put together. It is not easy to generalize results from individual differences or learning behavior, because learning interacts with context. Context is one of the factors facilitating output, in spite of the fact that the quality and quantity of output lies in the hands of individual learners. Individual learners might mediate the learning process by adjusting their linguistic resources according to the demand of the interlocutor, the task or the teacher, the social context in which they are

interacting, time pressure on them and so on. The results of this research serve to remind teachers of the role of individual differences. When a teacher arranges tasks or gives instruction, he or she has to consider that role seriously.

Exploration of L2 language acquisition should pay more attention to the output of learners, and provide relevant input for them through a variety of methods, such as teachers' comments on learners' use of structure and lexis, or practice with more proficient peers if necessary. Output quality can be increased and improved by understanding and recognising the subtle relationship between strategies, planning time, and different task types in L2 acquisition, as well as the fact that individual learners can mediate their learning processes. Nevertheless, teachers or curriculum planners cannot follow the latest theoretical fashion blindly; they should consider the characteristic features of their teaching environments, learners and cultures. I strongly believe that communicative language teaching which stresses the learning process will benefit L2 acquisition if its merits and demerits are fully recognised by teachers and curriculum planners.

To conclude, I would like to summarize the main findings of this research.

#### *Relationship between communicative tasks and L2 output quality*

- the divergent and the convergent tasks are likely to promote different discourse structures, which may enable the subjects to experience the use of a variety of complex sentence structures and lexis in their interactions.
- discourse structure seems to be related to task goal;

however, it is hard to state categorically that there is a causal relationship between task goal and discourse structure.

- Individual subjects' speech styles, personality and language confidence may directly or indirectly influence the way they handle the discourse structure of the task.

*Relationship between communicative tasks, strategy use and L2 acquisition*

- communicative tasks and strategy use are inter-related. The goal of the task may motivate strategy use, which in turn influences L2 output quality and even the process of acquisition. Strategies of paraphrase, example giving, clarification request, comprehension check, confirmation check, helping out and correction can trigger more L2 output, and can provide space for the subjects to modify their intended meaning for better effects, which may consist of more variety of syntax, or more fluent L2. Requests and checks can also facilitate the use of different question forms.
- Individual subjects' risk-taking attitudes and even their speech styles may manipulate strategy use.

*Relationship between planning time and L2 acquisition*

- planning time enables the subjects to concentrate on the content and language. The results suggest that planning time appears to facilitate fluency and the use of a wide range of lexis, but it does not guarantee the use of accurate L2, the use of a wide range of strategies and sentence structures in the two communicative tasks.

*Relationship between communicative tasks, strategy use and planning time*

- The three factors are interdependent and interact with one another, and influence L2 output quality and L2 acquisition.

*Other factors influencing the use of L2 in the two communicative tasks*

- There are other factors influencing the use of L2 in the two communicative tasks, namely the topic of discussion, the subjects' limited linguistic ability and confidence, task instructions, individual differences and teachers.
- Individual differences and teachers seem to play a relatively significant role in mediating the process of acquisition. Teachers should take into account individual differences when they arrange tasks, choose topics or give instructions.

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## Appendices

**Appendix 1****Results of the Interviews**

The interviews were conducted in Cantonese (the subjects' mother tongue, but the responses were translated into English and were edited) as requested by the subjects. The interview consisted of three parts. The first part aimed to obtain more information about the subjects' personal feelings about language learning; the second part aimed to know more about the subjects' past language learning experiences; and the last part focused on their reflections on their L2 output in the tasks. The following sections report the subjects' responses.

**1. Part 1****The subject's personal feelings about language learning**

## 1. What kind of language learner do you think you are?

*Katherine*

Katherine regarded herself as a risk avoider and a good listener. She enjoyed listening to other students' ideas.

*Kelvin*

Kelvin regarded himself as both a risk taker and a risk avoider. His performance would change and vary with the requirement of the situation. If he was acquainted with the interlocutors, he would be willing to talk in English. If he did not know the interlocutors well, he preferred to remain quiet.

*Lin Sze*

Lin Sze preferred to remain quiet. She thought that she was sometimes a risk avoider but her behaviour depended on the nature of the discussion. If she knew

what to discuss, she would participate. In contrast, if she could not figure out the theme or the details of the discussion, she would not say anything.

#### *Daniel*

Daniel said he was not an active learner.

#### *Eugene*

Eugene had many ideas but he could not find the right words to express them. He described himself as 'rather passive in learning', and 'he usually listened'.

#### *Cathy*

Cathy considered herself to be a passive learner. She had some problems in articulating ideas and she sometimes could not think of the appropriate words to express herself. She was not willing to write very much.

#### *Alex*

Alex did not mind making mistakes in L1. But in L2, he was inclined to be conservative and was not very willing to try. He used to avoid using English but now he would like to grasp more opportunities to practise.

#### *Joanne*

Joanne described herself as both 'a risk avoider and a risk taker' in L1 and L2; and her attitude is subject to changes in different situations.

#### *Law Chi Kong*

He thought that before Lower Six, he was an avoider. But after lower six, he was more aggressive. Passivity was due to the pressure imposed on him to speak in front of people in the oral examination.

*Wendy*

Wendy described herself as 'a risk avoider, a good listener and a passive learner'.

**2. What will/won't you do when you anticipate a problem in expressing your ideas/opinions?**

(a) in L1

*Katherine*

Katherine tried to express her idea even though she had some difficulties in expressing it. If the interlocutor could not understand her idea, she would not persist.

*Kelvin*

Kelvin tried to sort out what he wanted to say before he made an utterance.

*Lin Sze*

Lin Sze tried her best to look for a substitute word or an appropriate description to bring out the meaning of the word. This might include switching to English if there was an appropriate term provided that she knew the English term. If a substitute word could not be found, she would give up her idea. If the meaning was known, she would look for a word with analogous meaning. If the discussion was conducted in Cantonese and she failed to find a substitute word, she would use an English term.

*Alex*

Alex would repeat the same idea several times so that the interlocutor could get the idea. Or he would use another means to express the idea.

*Joanne*

Joanne would use L2. Sometimes she used another means to express her idea. For example, if she did not want

the word 'tape recorder' she would say, 'that thing that records your voice.'

*Law Chi Kong*

Law would think of another word/expression immediately.

*Wendy*

Wendy attempted to use other words or expressions to express her ideas because she believed she had a wide range of vocabulary.

(b) in L2

*Katherine*

Katherine tried to make up the whole sentence that could represent her idea/opinion before she stated the idea/opinion in public. If it was her turn but she could not think of an idea, she would not paraphrase or repeat another interlocutor's idea. She insisted on stating or making her key points in incomplete sentences and hoped that the interlocutor(s) could get the key point.

*Kelvin*

Kelvin tried to make up the whole sentence that could represent his idea or opinion before he stated the idea or opinion in public. If it was his turn but he could not think of an idea, he would repeat or paraphrase what the interlocutor had just said and hoped that through the expansion of the other's idea, he could make clear what he wanted to say.

*Lin Sze*

Lin Sze would look for a substitute word or would use an appropriate description of the meaning of the word. If the discussion was conducted in English and everybody was discussing in English, she would not switch to L1. The ideas that she wanted to convey in

English were relatively fewer than those in L1, but she would try to convey as much as possible.

### *Daniel*

Daniel would use gestures to convey the meaning or to describe the characteristic feature of the word or the expression. He rarely distorted or cut the whole message. He would tried his best to express what he wanted to express.

### *Eugene*

Eugene avoided using the words or expressions that he was not familiar with. He used simple words and long sentences to express the intended meaning.

### *Cathy*

Cathy would avoid using the words or expressions that she was not familiar with. She would use simple words and long sentences to express the intended meaning, or alternative methods to convey the same meaning.

### *Joanne*

Joanne tried to describe the thing or the event.

### *Alex*

Alex might not say very much. He might avoid expressing the idea if he did not know how to do so.

### *Law Chi Kong*

Law said he could not think of an alternative word immediately and had to pause and search for a solution.

### *Wendy*

Wendy tried to explain and hoped that the interlocutor could understand. But she encountered difficulty in using alternative words/expressions because of her limited range of vocabulary.

3. How do you feel when you are speaking English in Hong Kong?

*Katherine*

Katherine did not feel much confidence in using English. She felt a bit uncomfortable, nervous and passive when she spoke English. There were some English-speaking students in Management studies. When they communicated with Katherine, she was happy. But in the meantime she was wondering what she should tell them, and was worried about her response. She did not want to expose her weaknesses in front of the others immediately. When she spoke English with Cantonese speakers such as with her classmates, she felt more comfortable.

*Kelvin*

Kelvin felt a bit uncomfortable and passive. But he did not feel that there would be a change of identity when using English in Hong Kong. The feeling of intimacy prevailed him when he spoke Cantonese.

*Lin Sze*

Lin Sze was not very willing to speak. She felt that she was forced to use English because the interlocutor was an English speaker.

*Daniel*

Daniel did not make any comment on this point.

*Eugene*

Eugene pointed out that he and his classmates were used to learning how to write well. Speaking activities were for examination purposes. He did not have much confidence in speaking. When he talked to English teachers in English, he did not feel his identity had changed.

*Cathy*

Cathy pointed out that learning English in Hong Kong was restricted to classrooms. She rarely used English outside classrooms to communicate. She did have some confidence in using English. She did not feel that her identity would be changed.

*Alex*

Alex rarely used English with peers. If English was used among peers, it was only a 'show-off'.

*Joanne*

When she used a whole expression in English with friends, she felt funny and considered it as an oral practice. But if she used English in the classroom, she did not have much confidence.

*Law Chi Kong*

The extent to which English was used by him in the classroom depended on the topic of discussion. He had confidence in discussing a topic that he was familiar with.

*Wendy*

Wendy had no confidence at all.

**4. Do you think you can express yourself more comfortably and eloquently in L1 than in L2? Why? Why not?**

*Katherine*

Katherine felt that ideas and feelings were more comfortably expressed in L1 than in L2. It was because L1 was the mother tongue and Cantonese was used everywhere in Hong Kong. But one might find it difficult to express all ideas in L1 because one might have an English term in mind and it was natural to say it.

*Kelvin*

Kelvin preferred to express his ideas and feelings in L1.

*Lin Sze*

She felt that ideas and feelings were more comfortably expressed in L1 than in L2, because the majority of Hong Kong people speak Cantonese. Only about 70 to 80 per cent of her intended meaning could be conveyed in L2.

*Daniel*

Daniel felt that ideas and feelings were more comfortably expressed in L1 than in L2.

*Eugene, Cathy, Alex and Joanne*

They all felt that ideas and feelings were more comfortably expressed in L1 than in L2.

*Law Chi Kong*

He voted for L1.

*Wendy*

Wendy preferred L1.

**5. What do you think you learn English for? Work? Study?***Kelvin*

Kelvin said English could be used for communication of feeling. But it was difficult to use outside the school.

*Katherine*

Katherine had not thought of the purpose of learning English. She did not know what it was for, because English was a compulsory subject and students were forced to learn it.

*Daniel*

He thought English was necessary for work and study. He sometimes conveyed his feelings in English in writing because he did not know how to express his feelings in Cantonese. He might use some English words to express his feelings in speaking as well.

*Law Chi Kong*

He thought he learnt to speak English for work. Sometimes he would use very simple English to communicate feelings.

**2. Part 2****The subject's previous language learning experiences****1. How would you describe your feelings about the English lessons you had at schools?***Katherine*

There were not many activities in junior forms. But there were some discussions in senior forms.

*Kelvin*

There were some language activities, and teachers provided them with some language gambits.

*Lin Sze*

Lin Sze said the English teacher did not teach well. The English teacher told the class to do some exercises and then checked the answers which could be found in the answer book. If there was a composition lesson, she would write a topic on the blackboard. Sometimes some classmates did not follow her instructions and she did not care about this. Lin Sze and her classmates were not given many chances to practise oral English except once in a while in F.7 to prepare for the oral part of the Advanced Level Examination, and once in F.6 before the final examination.

*Daniel*

Daniel said there were oral activities in senior forms. The aim of the oral activities was to prepare all students for the 'A' Level examination. Most of the time was spent on doing exercises. The focus was on writing, and oral activities were only practised a few times at the end of the term or before the examination. The teacher did not give much help in oral practices. The teacher only reminded them what to do and how to present better, or asked a group to interact in front of the class and the other students observed. Feedback from teachers about such aspects as vocabulary, pace of delivery, pronunciation and organization was limited.

*Eugene*

He did not receive a lot of encouragement from teachers. But one of his English teachers was an English native speaker and he was very nice to students. Eugene enjoyed talking to him in English and the teacher encouraged him to talk. But English was rarely used for communication among classmates.

*Cathy*

She said that the English teacher invited students to speak English for one or two days.

*Alex*

Alex said he and his classmates did not have many opportunities to role play or discuss except in Form 7 when they were preparing for the Advanced Level Examination.

*Joanne*

Joanne pointed out that she and her classmates did not have discussion or role-play activities except in Forms 6 and 7 when they were preparing for the Advanced Level Examination.

*Law Chi Kong*

Law said that his learning was very passive.

*Wendy*

Wendy said her past English learning was very examination-oriented.

**2. State some activities you did at school**

*Katherine*

The English teacher arranged some time for discussion because Katherine and her classmates were required to sit for an oral examination, which is one of the papers of the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination. They were given some topics for the discussion. Each time only one group would be asked to discuss in front of the class, and other classmates simply observed and gave comments. They used to have this kind of discussion activity in F.6 and F.7 in both Chinese Language and English Language classes because they had to prepare for the Chinese and English oral examinations of the 'A' Level Examination.

*Kelvin*

The English teacher asked one group to discuss in front of the class and the others sat around them and observed. The topics of discussion were similar to those in the 'A' Level examination. The English teacher also provided them with some useful linguistic expressions for transition, agreeing and disagreeing and so on. However, he had forgotten most of the expressions.

*Lin Sze*

Lin Sze started to have oral activities when she was in F.6. The whole class was divided into small groups and the English teacher distributed different discussion topics to them. Near the end of the

lesson, the teacher would choose one group and tell the group members to re-discuss the topic in front of the class. The setting was similar to that of the public examination. Others observed and gave comments. The English teacher also gave some comments, concerning how good every individual performance was or how well individual students spoke.

#### *Daniel*

Daniel said that most of the oral activities were taken from the study guide. The activities were quite similar to what he had done in the research; but they belonged to two categories : individual presentation and group interaction. For individual presentation, the classmates would be required to present the main theme of the text. For group interaction, the classmates would be required to talk about a theme. Daniel thought that English was necessary for study and work. He sometimes used English terms when he could not express his feeling in Cantonese. But he rarely talked with native speakers about personal feelings.

#### *Eugene*

Eugene said his English teacher gave them (him and his classmates) a topic and they talked about the topic for 5 minutes.

#### *Cathy*

Cathy said that there were role plays, debates and speech activities in school. She did a lot of writing activities.

#### *Alex*

Alex said there were oral practices for the 'A' Level Examination. The teacher usually asked Alex and his classmates to discuss in groups of four; however, the teacher did not give any feedback.

*Joanne*

Joanne did a lot of multiple choice exercises but had very few oral practices. When she was in junior forms, she and her classmates took turns to read out a passage. There were no lessons for oral activities. Some oral practices were arranged by the teacher only before the Advanced Level Examination. When the teacher was present, she and her classmates used English. When the teacher was not present, they would use Cantonese.

*Law Chi Kong*

He said he wrote about ten compositions a term but the teacher corrected them without explaining the mistakes to him. He and his classmates were not serious about oral practices.

*Wendy*

Wendy admitted that she adopted an examination-oriented attitude towards English learning. When the English teacher was present, she and her classmates would use English. When the English teacher was not present, she and her classmates would use fewer English expressions.

**3. How did your English teachers teach? Could you describe this? What language did they use?**

*Katherine*

In junior forms, English teachers used Cantonese. In senior forms, English teachers used English. For other subject teachers, they used Cantonese to explain the content but the terms were in English.

*Lin Sze*

In primary schools, she learnt English through textbooks and exercises. In secondary schools, she read English newspapers. English teachers used Cantonese. They did not teach well. The 'A' Level

English teacher did not teach in English. She told them (Lin Sze and her classmates) to do some exercises and then checked the answers with them.

*Daniel*

English teachers used English in senior forms but both Cantonese and English were used in junior forms.

*Eugene*

English teachers encouraged students to listen to radio and read more English books. But he and his classmates rarely took the advice seriously.

*Cathy*

English teachers encouraged students to read English newspapers and listen to radio. Once students were asked to listen to a radio news broadcast, jot down some points, and answer the questions.

*Alex*

In junior forms, English teachers used more Cantonese.  
In senior forms, they used English.

*Joanne*

In junior forms, English teachers used more Cantonese.  
In senior forms, they used English.

*Wendy*

English teachers talked all the time. They used English.

*Law Chi Kong*

He said that his mode of learning was very passive and routine. Before F. 3, there were tests and dictations on the sentence structures that had been taught. After F.3, teachers gave him and his classmates a lot of written exercises.

4. Do you think your language/subject teachers gave you a lot of chances to express your ideas, such as through activities/projects?

*Katherine*

Katherine said that there were limited chances for her and her classmates to express their ideas. She and her classmates had to discuss different topics in English because of the oral examination.

*Lin Sze*

Lin Sze said that there were insufficient chances for her and her classmates to express their ideas or to practice oral skills. There were very few oral practices for the 'A' Level Examination, and they attempted to discuss some topics once in F.6 before the final examination. There were no projects at all.

*Daniel*

Daniel said not many chances were given. There were some practices only before the examination, and he and his classmates tried to express their ideas only once at the end of the term.

*Cathy and Eugene*

Cathy and Eugene said that there were more practices in writing than in speaking.

*Alex and Joanne*

Alex and Joanne said there were not many oral activities.

*Joanne*

Joanne said there were not many oral activities.

*Wendy*

Wendy said there were no oral activities.

*Law Chi Kong*

Law said there were some oral practices for examinations. There were other conversation exchange activities on current affairs but the rate of participation was very low, usually less than 10 students each time.

**5. What language did you use for your activities in English Language classrooms? in other subject classrooms?**

*Katherine*

She used some English in English lessons, but Cantonese in other subjects.

*Kelvin*

He used some English in English lessons, but Cantonese in other subjects.

*Lin Sze*

She used some English in English oral lessons, but Cantonese in other English activities and in other subjects.

*Daniel*

He used English in English lessons in senior forms, but Cantonese in other subjects.

*Eugene*

Cantonese was used in English lessons in junior forms but English was the medium in English lessons in senior forms. An English teacher who taught him in Form 6 did not use Cantonese to explain some abstract or difficult concepts, even if classmates did not understand.

*Cathy*

English teachers used Cantonese in English lessons in junior forms, but English in senior forms. In the

case that the students could not understand some abstract or difficult concepts which had been explained in English several times, teachers would explain in Cantonese.

*Joanne*

She said that there were some discussion activities in other subjects such as ethics, but not in English lessons.

*Alex*

He rarely encountered discussions or role-plays because he studied Science subjects. No discussion was required.

### 3. Part 3

#### **The subjects' reflections on their L2 output in the tasks**

1. Do you feel that the two tasks are natural interactions for you? Could you imagine them happening in real life?

*Group 1*

They said they had encountered both task types in the English for Academic Communication course and Management Studies tutorials. But in real life, there might not be ample opportunities for them to argue or agree on a few things.

*Group 2*

They said they had encountered both task types in English courses and tutorials. The divergent task was easier than the convergent task because they could discuss anything about the topic although there was a slight digression in the middle of the discussion. There was not much to say in the convergent task. Their creativity was restricted by the nature of the

task which required them to agree on three pieces of advice.

*Group 3*

They said similar task types had been encountered in the A- level examination. They had also come across both task types in real life when they had to discuss an issue with friends who had different views.

*Group 4*

They said they had to do a lot of discussions in real life. For instance, to discuss some issues about hall management. But the discussions were mainly in L1. They only used English to discuss and come to an agreement in tutorials or in English enhancement classes.

*Group 5*

They had to discuss and suggest some solutions when they had to make presentations for different projects.

**2. Is your behaviour in these two tasks different from your behaviour in real discussion and problem-solving situations? If yes, state the differences.**

*Groups 1 and 2*

Groups 1 and 2 could not see any differences between real discussion and problem-solving situations.

*Group 3*

They felt rather nervous when they had to talk in a research-related context. But Eugene said the discussions in his hall were more serious than that in this context. Hallmates reacted very quickly, both in Cantonese and English. There were not many interruptions in English in formal contexts. He thought it was not caused by the rule of speaking or politeness; it might be due to the fact that people needed time to formulate ideas.

*Group 4*

They said no time was given in the research for planning and preparation. The mind was engaged with the content of the text and relevant linguistic expressions. There was no time to think about the detail and how to elaborate. It would be better if more planning time, say a few minutes, were given. Otherwise, the choice of words might not be good and appropriate.

*Group 5*

They said their behaviour in real and experimental settings was different. In an experimental setting, one could not ask the interlocutor what he/she wanted to do. Interaction and expressions would be very formal. But in a natural situation, they would speak in a less formal way.

**3. Are you happy with the way you worked in the two tasks? If not, what are the reasons?**

*Group 1*

They were happy with the way they worked in the 2 tasks. But they felt that there were some confusions in the divergent task. This was because they emphasized different issues : Katherine emphasized the central issue but Kelvin emphasized cultural differences.

*Group 2*

They were happy with the way they worked in the 2 tasks. Although they digressed from the topic in the middle of the discussion, they could return to the right track. Daniel had thought of three pieces of advice immediately after reading the text but Lin Sze could only think of one. Daniel suggested the first two points. But when they came to the last point, Daniel chose to wait for Lin Sze to suggest something.

*Group 3*

The two tasks were carried out in a way they were happy with.

*Group 4*

The two tasks were carried out 95% how they thought they should be.

*Group 5*

The two tasks were carried out in a way that they were happy with.

**4. Overall Comments after the two tasks.***Group 1*

Katherine said she could express herself better in the second attempt. But Kelvin did not think so, particularly in the divergent task. He did not have much to say because the topic could not stimulate him to say much. Katherine noted that the arguments were too one-sided and sometimes she found it difficult to argue.

*Group 2*

No comment.

*Group 3*

They thought they could respond with fewer hesitations if more planning time was given. They felt that too many hesitations disrupted their fluency. They also felt that planning time enabled them to plan what to say and prepare some useful expressions. For example, in the planning stage, Eugene put down 'small things' first but it was changed to 'small conflicts'. Having said that, they would use the expressions they were familiar with. They said that the tasks (discussion and compromise) were useful because they might have to

discuss or negotiate with potential clients in the workplace. The tasks also trained them how to think.

*Group 4*

They felt that if the five minutes planning time was taken away, they would not perform well. They said that if they agreed with each other, there would be no problems; but if they had to argue, they had to do their best. Planning time helped them prepare the content and useful expressions in English; otherwise, it was more difficult to argue. They used almost all the ideas that had been planned, but sometimes they simply said whatever came to their minds. For instance, the word 'rigorously' in the discussion. Sometimes some of the points could not be mentioned because the interlocutor did not raise them. For example, the point about 'cultural difference' was not discussed.

*Group 5*

The provision of planning time did not make any difference because discussion was dependent upon the topic. If the topic was interesting and stimulating, they would talk more.

**Appendix 2****Retrospections**

Retrospections were done after the completion of the task. The subjects had been told that they were invited to comment on their behaviour, for instance, the reason for a long pause or the reason for paraphrasing the speaker's utterance.

The subjects' retrospections are reported in the following sections : (1) and (2). Retrospections of some subjects were missing because they did not make any comments on their behaviour.

**1. Convergent Task**

Group 1	
Dialogue	Retrospection
(T18) 1. Ke : consider, consider to employ a more effective advertising company.	I wanted to correct him. 'Consider' is a more appropriate term
(T13-4) 2. Ke : er I think it's quite a way to Ka : It is not it's found that it's not em proportion er not ...	I corrected him because I wanted him to say in the way I preferred.
Group 2	
(T1-4) 1. D : I think the problem	

<p>is that the use of budget is too much in this first few months.</p> <p>Lin : Mhm</p> <p>D : Is it?</p> <p>Lin : No, em (pause : 6.84 seconds)</p>	<p>I was not thinking of anything. I was waiting for him to continue so that was why the pause was so long. I expected him to go on and thought he had not finished his message.</p>
<p>(T5-8)</p> <p>2. D : Emمم er may be may be Mr. Kwok should em (pause : 1.01 seconds) firstly take a look on the candidates budget on the the em advertising in the whole year.</p> <p>Lin : Mhm</p> <p>D : so to judge whether it will continue or not.</p> <p>Lin : Mhm er (pause : 2.70 seconds)</p>	<p>I did not know what I should say. I was not thinking carefully.</p>

<p>(T15)</p> <p>3. D : or em em make another budget. I if if if he want (pause : 1.84 seconds) in advertising or any other places.</p>	<p>I was searching for a more appropriate word. The word that I used was okay but I was searching for alternative expressions.</p>
<p>(T21-22)</p> <p>4. D : That that that we have compromised is that em to to look er er year plan and and adjust the budget, and what's the other advice?</p> <p>Lin : er (pause : 3.33 seconds)</p>	<p>I paused because he asked me for another piece of advice and I was thinking hard.</p>
<p>(T23-24)</p> <p>5. D : Aham do a helper or a monitor is necessary for for this marketing besides xxx (unclear words)?</p> <p>Lin: Em (pause : 1.56 seconds) may be er but who will be the person?</p>	<p>I paused again because I was wondering whether it was possible to employ a monitor.</p>

<p>(T26)</p> <p>6. Lin :Emm so you suggest that our next step will be em er find someone er who in charge of the accounting department to em monitor em em the present er work.</p>	<p>I intended to check his meaning and my comprehension.</p>
<p>(T29-31)</p> <p>7. D : What's the last one?</p> <p>Lin : The last one.</p> <p>D : Mhm (pause : 3.77 seconds)</p>	<p>D had an idea but he wanted to seek her advice.</p>
<p>(T39)</p> <p>8. Lin :Mhm but I think that is em xxx [unclear words] er em can em give him the emm er budget er every time er er ...</p>	<p>The use of 'er' and 'em' was due to word search. I was looking for an appropriate word.</p>
<p>(T44-47)</p> <p>9. D : What between er what to set em among xxx [unclear word] among xxx [unclear word] to some extent that if xxx [unclear word] spend over this amount, he should report the expenditure. But er under just like a</p>	

<p>few hundred or not</p> <p>Lin : Mhm</p> <p>D : That it is not necessary to reca to report it.</p> <p>Lin : Mhm (pause : 3.20 seconds) Then em you have just said ...</p>	<p>I was wondering how I could respond to D's question.</p>
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<p>Group 3</p>	
<p>(T1)</p> <p>1. C : ... advertising on em on on to towards this young lady executive (pause : 1.65 seconds). Then it can reduce its cost ...</p>	<p>I knew that there was something wrong with grammar.</p>
<p>(T2)</p> <p>2. E : because the budget is (pause : 1.29 seconds) is carefully planned ... because it is the responsibility of the advertising company to carry out the advertisement within the budget.</p>	<p>I wanted to elaborate, to explain the reason but I expressed the whole idea bit by bit.</p>
<p>(T4)</p> <p>3. E : ... express the idea very (pause : 1.64 seconds) not not and they and actually they don't</p>	<p>I was not certain of the word and that was why I started again.</p>

<p>(T2-3)</p> <p>4. E : ... Because it is the responsibility of the advertising company to carry out the advertisement within the budget.</p> <p>(pause : 1.95 seconds)</p> <p>C : What is the disadvantage of your advice?</p>	<p>I had no intention of checking. But I was curious about the disadvantage of his advice.</p>
<p>(T2)</p> <p>5. E : ... Because it is the responsibility of the advertising company to carry out the advertisement within the budget.</p> <p>(pause : 1.95 seconds)</p>	<p>I was waiting for the second advice but she did not say it.</p>
<p>(T5)</p> <p>6. C : ah [murmuring the word 'difficult'] em (pause : 4.31 seconds) em (pause : 2.31 seconds). Let me introduce my second piece of advice. I would like to advise Mr. Kwok to have a look of the planning. Em it seems to me</p>	<p>I repeated the same idea several times. This is similar to what I usually do in Cantonese.</p>

<p>that lack of understanding of this planning since he is very concerned with (pause : 1.29 seconds) this advertising programme em but he he have em any em he have haven't any understanding of it he will be very difficult to understand this .... but em it is very difficult for him to change what happened within this planning. This has gone and all this becomes past. He cannot make any changes to it.</p>	
<p>(T8)</p> <p>7. E : and the xxx [unclear word] and the advantage is that em they know exactly both of each other each of them and they know exactly er what what they are doing now.</p>	<p>I wanted to be grammatically correct.</p>

<p>(T13)</p> <p>8. C : Erm (pause : 2.63 seconds) your advantage is to er have more understanding</p>	<p>I still wanted to clarify what the advantages were before I moved on.</p>
<p>(T42-43)</p> <p>9. E : they don't want to C : they want to they want advertising company want to em make any many of advertising in many er places many advertisement but at at the xxx [unclear words] time the the company may not be able to provide this huge amount.</p>	<p>I wanted to include an additional point. I understood her message. I interrupted because I thought E misinterpreted my idea.</p>

<p>Group 4</p>	
<p>(T21)</p> <p>1. A : Mhm, yeah, do you mean that you give another maximum budget to to xxx [unclear word]?</p>	<p>I wanted to check my comprehension.</p>
<p>(T26)</p> <p>2. J : That is my our first advice. A : Is it er the (pause : 2.10 seconds) J : er</p>	

A : suggest the company to give a proposal before in advance and including the result they expect?	I was checking my comprehension and wanted to have it confirmed.
(T45) 3. A : Mhm (pause : 1.05 seconds) er (pause : 3.51 seconds) But do you think that the 25% left.	I had suggested increasing 5% and asking the director for more money. But J did not say anything about it, neither did I. I was thinking about the last piece of advice.

## 2. Divergent Task

Group 2	
Dialogue	Retrospection
(T4)  1. Lin : Then if Mr. Ho em sou sourvenir em er collect all his er sourvenir and give to others then who will em er then em before Mr. Ho can give the sourvenir to er the one he em...	I gave up because I had forgotten what to say.
(T8)  2. Lin : Er Then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy substitute for example some sh er er another kind of shield em to substitute the one or the ones given to the guest. Then why can	I paraphrased D's idea to confirm what he had said before.
Group 3	
(T9)  1. E : ... But er Mr. Ho decision is basically to correct correct the situ the situation and improve them.	I meant to improve the internal situation.

(T10)	<p>2. C : Yes. Em (Pause : 14.72 seconds)</p> <p>I did not understand his point. I was thinking what I should do next. I agreed with Mr. Ho's decision. I did not want to rebut and I had no idea/ point left. So I did not know what to say.</p>
Group 5	
(T6)	<p>1. W : But I think Mr. Ho's decision is the most effective one because as we can see it, many people do many things on other people that can affect that people, that person but er the person cannot understand what, er, I mean, er A and B, A may have some, er, wrong things on but B is very unhappy but A cannot understand what, what , what is the feeling of B.</p> <p>I paraphrased and elaborated my idea because I found the first sentence very vague.</p>

<p>(T4)</p> <p>2. W : ... but er in this situation I think it's it's not a , I mean in this situation er Mr. Ho can take take his decision to let Mr. Smith know his feeling through this way because er the situation is not an urgent.</p>	<p>I wanted to elaborate.</p>
<p>(T15)</p> <p>3. Law : That means that, em, we regard, we disregard the whether er it's right or wrong but we just to see whether it's effective way to</p>	<p>I wished to check my comprehension and have it confirmed.</p>
<p>(T17)</p> <p>4. Law : That means that er you put your emotions to someone else who will put you in, er, who may, er ...</p>	<p>I wished to check my comprehension and have it confirmed.</p>

**Appendix 3****Interview Questions****1. Part 1**

**Knowing more about the subjects' personal feeling about language learning.**

1. What kind of language learner do you think you are?
2. What will/won't you do when you anticipate a problem in expressing your ideas/opinions?
  - a. in L1
  - b. in L2
3. How do you feel when you are speaking English?
4. Do you think you can express yourself more comfortably and eloquently in L1 than in L2? Why? Why not?
5. What do you think you learn English for? Work? Study?

**2. Part 2**

**Knowing more about the subjects' previous language learning experiences**

1. How would you describe your feelings about the English lessons you had at schools?
2. State some activities you did at schools.
3. How did your English teachers teach? Could you describe this? What language did they use?
4. Do you think your language/subject teachers gave you a lot of chances to express your ideas, such as through activities/ projects?
5. What language did you use for your activities in English language classrooms? in other subject classrooms?

**Part 3****Knowing more about the subjects' reflections on their L2 output in the tasks**

1. Do you feel that the two tasks are natural interactions for you? Could you imagine them happening in real life?
2. Is your behaviour in these two tasks different from your behaviour in real discussion and problem-solving situations? If yes, state the differences.
3. Are you happy with the way you worked in the two tasks? If not, what are the reasons?
4. Overall comments after the two tasks.

**Appendix 4****Convergent Task****Rosy Fashion Company**

Rosy Fashion Company was set up in Hong Kong 50 years ago. In the 1960s and 70s, it was one of the Hong Kong's most prestigious fashion companies. However, sales fell in the 1980s because it failed to adapt to its customers' changing needs. The company decided to change its image three years ago and has started heavy promotion of its new fashion lines targeted at young women executives. The Marketing Department has since developed a high profile. The Managing Director, although willing to support aggressive marketing campaigns, still wants to maintain a conservative attitude towards budgetary control.

**Problem**

Kwok Lee-ho, Marketing Director found that the problem had first appeared four months ago. While carrying out a routine inspection of the monthly printout showing budgets and expenditure, he had noticed that advertising expenditure had been 15 per cent above the average monthly budget.

When the figures for the second month were available, Kwok had checked on the newly appointed Advertising Company. The company had spent a full third of the total advertising budget in only two months. Following the third month's figures, the advertising company had spent half of the budget. Kwok expressed his concern. Now, the fourth month's figures showed that the Advertising Department had spent 75 per cent of its annual budget. Kwok knew that he would have to tackle the situation, but how?

**(for groups with no planning time)**

Discuss the situation and make **three pieces of advice** (both of you agree). Your advice could be (a) short term or (b) long term.

You will be given 3 minutes to read the text and 10 minutes to discuss with your partner.

X      X      X      X      X      X      X      X      X

**(for groups with planning time)**

Discuss the situation and make **three pieces of advice** (both of you agree). Your advice could be (a) short term or (b) long term.

You will be given 3 minutes to read the text and 5 minutes for preparation. Feel free to make any notes for the discussion. You will discuss with your partner for 10 minutes.

**Divergent task****Community Education Commission**

The Community Education Commission is a non-profit-making organisation funded by the government for educating the public on civic responsibilities and social ethics. It has a multicultural workforce.

**Incident**

Mr. Smith, Programme Director of a major community education programme, selected some shields as souvenirs for the guests of honour of the programme. His assistant obtained two dozen of shields from the Staff Relations Manager's assistant. The Staff Relations Manager, Mr. Ho, was annoyed when she found that the stock of the shields was used up and he had not been informed beforehand. Mr. Ho asked his assistant to inform Mr. Smith not to give the shields to local guests and had to return them to the department. Mr. Smith was angry and phoned Mr. Ho. Mr. Ho was not in the office.

'Tell Mr. Ho that there is no way to stop me giving out the souvenirs because I have already sent out some of them. I don't want some of the guests to go away with souvenirs while the others get nothing. Tell Mr. Ho to call me before doing anything so foolish !' said Mr. Smith

Mr. Ho was very unhappy, however, he finally changed his decision. He sent his agreement to Mr. Smith.

**(for groups with no planning time)**

You think that Mr. Ho's decision is wrong. You need to support your arguments.

You will be given 3 minutes to read the text and 10 minutes to complete the task.

---

You think that Mr. Ho's decision is correct. You need to support your arguments.

You will be given 3 minutes to read the text and 10 minutes to complete the task.

X      X      X      X      X      X      X      X      X      X

**(for groups with planning time)**

You think that Mr. Ho's decision is wrong. Support your arguments.

You will be given 3 minutes to read the text and 5 minutes for preparation. Feel free to make any notes for the discussion. You will discuss with your partner for 10 minutes.

You think that Mr. Ho's decision is correct. Think of some reasons to argue with your partner.

You will be given 3 minutes to read the text and 5 minutes for preparation. Feel free to make any notes for the discussion. You will discuss with your partner for 10 minutes.

## Appendix 5

## More examples to illustrate the discourse structure of the divergent task

(group 2)

(T4) Lin : Then if Mr. Ho em sou sourvenir em will given to someone else, and then you suddenly em er collect all his er souvenir and give to others then who will em er then em before Mr. Ho can give the souvenir to er ... Then what can I do? ... An then I you em you tell me that er I can get some em some substitute. But I promise to give them a shield. Then how can I collect them back? **(disagreed with D's suggestion and questioned its feasibility)**

(T5) D : I think the problem is that em Mr. Ho is angry.... But I think it it is not very difficult to to to buy an any substitute for the sourvenir just like shield or er some glad. **(explained and reiterated the idea)**

(group 3)

(T7) E : But er (pause : 1.81 seconds) I think in your point you you have say er the better understanding or communication is very crucial. But em (pause : 2.52 seconds) but in this case er (pause : 1.60 seconds) this is erm it may it may not not it may not have very good understanding between the staff... Aha (pause : 2.39 seconds) Do you understand? I don't know. **(paraphrased C's idea and then disagreed)**

(T8) C : Mh, the situation is if Mr. Ho and is if Mr. Ho and (pause : 1.18 seconds) the er didn't give out the such excuse, it may not it may not offend the manager. Then the situation em may not be as work as as worse as (pause : 1.63 seconds) and this one. **(explained her argument)**

(T9) E : Yes, em yes I agree that both of them have some (pause : 1.19 seconds) communication problem. But em (pause : 1.44 seconds) but they but we are arguing is that Mr. Ho decision. But er Mr. Ho decision is basically to correct correct the situ the situation and improve them. (pause : 3.14 seconds) Mhm. **(agreed with C to some extent and restated his view)**

(group 5)

(T2) W : O.K. er I think Mr Ho's with , er, decision is correct because er the beginning, Miss Chan, the assistant of Mr. Smith sent a message to the assistant of Mr. Ho about the sourvenir, about the request of ...  
**(made a statement)**

(T3) Law : O.K. That's the point, I think. It may be, it may be right and on the surface. But when we look at it, it may be not the case. First of all, em, Mr. Tai's em do, first of all, Mr. Ho's ... **(agreed with W to some extent and then stated his view)**

(T4) W : But I thin, er, we can, when we face a situation or task, we have different ways to treat the task or to treat the situation. Mr. Ho's decision is to, er, you, you can say that he is taking a revenge, but , er, in this situation, I think it's it's not a I mean, in this situation, er Mr. Ho can take this, take his decision to let Mr. Smith know his feeling through his way because, er, the situation is not an urgent. **(disagreed with Law and made the argument)**

Lin questioned D's idea and D had to explain; E did not go with C; and Law did not accept W's idea.

## Appendix 6

## More examples to illustrate the discourse structure of the convergent task

(group 1)

(T3) Ke : Okay I I I agree with you that the budget should be enlarged because the the exiting budget can is in fact is very s-m-a-l-l and accordings to the case we given, the budget should [emphasized] allow flexibility, that is it can be enlarged as as soon as possible because the existing budget is very small, so the first advice that can be given to Mr. Kwok is that the budget should be enlarged so that there is no problem and se-cond-ly inspection of the sales should al should also be taken out because (pause : 2.24 seconds) if we advertise we cannot know the effect is is obvious or not obvious so the sales is the is the most (pause : 1.56 seconds) enlightening evidence so we have to took look at the close side and see if the sales does [emphasized] increase due to the advertising effect we can ad advertise more but if the sales does not ins increase considerably so we can cut down some money on advertising. **(agreed with Ka and summarized the advice)**

(T4) Ka : Mm that is we can we can link em the sales amount and the advertising budget together. That is when the sales increase we can increase more adv advertising and er the other way round. **(agreed and paraphrased the main point)**

(T5) Ke : that is the budget will er allow flexibility **(paraphrased and checked)**

(T6) Ka : Mhm **(acknowledged)**

(T8) Ka : emm emm that's all for me and how about you? **(asked for another suggestion)**

(T9) Ke : em I think the attitude of the of the employers may not may not be good because when they spend they just throw too much money without thinking about the consequences and so I think em a department should be set up to to monitor the money being throw out to advertising because some money will just thrown into advertising but there is no effect so we have to make sure that when we throw each coin into advertisement we have to make sure that the effect is constructive and obvious. Em this should be the main point.

Because when we just spend money on it, it er the sales may not increase because the the strength of the competitors may be very strong. So we have to be very careful when we have to spend money so we have to monitor or inspect the the way the money spend money so that each this will maximize our profit. What do you think? **(stated her opinion)**

(T10) Ke : Y-e-s [elaborated] em **(agreed and attempted to made a point)**

(T11) Ka : so er if er you have er some points, er the budget can be settled it for flexibility, er we have to inspect the sales and to and to have a clos closer look how people spend it amount of money so that we can make sure that er we can have a good return and do not just to waste money in it. **(summarized the idea)**

x x x x x x x x x

(T17) Ka : yes I see your point and you say that you say that er the growth might go with some advertising company but [emphasized] if we can employ an im more effective ad advertising company which provides er effective advertisement then the grow will increase more and more, and this what we want is to earn much more money and of course this is one this can be one of my advice to to employ more effective advertising company. (pause : 2.68 seconds) So the point is we have to allow flexibility to inspect the sales to to see the sales increase or decrease and to adjust the amount of advertisements and thirdly to to monitor the money the our employees spend on so that we can make sure that the amo money is spent worthwhile and and the last point we can employ an effective advertise **(paraphrased the main point of the previous discussion for checking purpose)**

(T18) Ke : consider , consider to employ a more effective advertising company **(suggested Ka to use the word 'consider')**

(T19) Ka : so that the company will provide good and efficient advertisement that to help us to earn much more money. **(continued the summary)**

(T20) Ka : mhm **(acknowledged)**

(T21) Ke : that is our whole point. **(completed the discussion)**

In group 1, Ka summarized the first advice in turn 4, the second advice in turn 9 and the third advice in turn 11. Ke also made a summary of the three pieces of advice in turn 17 (a total of 21 turns).

(group 2)

(T19) D : Aha, I I I think adjusting the budget is possible but the the first first step which do is look (slowing down) look the planning that no more money will be given if er breaking of budget again. That that will gaurantee the the er process or procedure of accounting and I think em em starting en this project will will will bring em a profitable year but erm if (pause : 2.02 sec.) there any suggestion about? (made a suggestion and invited Lin to make another suggestion)

(T20) Lin : Ahmm (hesitated)

(T21) D : that that that we have compromised is that Em to to look er er year plan and and adjust the budget, and what's the other advice? (summarized the first piece of advice and asked Lin for the second one)

x x x x x x x x

(T25) D : em I think er some someone in the accounting department should should be should be on this em pro-ject to to monitor the use of money, I I think xxx is not not er very concerned about. (made a suggestion)

(T26) Lin : Emm so em you suggest that our next step will be em er find someone er who in charge of the accounting department to em monitor em em the present er work. (paraphrased D's suggestion in order to check comprehension)

(T27) D : yeah, I I think. (admitted)

(T28) Lin : Em then er (hesitated)

(T29) D : What's the last one? (asked for an opinion)

x x x x x x x x

(T58) D : be'cos it would only be useful once xxx has over the budget. So I think er no no extra personal (stated his opinion)

(T59) Lin : extra xxx okay (repeated D's words and showed agreement)

(T60) Lin : erm (pause : 1.81 sec.), okay we can just appoint someone to be the coordinator. (summarized)

(T61) D : okay. (agreed)

(T62) Lin : mhmm. (acknowledged)

In group 2, D summarized the three pieces of advice in turns 21, 26 and 60.

(group 5)

(T17) Law : Mhm I agree with you. Let us let us er summarize the points arise from the past to now. First advice is that in short term, we cut off the advertising price and the cost. And then afterwards we conduct an investigation em what is what problems and what products should we provide so as to meet the needs of the customers. And for the promotion technique, we can change it a bit. May be we can have a demonstration or an exhibition so that er other companies can have a look and got the products they want. (summarized the three pieces of advice)

(T28) W : Shall we make three pieces of advice? (clarified with Law)

(T29) Law : Yes, I think we have we have made. Let's sum up it. (confirmed and attempted to summarize)

(T30) W : But only two? (clarified with Law again)

(T31) Law : Two? 2 Oh. You summarize first. I don't know why there is two. (asked W to summarize)

(laugh)

(T32) Law : I think three. (insisted on discussing three pieces of advice)

(T33) W : The first one is cut down to cut down the er advertising cost and the second one is to have a research. (summarized the two pieces of advice)

(T34) Law : And the third one I think is to use another kind of promotion (stated the third piece of advice)

(T35) W : Ah (exclaimed)

(T36) Law : is that using advertisement. (completed T34)

(T37) W : Ah Ah Ah but I treat it I I I put it into the  
(mentioned there was a misunderstanding in the  
discussion)

In group 5, Law summarized the first two pieces of advice in turn 17 (a total of 40) and he repeated the same strategy in turn 29.

## Appendix 7

## Students' Drafts

Group 1 - Convergent Task

With planning time

Kelvin

Kelvin

conservative

1 month

A. E ↑

 $\frac{1}{3}$ 

(a) control budget nicely → going

(b) healthy

flexibility

conservative →  
 turn one new ready in the task.

① Advise them not to spend so much money

② Budget flexibility

③ Force them

Inspection

J

sales

(e)  
sales ↑ adr

Group 1 - Divergent Task

With planning time

Kelvin

① submissive

Mr Smith

② don't quibble

Mr Ho

③ concessions

Dampen  
morale

① Quibble → no advantage to both side  
both side will suffer

Embarrass  
friendly  
working  
efficiency

② Peaceful / Harmoniously

~~③~~ Make concessions and should consider feelings

Not aggressive

Cultural difference

1. so  
2. os  
3. bc  
4. st

right

It is not advisable

Constructive

Cultural  
difference

Lack of  
communication

Destructive

Just stand firm  
is not enough.

Meeting to  
communicate.

## Group 5 - Divergent Task

Mr. Ho

Mr. Ho had not been informed before hand  
Mr. Smith → left.

Mr. Ho although unhappy / pass consent to Li

point =

- ↳ no direct confrontation to Mr. Smith
- As Mr. Smith had already decided and informed and if so  
let him do that
- avoid conflicts
- next time want to be informed first.
- Cultural Conflicts / Way of doing things is different  
except others
- Compromise first

Stork has  
used  
up  
problems  
come  
make  
harmony  
of  
the co.

## Divergent Task

Community Education Commission (CEC)  
 8820 Chin  
 12<sup>th</sup> Bri  
 2-3<sup>rd</sup> U.S.  
 Mr. Smith  
 Mr. Ho: Shivalini - local guest  
 Discrepancy  
 already sent out  
 Mr. Smith  
 destroy, the sample

## Divergent Task

Excuse: given out to local guests  
 Actually out of stock  
 actual  
 → Give him the reason.  
~~not~~ Mr. <sup>Tai</sup> Ho, his assistant inform him

## Appendix 8

**Table 1**  
**Convergent Task**

items	Group 1 (with planning time)	Group 2 (no planning time)	Group 3 (with planning time)	Group 4 (with planning time)	Group 5 (no planning time)	Average (1-5)
total length of discussion	6.46 mins 406.sec.	9.59 mins 599 sec.	10 mins 600 sec.	6.35 mins 395 sec.	7.13 mins 433 sec.	7.906 mins 486.6 sec.
total no. of words	984	1142	855	815	907	940.6
total no. of turns	21	62	46	58	43	46
total no. of pauses	7	18	30	27	10	18.4
total no. of hesitations	42	144	67	18	23	58.8
Average length of each turn						
a. words per turn	46.86	18.42	19.24	14.05	21.09	23.93
b. seconds per turn	19.33	9.66 sec.	13.95 sec.	6.81sec.	10.31 sec.	12.01
Total length of pause	13 sec.	52.59 sec.	59.41 sec.	55.83 sec.	22.93 sec.	40.75 sec.
Average length of each pause	1.86 sec.	2.92 sec.	1.98 sec.	2.07 sec.	2.293 sec.	2.23 sec.

**Table 2**  
**Divergent Task**

items	Group 1 (with planning time)	Group 2 (no planning time)	Group 3 (with planning time)	Group 4 (with planning time)	Group 5 (no planning time)	Average (1-5)
total length of discussion	7 mins	9.25 mins	8.8 mins	7.13 mins	12 mins	8.84 mins
	420 sec.	565 sec.	528 sec.	433 sec.	720 sec.	533.2 sec.
total no. of words	980	1175	526	973	1273	985.4
total no. of turns	24	32	14	43	21	26.8
total no. of pauses	1	10	16	9	0	7.2
total no. of hesitations	32	119	41	31	47	54
Average length of each turn a. words per turn b. seconds per turn						
	40.83 17.5 sec.	37.03 17.66 sec.	37.57 37.71 sec.	22.63 10.07 sec.	60.62 36 sec.	39.74 23.79 sec.
Total length of pauses	1.52 sec.	39.5 sec.	48.48 sec.	48.15 sec.	0	27.53 sec.
Average length of each pause	1.52 sec.	3.95 sec.	3.03 sec.	5.35 sec.	0	2.77 sec.

**Table 3**

**Total length and the average length of discussion, number of words, turns pauses and hesitations:  
The groups with and without the provision of planning time in the divergent and the convergent tasks**

	Convergent		Divergent	
	(groups with planning time)	(groups without planning time)	(groups with planning time)	(groups without planning time)
Average length of discussion	467 sec.	516 sec.	460.33 sec.	642.5 sec.
Average no. of words	884.67	1024.5	826.33	1224
Average no. of turns	41.67	52.5	27	26.5
Average no. of pauses	21.33	14	8.67	5
Average no. of hesitations	42.33	83.50	34.67	83
Average length of each turn				
a. words per turn	26.72	19.76	33.68	48.83
b. sec. per turn	13.36 sec.	9.99 sec.	21.76 sec.	26.83 sec.

**Appendix 9****Communication Strategies****Convergent Task****Language switch**

(group 1)

1. Ka : it is not it's found that it's not em proportion  
 er not positively proportion ( =<sup>u</sup> ) then it is  
 not worthy em to employ this company and may be  
 we have to change a a more effective and  
 advertising company.

(group 5)

1&2. Law : Oh never mind.  
 W : ( 嘴 ), okay.  
 Law : Okay, I think there will be no more discussion.  
 W : ( 嘴 ).  
 Law : from this point.

3. W : (pause : 4.73 seconds) I think cost of  
 advertising is too high and we must to cut off  
 to cut the price of the ( =<sup>u</sup> ) the price of  
 advertisement.

**Message abandonment**

(group 2)

1. D : ... and I think em em starting em this project  
 will will will bring em a profitable year but  
erm if (pause : 2.02 seconds). Is there any  
 suggestion?

(group 3)

1. E : disadvantage, em (pause : 1.43 seconds) but  
 actually er (pause : 2.23 seconds) er especially  
 in Hong Kong, the advertising company er like to  
 (pause : 2.09 seconds) express the idea very  
 (pause : 1.64 seconds) not not and they and  
 actually they don't want the company to control  
 that.

2. C : ... he will be very difficult to understand this  
 the real situation and (pause : 1.81 seconds)  
 ths and within the plan they sh em the budget  
 the budget set is er maybe erm fully explained  
 em which aspect should be used and xxx (unclear  
 words) effect.

(group 4)

1. A : You don't think increase the budget will  
 increase the xxx (unclear words) for them?  
 J : [ Yes  
 A : [ just in  
 J : It's not practical (pause : 1.93 seconds)

**Comprehension check****(group 2)**

1. Lin : Emm so you suggest that our next step will be em er find someone er who in charge of the accounting department monitor em em the present er work.

D : Yeah, I I think.

**(group 3)**

1. C : Your you advice like my second advice but xxx (unclear words) combining combined together that is er to increase the communication and understanding of

E : Mhm

C : each other?

E : Yeah.

**(group 4)**

1. J : Er because you cannot ad adjust the effect only in a few months. You if you can er use up all the budget in only few months but the result is great, this is this is okay I think.

A : Mhm, Yeah, do you mean you give another maximum budget to to xxx?

J : No, no, but just an and to give and to pleasurable them. To want the advertising company to give us a more concrete plan of their advertising.

2. A : I agree with you, that is I I I the first advice of mine is also about er (pause : 2.57 seconds) I suggest Mr. Kwok to (pause : 1.15 seconds) to have the proposal of the advertising company about what will be [about what will be]

J : And the estimated [result I think].

A : Mhm

J : That is my our first advice.

A : Is it er the (pause : 2.10 seconds)

J : er

A : suggest the company to give a proposal before in advance and including the result they expect?

J : Yes.

3. J : It means it has done something. There there must be some some return to our company first I think. But that 25 % it depends on how effective that advertising company. It's it's their job. If you say that you use all my money and I continue, and you don't have money to give me so I cannot help you, but this is not a reason I think.

A : You don't think increase the budget will increase the xxx for them?

J : [ Yes.

4. A : That means er if the company wants to spend any money,  
 J : Mh  
 A : er he should they should (pause : 1.51 seconds)  
 get the approval from the Mr. Kwok  
 J : Yes okay.  
 A : before . Aha,  
 (pause : 1.13 seconds)  
 A : Er (pause : 1.92 seconds)  
 J : That will be the second advice?  
 A : Yeah and then the last one, do you have any opinion?

(group 5)

1. W : It costs less... or we can use er other other  
 method to promote our (pause : 1.16 seconds)  
 promote our goods.  
 Law : Yes, such as introduce this to other boutiques?  
 and and talk send letters to other companies and  
 so on and so forth?  
 W : Maybe. About the research, I think we can use  
 2. W : That means invite other companies similar  
 company com similar ... at that time.  
 Law : That means competitors?  
 W : You can see you can treat them as a competitor  
 when ...

### Confirmation check

(group 2)

1. D : What's the last one?  
 Lin : the last one  
 D : Mhm (pause : 3.77 sec.)  
 2. D : I think the problem is that the use of budget is  
 too much in this first few months  
 Lin : mhm  
 D : Is it?  
 Lin : No. em (pause : 6.84 sec.)

(group 3)

1. C : Then what is our our disadvantage?  
 E : Disadvantage?  
 C : Ssss Strategy.  
 2. E : Er (pause : 2.26 sec.) actually (pause : 1.56  
 sec.) just just I have mentioned. Em the  
 manpower of the advertising company may not may  
 not enough to explain the whole process because  
 the the people at the ads advertising company  
 have their own idea  
 C : Em what is the disadvantage of your advice?  
 E : disadvantage? em (pause : 1.43 sec.) but  
 actually er (pause : 2.23 sec.) er especially in  
 Hong Kong, the advertising company er like to  
 (pause : 2.09 sec.) express the idea very (pause  
 : 1.64 sec.) not not and they and actually they

don't want the company to control that. Em and I think it is very difficult to (pause : 1.76 sec.) to control the budget just like the proposed by the marketing department.

## (group 4)

1. A : [Do you think  
J : [But have to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the advice.  
A : Aha (pause : 1.95 seconds) advantages and disadvantages the  
J : the advantages and disadvantages of the advice.
2. J : And Mr. Kwok has a conservative positive attitude, it is not very good for him (pause : 2.56 seconds). And my third advice, what's that?  
(pause : 1.84 seconds)  
A : the third third advice?  
J : We will hire another advertising company [giggled].  
(pause : 2.45 seconds)

## (group 5)

1. Law : [ Any other  
W : [ Shall we make three pieces of advice?  
Law : Yes, I think we have we have made. Let's sum up it.  
W : But only two?  
Law : Two? Oh. You summarize first. I don't know why there is two.

**Clarification request**

## (group 2)

1. D : Aham, do a helper or a monitor is necessary for for this marketing besides xxx [unclear words]?  
Lin : Em (pause : 1.56 seconds) may be er but who will be the person?  
D : Em I think er some someone in the accounting department should be should be on this em project to to monitor the use of the money. I I think xxx [unclear words] is not not er very concerned about.
2. D : Do you think em a communicator  
Lin : Mhm  
D : between Mr. Kwok and xxx [unclear words] is necessary?  
Lin : Mhm, why?  
D : Em because em M-r. Kwok only only er looks into the budget or the project er it among but er I think it's too late for xxx to advice since em most can most er procedure or process or campaign has been launched. So em if there is a mon communicator or [emphasized] there is a - more [emphasized] frequent regular meeting between them is - better.

3. D : if if erm erm we we set a coordinator to represent Mr. Kwok  
 Li : Mhm  
 D : and to judge to judge whether xxx should launch the campaign or not once once he spend *more* (emphasized) than the budget.  
 Lin: mhm, er but who is the one?  
 D : em maybe maybe em maybe some executive, marketing or or or the Mr. Kwok appoint people

4. Lin: Mhm (pause : 3.20 sec.). Then em you have just said (quick) to find a co-ordinator and then what is the work of the co-ordinator?  
 D : er to to to be more more c-o-n-f-i-d-e-n-t, I think Mr. Kwok should should appoint someone in the company that familiar with the erm with the executive process or or the the structure or the nature of the company that will be useful as the coordinator or the communicator.

5. Lin: er (pause : 1.33 sec.) but xxx emmmm should have their own work, then mhm how can they do [slow] this extra- work?  
 D : I don't think [slow] the workload is so much.  
 Lin: aha mhm

(group 3)

1. E : So em my my first advice is the the Mr. Kwok em the marketing manager should express the concern about xxx advertising company and because em he he is the main controller of the ['the' is emphasized] of the whole market xxx and he should know er the com the whole company should not wholly dependent on the on the advertising company and and more importantly em Mr. Kwok should not like that interrupt and disturb the whole budget because the budget is (pause : 1.29 sec.) is carefully planned and they should not em add some they should not the advertising company should not ask them to add the budget. Because it is the responsibility of the advertising company to carry out the advertisement within the budget.  
 (pause : 1.95 sec.)

C : Em what is the disadvantage of your advice?  
 E : disadvantage em (pause : 1.43 sec.) but actually er (pause : 2.23 sec.) er especially in Hong Kong, the advertising company er like to (pause : 2.09 sec.) express the idea very (pause : 1.64 sec.) not not and they and actually they don't want the company to control that. Em and I think it is very difficult to (pause : 1.76 sec.) to control the budget just like the proposed by the marketing department.

2. E : I think (pause : 1.56 sec.) person should should come xx more communicate more frequent  
 C : Then what is our our disadvantage?  
 E : Disadvantage?  
 C : Ssss Strategy.  
 E : Er (pause : 2.26 sec.) actually (pause : 1.56 sec.) just just I have mentioned. Em the manpower of the advertising company may not may not enough to explain the whole process because the the people at the ads advertising company have their own idea

(group 5)

1. W : I haven't consider this part.  
 Law : So I don't consider this as a good point.  
 W : Okay (pause : 3.87 seconds)  
 Law : [ Any other  
 W : [ Shall we make three pieces of advice?  
 Law : Yes, I think we have we have made. Let's sum up it.

### Paraphrase

#### Self-paraphrase

(group 1)

1&2. Ke : Okay I I I agree with you that the budget should be enlarged because the the exiting budget can is in fact is very s-m-a-l-l and accordings to the case we given, the budget should [emphasized] allow flexibility, that is it can be enlarged as as soon as possible because the existing budget is very small, so the first advice that can be given to Mr. Kwok is that the budget should be enlarged so that there is no problem and se-cond-ly inspection of the sales should al should also be taken out because (pause : 2.24 seconds) if we advertise we cannot know the effect is is obvious or not obvious so the sales is the is the most (pause : 1.56 second) enlightening evidence so we have to took [swallowed] look at the close side and see if the sales does [emphasized] increase due to the advertising effect we can ad advertise more but if the sales does not ins increase considerably so we can cut down some money on advertising.

3. Ka : Em this should be the main point. Because when we just spend money on it, it er the sales may not increase because the the strength of the competitors may be very strong. So we have to be very careful when we have to spend money so we have to monitor or inspect the the way the money spend money so that each this will maximize our profit. What do you think?

Ke : Y-e-s [extended] em

Ka : so er if er you have er some points, er the budget can be settled it for flexibility, er we

have to inspect the sales and to and to have a clos closer look how people spend it amount of money so that we can make sure that er we can have a good return and do not just to waste money in it.

## (group 3)

1. C : Erm (pause : 2.63 sec.) Your advantage is to er have more understanding

E : Not more understanding but the real situation you know em the marketing department is not the only customer, the advertising company they should they (pause : 1.01 sec.) they will not send the whole time on how to explain explain the the processes

C : Mhh

E : the projects (pause : 2.05 sec.) to the [slowed down] marketing.

C : emm I think since em they want to er to keep every customer tey may like to provide the best service to them and I think they will er need er em send a present person to xxx er to Mr. Kwok

E : But I think in this situation because it is er I think extremely over budget

C : xxx

E : I think (pause : 1.56 sec.) person should should come xx more communicate more frequent

C : Then what is our our disadvantage?

E : Disadvantage?

C : Ssss Strategy.

E : Er (pause : 2.26 sec.) actually (pause : 1.56 sec.) just just I have mentioned. Em the manpower of the advertising company may not may not enough to explain the whole process because the the people at the ads advertising company have their own idea

C : aha

## (group 4)

1. A : Aha, and then the second one (pause : 2.27 seconds). I suggest that er although there is a proposal given to Mr. Ho in advance, I suggest Mr. Kwok has the advertising to (pause : 1.66 seconds) stop them from using any money.

J : Of course.

A : That means er if the company wants to spend any money,

J : Mh

A : er he should they should (pause : 1.51 seconds) get the approval from the Mr. Kwok

J : Yes okay.

2. A : Yes, (pause : 1.99 seconds) the two advices we have discussed is for the short term only. It quite impossible to terminate is advertising company up up till now but er for the next year, you may consult another advertising company because

J : [ but you may not have the money.

A : for the next year. That is the next financial year. You can hire consult another advertising company to see whether their their planning of advertise advertisement can be *more effective* than this one. (pause : 2.34 seconds) That means the third advice of us is to em (pause : 1.38 seconds) to (pause : 1.27 seconds) see (pause : 1.88 seconds) other to see there is advertising company is *more effective* than this one.

3. J : Er because you cannot ad adjust the effect only in a few months. You if you can er use up all the budget in only few months but the result is great, this is this is okay I think.

A : Mhm, Yeah, do you mean you give another maximum budget to to xxx?

J : No, no, but just an and to give and to pleasurable them. To want the advertising company to give us a more concrete plan of their advertising.

(group 5)

1. W : May be. About the research I think we can use some we can employ not using not use our own staff or may be may be we can employ some part time workers such as the er (pause : 1.68 seconds) undergraduates in university or some part time workers from the secondary school or the housewife. It may cost much lower.

Law : But however, we should consider one point is the training cost for these workers. Since they do not may be have not have not so much er background experience, it may cost *money* and also *time* to train them in order to become a good researcher in in for the investigation. And it may cost too much.

W : I mean that about in investigation *part*, we should use our own staff to investigate and an analysis our result of the research. But er when we go when we conducting a research, we should em employ some other part-time workers for us to go to the may be

2. W : er (pause: 1.16 seconds) the last advice [slowing down] I want to mention is that, we can have an open house. That means invite others companies, similar company com similar company who come to our company and see what and have a visit maybe. Er may be we can promote our products to them at that time.

**Other-paraphrase**

(group 1)

1. Ke : em I think the attitude of the of the employers may not may not be good because when they spend they just throw too much money without thinking about the consequences and so I think em a department should be set up to to monitor the money being throw out to advertising because some money will just thrown into advertising but there is no effect so we have to make sure that when we throw each coin into advertisement we have to make sure that the effect is constructive [mispronounced] and obvious. Em this should be the main point. Because when we just spend money on it, it er the sales may not increase because the the strength of the competitors may be very strong. So we have to be very careful when we have to spend money so we have to monitor or inspect the the way the money spend money so that each this will maximize our profit. What do you think?

2. Ke : yes er may be the sales grows er with the advertisement but em (pause : 2.11 seconds) but em yes I mean that yea the sales might grow up with the advertisement but em if we (slow down) employ em a more em efficient er advertising company that it produces er more quality advertisements maybe [emphasized] the sales will grow more.

Ka : yes I see your point and you say that you say that er the growth might go with some advertising company but [emphasized] if we can employ an im more effective ad advertising company which provides er effective advertisement then the grow will increase more and more, and this what we want is to earn much more money and of course this is one this can be one of my advice to to employ more effective advertising company. (pause : 2.68 seconds) So the point is we have to allow flexibility to inspect the sales to to see the sales increase or decrease and to adjust the amount of advertisements and thirdly to to monitor the money the our employees spend on so that we can make sure that the amo money is spent worthwhilely and and the last point we can employ an effective advertise

(group 3)

1. E : and the xxx and the advantages is that em they know exactly both of each other each of them and they know exactly er what what they are doing now. Em I think the advertising company is the is the custom er oh sorry I think the marketing department is the customer of the advertising company and and [slowed down] the

Marketing department should know exactly what what the services being provided.

C : Your your advice like my second advice but xxx combining combined together that is er to increase the communication and understanding of

E : Mhm

C : each other?

E : Yeah.

(group 2)

1. D : Aha, I I I think adjusting the budget is possible but the the first first step which do is look [slowing down] look the planning that no more money will be given if er breaking of budget again. That that will guarantee the the er process or procedure of accounting and I think em em starting en this project will will will bring em a profitable year but erm if (pause : 2.02 sec.) there any suggestion about?

Lin: Ahmm

D : that that that we have compromised is that Em to to look er er year plan and and adjust the budget, and what's the other advice?

2. D : what between er what to set em among xxx among xxx to some extent that if xxx spend over this amount, he should report the expenditure. But er under just like a few hundred or not

Lin: mh

D : that [emphasized] it is not necessary to reca to report it.

Lin: Mhm (pause : 3.20 sec.). Then em you have just said [quick] to find a co-ordinator and then what is the work of the co-ordinator?

**other correction**

(group 1)

1. Ke : ... and the last point we can employ an effective advertise

Ka : consider consider to employ a more effective advertising company.

Ke : so that the company will provide good and efficient advertisement that to ehlp us to earn much more money.

(group 3)

1. C : Erm (pause : 2.63 seconds) your advantage is to have more understanding

E : not more understanding but the real situation you know em the marketing department is not the only customer...

2. C : The advertising company may want to er to em do many thing em.

E : they don't want to

C : they want, advertising company want to em make any many ad advertising in many er places but many advertisement but ...

### Helping out

#### (group 4)

1. A : ... about what will be [about what will be  
 J : [the estimated result I think.  
 A : Mhm  
 J : That is my first advice.

#### (group 5)

1. W : May be we can er okay the er your suggestion of the research is very useful. May be we can er (pause : 2.24 seconds) we can see the point of the advertising. We can use the we can use the advertising in a [slowing down] lower lower proportion or in a lower budget that means that em (giggled)  
 Law : It costs less.  
 W : It costs less. We we put a little proportion of our budget in the advertising or we can use er other other method to promote our (pause : 1.16 seconds) s promote our goods.

2. W : No, I mean that about in investigation part, we should use our own staff to investigate and an analysis our result of the research. But er when we go when we conducting a research, we should em employ some other part-time workers for us to go to the may be  
 Law : distributing?  
 W : Ha, may be distributing the questionnaire er so so such this untech, use less technique swork.

### Interruption/Overlapping

#### (group 1)

1. Ka : er I think it's quite a good wa- y to  
 Ke : it is not it's found that it's not em proportion er not positively proportion law (= <sup>正</sup> <sub>反</sub> <sup>比</sup> <sub>比</sub>), then it is not worthy em to employ this company and may be we have to change a a more effective ad advertising company.

2. Ka : ... so that we can make sure that the amo money is spent worthwhilely and and the last point we can employ on an effective advertise  
 Ke : consider, consider to employ a more effective advertising company.  
 Ka : so that the company will provide good and efficient advertisement that to help us to earn much more money.

(group 3)

1&2. E : they don't want to  
 C : they want ['want' is emphasized] advertising company want to em make any many ad advertising in many er places many advertisement but at at the xxx time the the company may not be able to provide this huge amount.  
 E : Em I think that  
 C : we will xxx get to compromise.  
 E : And I thinks em (pause : 1.91 sec.) the advertising company should should make er reponsible to the marketing.

(group 4)

1. A : Do you think  
 J : [But have to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the advice.  
 A : Aha (pause : 1.95 seconds) advantages and disadvantages the

2. A : About 70 % and and I don't know what what will be happen but [ xxx  
 J : [ I think I think it's not bad if the result is good.  
 A : Aha

3. A : I agree with you, that is I I I the first advice of mine is also about er (pause : 2.57 seconds) I suggest Mr. Kwok to (pause : 1.15 seconds) to have the proposal of the advertising company about what will be [about what will be  
 J : [And the estimated result I think.  
 A : Mhm  
 J : That is my our first advice.

4. A : Mhm (pause : 1.05 seconds) er (pause : 3.51 seconds) But do you think that the 25 % left can afford the adver advertising expenditure in the company  
 J : [ But he has already spend 75 %  
 A : [ in next month?

5. A : You don't think increase the budget will increase the xxx for them  
 J : [ Yes.  
 A : [ just in  
 J : It's not practical.

6. A : Yes, (pause : 1.99 seconds) the two advices we have discussed is for the short term only. It quite impossible to terminate is advertising company up up till now but er for the next year, you may consult another advertising company because  
 J : [ but you may not have the money.

(group 5)

1. Law: So I don't consider this as a good point.
- W : Okay (pause : 3.87 seconds)
- Law: [ Any other
- W : [ Shall we make three pieces of advice?

### **Exemplification**

(Group 2)

1. Lin: er, then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy some er substitutes for example some sh er er another kind of shield em to substitute the one er the ones given to the guest.

**Appendix 10****Communication Strategies :****Divergent Task****Interruption**

(group 1)

1. Ke : But the main case is that the main problem is the lack of communication and I think they should sit down and to find to find the best solution but not just but xxx in this situation that follows that Mr. Ho but do not follow the instructions. I think this does not help to solve the problem from the root. I think a meeting is very important for them to communicate with others and to find out the or or to find out the opinions of others. And I think this can help to prevent the same thing from happening again in the future.

Ka : (!) Yes, I agree that they should have meetings, they should sit down and have a calm meeting.

(group 3)

1. C : Em, however I I don't think em Mr. Mrs Ho Ho's decision is right. As I think he should gives er give the actual reason to to the other the manager rather than giving out su such excuse as the give er the gift cannot be given to local guest. In this way, he em he may not offend him. Er if he really tell the other manager that er the new situation and and they em can understand their position better, therefore the erm there there is a smooth running of the company and they can em have better understanding and communication (pause : 2.04 seconds) than before (pause : 3.03 seconds). That's all of my xxx.

E : (!) but

C : argument.

E : But er (pause : 1.81 seconds) I think in your point you you have say er the better understanding or communication is very crucial.

2. C : Yes. Em (pause : 2.91 seconds) [xxx

E : (!) And I think some compromise should be made in this case. Aha.

(pause : 4.59 seconds)

C : Then I I agree with you.

(group 4)

1&2. A : I I I I think there is not wrong about not their position but er er I think that em (pause : 1.99 seconds) to improve the communication [ with among between them.

J : (!) No, I think the their position is important too. If Mr. Smith is greater than Mr. Ho.

A : Aha.

J : So Mr. Smith have to (pause : 1.20 seconds) [inform

A : [in order

J : [Mr. Ho first

A : Yeah, but er I see that er there there may be it is it may be not the fault of Mr. other Mr. Smith or Mr. Ho. It may be the problem of Mr. Ho's assistant of not consulting Mr. Ho's in advance.

3&4. A : Yes, that's what what I suggest. But I I I'm not agree with him, not not doing nothing not doing anything to try to improve the situation, to try to improve [ the communication.

J : [ But what do you think he can do?

A : Er

J : Stop him to send the [ souvenir to xxx.

A : (!) I I I agree I agree that he should let Mr. Smith to send out the remaining souvenirs. But I am not agree with him that er he he is not going to discuss this matter with Mr. Smith because I I I see that er there may be many other occasions that er Mr. Smith Smith has to er obtain some souvenirs from the the department in the future. And if Mr. Ho do not em find out find out the solution to improve the to avoid to avoid this incident from happening a again, then there may be in the future there may be many er other occasions and just let these things happen again and again.

J : So that the (pause : 1.27 seconds) main them is they must communicate better.

## (group 5)

1. W : But you, you, you can see the situation is not so

Law : (!) urgent

W : serious

2. Law : Serious of

W : it's not so serious, so, Mr. Ho can, can have this way to let Mr. Smith  
(Law laughed)

W : knows, em.

**Paraphrase**  
**(Self paraphrase)**

1. W : But I think Mr. Ho's decision is the most effective one because as we can see it, many people do many things on other people that can affect that people, that person but, er, the person cannot understand what, er I mean, er A and B, A may have some, er, wrong things on but B is very happy but A cannot understand what,

what, what is the feeling of B. So er, I think Mr. Ho's decision, Mr. Ho's behaviour is to let Mr. Smith know, knows his feeling and this is the most effective one.

### Other paraphrase

#### (group 2)

1. D : I think the most important is Mr. Ho should find solution to this problem not to not to er argue or or find find find back the shield given out.

Lin : Er Then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy some er substitutes for example some sh er er another kind of shield em to substitute the one er the ones given to the guest. Then why can em er Mr. Mr Smith buys another kind of s er sheild to the guest and return the original one to Mr. Ho.?

D : Oh I I think it's so very embarrassed and it will affect the image of the company once you withdraw of withdraw the souvenir.

#### (group 3)

1. C : Em, however I I don't think em Mr. Mrs Ho Ho's decision is right. As I think he should gives er give the actual reason to to the other the manager rather than giving out su such excuse as the give er the gift cannot be given to local guest. In this way, he em he may not offend him. Er if he really tell the other manager that er the new situation and and they em can understand their position better, therefore the erm there there is a smooth running of the company and they can em have better understanding and communication (pause : 2.04 seconds) than before (pause : 3.03 seconds). That's all of my xxx.

E : [but

C : argument.

E : But er (pause : 1.81 seconds) I think in your point you you have say er the better understanding or communication is very crucial. But em (pause : 2.52 seconds) but in this case er (pause : 1.60 seconds) this is erm it may it may not not it may not have very good understanding between the staff. But er but basically Mr. Ho's decision is to correct the understand the correct to correct and to improve the communication. Because er (pause : 2.18 seconds) before we can make any improvement er we should have the good relationship first. Aha (pause : 2.39 seconds) Do you understand? I don't know.

#### (group 5)

1&2 W : But you, you, you can see the situation is not so

Law : urgent

W : serious  
 Law : Serious, of  
 W : it's not so serious, so Mr. Ho can, can have  
     this way to let Mr. Smith  
     (Law laughed)  
 W : knows, em  
 Law : That means that, em we regard, we disregard  
     the, whether, er, it's right or wrong but we  
     just to see whether it's effective way to [  
 W : [I don't think that this way is wrong. I don't  
     think that this way is wrong.  
 Law : That means that, er, you put your emotions to  
     someone else who will put you in, er, who may,  
     er give you some emotional words and during his  
     speaking and during this decision or during the  
     relationship between xxx (unclear words) staff  
     ors, or the, or in the company.

### Confirmation Check

#### (group 1)

1. Ka : So but er in this case you agree that Mr. Ho is  
     right em for asking Mr. Smith to return the  
     souvenir. Em do you think that em he is doing  
     right?  
 Ke : Yes, I think he is doing right.

#### (group 3)

1. E : But er (pause : 1.81 seconds) I think in your  
     point you you have say er the better  
     understanding or communication is very crucial.  
     But em (pause : 2.52 seconds) but in this case  
     er (pause : 1.60 seconds) this is erm it may it  
     may not not it may not have very good  
     understanding between the staff. But er but  
     basically Mr. Ho's decision is to correct the  
     understand the correct to correct and to improve  
     the communication. Because er (pause : 2.18  
     seconds) before we can make any improvement er  
     we should have the good relationship first. Aha  
     (pause : 2.39 seconds) Do you understand? I  
     don't know.  
 C : Mh, the situation is if Mr. Ho and (pause : 1.18  
     seconds) the er didn't give out the such excuse,  
     it may not it may not offend the manager. Then  
     the situation em may not be as work as as worse  
     as (pause : 1.63 seconds) and this one.

#### (group 4)

1. A : Yes, I agree with you. At this time Mr. Smith  
     has er has already done the thing so this time  
     if I were Mr. Mr. Ho, I would let you do it.  
     And I will find some ways to talk to him to  
     include the communication first and to make sure  
     the position of Mr. Ho. Is that he is top  
     management?  
 J : Mr. Ho?  
 A : Yes, Mr. Ho is manager.

**Comprehension Check**

(group 4)

1. A : Yes, I agree with you. At this time Mr. Smith has er has already done the thing so this time if I were Mr. Mr. Ho, I would let you do it. And I will find some ways to talk to him to include the communication first and to make sure the position of Mr. Ho. Is that he is top management?

J : Mr. Ho?

A : Yes, Mr. Ho is manager.

J : Manager.

A : Yeah.

J : Is he greater than Mr. Smith?

A : I I think there is not wrong about not their position but er er I think that em (p: 1.99 seconds) to improve the communicaton with among between them.

2&3. A : So mhm it's not the fault of Mr. Ho and the he no need to say sorry to Mr. Smith and

J : Did he say sorry?

A : The text said he is in contact.

**Clarification request**

(group 2)

1. D : I think the most important is Mr. Ho should find solution to this problem not to not to er argue or or find find back the shield given out.

Lin : Er Then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy some er substitutes for example some sh er er another kind of shield em to substitute the one er the ones given to the guest. Then why can em er Mr. Mr Smith buys another kind of s er sheild to the guest and return the original one to Mr. Ho.?

D : Oh I I think it's so very embarrassed and it will affect the image of the company once you withdraw of withdraw the souvenir.

**Language Switch**

(group 4)

1. J : Yes.

A : So, jih hai ( =oùp 归矣 ).  
(J laughed)

**Message abandonment**

(group 4)

1. A : So mhm it's not the fault of Mr. Ho and the he no need to say sorry to Mr. Smith and

J : Did he say sorry?

2. A : Aha, But I I I'm not I'm not say that Mr. Ho should Mr. Ho should go to Mr. Smith Smith's

office or phone to him and scold him about his manner. But I I I I think I suggest him to discuss this matter. I I if Miss Mr. Smith and then to see whether there is any problem about communication among the department or among the staff. And to see whether there is an improvement not just for

J : Yes I agree with you. At this time Mr. Smith has er has already done the thing so this time if I were Mr. Mr. Ho, I would let you do it. And I will find some ways to talk to him to include the communication first and to make sure the position of Mr. Ho. Is that he is top management?

(group 5)

1. W : But afterwards you, you can see that Mr. Hos, although Mr. Ho er use this way, but this is the one part. After all, Mr. Ho also, er , agree with the Mr. Smith, with Mrs Smith er to send the two dozen shields to him and he use the correct form, the correct way of communication. He ask his assistant to inform Mr. Smith directly so that Mr. Smith can get the information and

Law : O.K., the final decision is right, I agree. . .

**Helping out**

(group 5)

1. W : But you, you, you can see the situation is not so

Law : urgent

W : serious

## Appendix 11 - Convergent Task

## Group 1 - First Discussion Information

Date : 15th March, 1995  
 Time : 1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.  
 Venue : Language Resource Centre  
 Content : Convergent  
 Planning Time : Yes, 5 mins planning time  
 Subjects : Katherine (F-20), Kelvin (M-19)

## Data

Length of discussion : 6.46 mins = 406 seconds  
 Total no. of words : 984 words  
 Total no. of turns : 21 turns  
 Total no. of pauses : 6 pauses  
 Total no. of hesitations : 42 hesitations  
 Total length of pauses : 12.99 seconds  
 Average length of turns : 19.333 seconds per turn  
 Average no. of words per turn : 46.857 words per turn  
 Average length of pauses : 2.16 seconds per pause  
 Frequency of hesitations : 1 hesitation in every 23.428 words  
 Frequency of pauses : 1 pause in every 164 words  
 Frequency of pauses : 1 pause in every 67.666 seconds

(T1) Ke : So, er we are going to discuss the advice that Mr. Kwok should adopt, em I think em in changing the image of the company from a conservative one to a new one trendy one, I think some money [slowed down] should be spent [emphasized] on the advertising, but [strongly emphasized] from the above case we realize that the the (pause : 2.72 seconds) too much money have been spent on advertising, I think we should be controlled because if we spend money inadvertently I think, the the account of the whole company will not be healthy. Is

(T2) Ka : Yes, er, but I think that the budget may be too small and when compare with the previous one [slowing down] and may be enlarged his budget or may be em Mr. Kwok can have an inspection to to find that the sales of the following months are not satisfied then em he may cut the budget.

(T3) Ke : Okay I I I agree with you that the budget should be enlarged because the the exiting budget can is in fact is very s-m-a-l-l [elalorated] and accordings to the case we given, the budget should [emphasized] allow flexibility, that is it can be enlarged as as soon as possible because the existing budget

is very small, so the first advice that can be given to Mr. Kwok is that the budget should be enlarged so that there is no problem and second-ly inspection of the sales should al should also be taken out because (pause : 2.24 seconds) if we advertise we cannot know the effect is is obvious or not obvious so the sales is the is the most (pause : 1.56 second) enlightening evidence so we have to took look at the close side and see if the sales does [emphasized] increase due to the advertising effect we can ad advertise more but if the sales does not ins increase considerably so we can cut down some money on advertising.

(T4) Ka : Mm that is we can we can link em the sales amount and the advertising budget together. That is when the sales increase we can increase more adv advertising and er the other way round.

(T5) Ke : that is the budget will er allow flexibility

(T6) Ka : Mhm

(T7) Ke : and if the sales go up, we can advertise more and if the sales go down, we can cut some money on advertising (pause : 1.68 seconds) so er do you have other advice?

(T8) Ka : emm emm that's all for me and how about you?

(T9) Ke : em I think the attitude of the of the employers may not may not be good because when they spend they just throw too much money without thinking about the consequences and so I think em a department should be set up to to monitor the money being throw out to advertising because some money will just thrown into advertising but there is no effect so we have to make sure that when we throw each coin into advertisement we have to make sure that the effect is constructive [mispronounced] and obvious. Em this should be the main point. Because when we just spend money on it, it er the sales may not increase because the the strength of the competitors may be very strong. So we have to be very careful when we have to spend money so we have to monitor or inspect the the way the money spend money so that each this will maximize our profit. What do you think?

(T10) Ke : Y-e-s [extended] em

(T11) Ka : so er if er you have er some points, er the budget can be settled it for flexibility, er we have to inspect the sales and to and to

have a clos closer look how people spend it amount of money so that we can make sure that er we can have a good return and do not just to waste money in it.

(T12) Ke : may be em we have to ins em inspect the quality of the advertisement, is it proportionate to em the amount of money they have spent? that is er the the [emphasized] advertisement company.

(T13) Ka : er I think it's quite a good wa- y to

(T14) Ke : it is not it's found that it's not em proportion er not positively proportion law (= <sup>正比</sup>), then it is not worthy em to employ this company and may be we have to change a a more effective ad advertising company.

(T15) Ka : yes, I think you are right because some advertising company may not be may not be suitable to our products and this will simply waste our money so we have to mon to inspect the the effect of the advertisement and see if the advertising company suits our taste or our style.

(T16) Ke : yes er may be the sales grows er with the advertisement but em (pause : 2.11 seconds) but em yes I mean that yea the sales might grow up with the advertisement but em if we [slowing down] employ em a more em efficient er advertising company that it produces er more quality advertisements maybe [emphasized] the sales will grow more.

(T17) Ka : yes I see your point and you say that you say that er the growth might go with some advertising company but [emphasized] if we can employ an im more effective ad advertising company which provides er effective advertisement then the grow will increase more and more, and this what we want is to earn much more money and of course this is one this can be one of my advice to to employ more effective advertising company. (pause : 2.68 seconds). So the point is we have to allow flexibility to inspect the sales to to see the sales increase or decrease and to adjust the amount of advertisements and thirdly to to monitor the money the our employees spend on so that we can make sure that the amo money is spent worthwhile and and the last point we can employ an effective advertise

(T18) Ke : consider, consider to employ a more effective advertising company

(T19) Ka : so that the company will provide good and efficient advertisement that to help us to earn much more money.

(T20) Ka : mhm

(T21) Ke : that is our whole point.

## Group 2 - First Discussion Information

Date : 17th March, 1995.  
Time : 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Venue : Language Resource Centre  
Content : Convergent  
Planning Time : no planning time  
Subjects : Lin Sze (F - 19) and Daniel (M - 19)

<i>Length of discussion</i>	<i>: 9.59 minutes = 599 seconds</i>
<i>Number of words</i>	<i>: 1142 words</i>
<i>Number of turns</i>	<i>: 62 turns</i>
<i>Number of pauses</i>	<i>: 18 pauses</i>
<i>Total length of pauses</i>	<i>: 52.59 seconds</i>
<i>Average Length of the turns</i>	<i>: 9.661 seconds per turn</i>
<i>Average number of words per turn</i>	<i>: 18.42 words per turn</i>
<i>Average length of pauses</i>	<i>: 2.92 seconds per pause</i>
<i>Frequency of hesitations</i>	<i>: 1 hesitation in every 4.16 seconds</i> <i>1 hesitation in every 7.93 words</i>
<i>Frequency of pauses</i>	<i>: 1 pause in every 33.28 seconds</i> <i>1 pause in every 63.44 words</i>

(T1) D : I think the problem is that the use of budget is too much in this first few months

(T2) Lin : mhm

(T3) D : Is it?

(T4) Lin : No. em (pause : 6.84 sec.)

(T5) D : Emm er may be Mr. Kwok should em (pause : 1.01 sec.) firstly take a look on the candidates xxx budget on the the em advertising in the whole year.

(T6) Lin : mhm

(T7) D : so to judge whether it will continue or not.

(T8) Lin : mhm er (pause: 2.70 sec.)

(T9) D : xxx agree?

(T10) Lin : yea er (pause: 2.44 sec.) erm (pause: 10.07 sec.) er (pause: 2.70 sec.) so do you think that em as the em the passage say that em er the budget is too small so em so he will spend em quite a lot of money em in a few em in a few months. em So do you agree that em er Mr. Kwok should em give er or ask the em authority to give him more budget so that the the em the whole process can run more smoothly.

(T11) D : Mhm er because there is a budget [slowing down] which has has already been set, I I I I suggest Mr. Kwok should follow it because once the budget is set that. Em that the authority should borrow the budget to to to make it their marketing plan em but I don't think it should increase the budget at that at that moment.

(T12) Lin : Mhm

(T13) D : em I suggest to to revise it.

(T14) Lin : Mhm

(T15) D : or em em make another budget i if if if he want (pause : 1.84 sec.) in advertising or any other places.

(T16) Lin : mhm (pause : 1.27 sec.) but if er but if er er er it's been it's Mr. Kwok em don't er give him any more budget or don't give any more em money and then the budget will stop (pause : 3.74 sec.) because em (pause : 1.22 sec.) actually er other marketing managers also em also also influence by xxxxx so [emphasized] if we just erm stop it then the project may be will em will not em be able to continue.

(T17) D : Mh

(T18) Lin : So [emphasized] in order to continue the project mhm may be Mr. Kwok er can just em think of giving more money to him erm er may be the result will be em er be very good in the end mhm so Mr. Kwok can think of em er adjusting t-h-e [elaborated] budget.

(T19) D : Aha, I I I think adjusting the budget is possible but the the first first step which do is look [slowing down] look the planning that no more money will be given if er breaking of budget again. That that will gaurantee the the er process or procedure of accounting and I think em em starting en this project will will will bring em a profitable year but erm if (pause : 2.02 sec.) there any suggestion about?

(T20) Lin : Ahmm

(T21) D : that that that we have compromised is that Em to to look er er year plan and and adjust the budget, and what's the other advice?

(T22) Lin : er (pause : 3.33 sec.)

(T23) D : Aham do a helper or a monitor is necessary for for this marketing besides xxx?

(T24) Lin : em (pause : 1.56 sec.) may be [emphasized] er but who will be the person?

(T25) D : em I think er some someone in the accounting department should should be should be on this em pro-ject to to monitor the use of money, I I think xxx is not not er very concerned about.

(T26) Lin : Emm so em you suggest that our next step will be em er find someone er who in charge of the accounting department to em monitor em em the present er work.

(T27) D : yeah, I I think.

(T28) Lin : Em then er

(T29) D : What's the last one?

(T30) Lin : the last one

(T31) D : Mhm (pause : 3.77 sec.)

(T32) D : Do do you think em a communicator

(T33) Lin : Mhm

(T34) D : between Mr. Kwok and xxx is necessary?

(T35) Lin : Mhm, why?

(T36) D : Em because em M-r. Kwok only only er looks into the budget or the project er it among but er I think it's too late for xxx to advice since em most can most er procedure or process or campaign has been launched. So em if there is a mon communicator or [emphasized] there is a - more [emphasized] frequent regular meeting between them is - better.

(T37) Lin : er but do you think that em Mr. Kwok is I think he is a quite busy person and do you think that he has enough time to em to go to meet-ing so often?

(T38) D : ah, that's we we that's I I has say that er a medium or a communicator is necessary to put into that position.

(T39) Lin : mhm but I think that is em xxx er em can em give him the em er budget every time er er he spend and then he can Mr. kwok can immediate immediately know er how much expend er or em er yeah how much er he spend each time so that

he can directly em er call him em em to ask him why he spend so much money and so em he advise xxx to spend less xxx for the xxx. em I think em we don't need em to find a coordinator but the em but the er em the some of his expen expenditure should be em er given to er Mr. Kwok frequently er every time he spend, and the [emphasized] budget [emphasized] should be given to him em (pause : 1.74 sec.) to xxx.

(T40) D : em but if er if we do that that em i think xxx is highly restricted

(T41) Lin : Mhm

(T42) D : in spending money

(T43) Lin : Mhm

(T44) D : what between er what to set em among xxx among xxx to some extent that if xxx spend over this amount, he should report the expenditure. But er under just like a few hundred or not

(T45) Lin : mh

(T46) D : *that* [emphasized] it is not necessary to reca to report it.

(T47) Lin : Mhm (pause : 3.20 sec.). Then em you have just said (quick) to find a co-ordinator and then what is the work of the co-ordinator?

(T48) D : if if erm erm we we set a coordinator or a communicator *here* [emphasized] that the the erm function of him is to to *represent* [emphasized] Mr. Kwok

(T49) Lin : Mhm

(T50) D : and to judge to judge whether xxx should launch the campaign or not once once he spend *more* [emphasized] than the budget.

(T51) Lin : mhm, er but who is the one?

(T52) D : em maybe maybe em maybe some executive, marketing or or or the Mr. Kwok appoint people

(T53) Lin : er do you think Mr. Kwok em should appoint someone in the company or to *hire* [emphasized] someone outside.

(T54) D : er to to to be more more c-o-n-f-i-d-e-n-t [elaborated], I think Mr. Kwok should should appoint someone in the company that familiar with the erm with the executive process or or

the the structure or the nature of the company that will be useful as the coordinator or the communicator.

(T55) Lin : er (pause : 1.33 sec.) but xxx emmmmm should have their own work, then mhmm how can they do [slowing down] this extra- work?

(T56) D : I don't think [slowing down] the workload is so much.

(T57) Lin : aha mhmm

(T58) D : be'cos it would only be useful once xxx has over the budget. So I think er no no extra personal

(T59) Lin : extra xxx okay

(T60) Lin : erm (pause : 1.81 sec.), okay we can just appoint someone to be the coordinator.

(T61) D : okay.

(T62) Lin : mhmm.

## Group 3 - First Discussion Information

Date : 23rd March, 1995  
Time : 2:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.  
Venue : KK Leung Building Rm 724  
Content : Convergent  
Planning Time : Yes, 5 mins planning time  
Subjects : Eugene (F- 20), Cathy (M- 20)

## Data

*Length of discussion* : 10 mins = 600 seconds

Total no. of words : 885 words

Total no. of turns : 46 turns

Total no. of pauses : 30 pauses

Total no. of hesitations : 67 hesitation.

Total length of pauses : 59.41 seconds

Average length of turns : 13.04 seconds per turn

Average no. of words per  
text

turn : 19.24 words per turn

*Average length of pauses : 1.98 sec per pause*  
*Frequency of hesitations : 1 hesitation in 13.21 every*  
*words*

words  
1 hesitation in every 8.96  
seconds

*Frequency of pauses* : 1 pause in every 29.5 words  
1 pause in every 20 seconds

(T1) C : Em, my first advice to Mr. Kwok is to make a research about the taste of their segmenting market. That is the young lady executive. With this research, it can er increase its understanding of the market and concentrate its advertising on em onn on to towards this young lady executive (pause : 1.65 sec.) Then it can reduce its costs and however, in this way the em it will narrow its market to only those young lady executives and very difficult for them to expand the market (pause : 1.94 sec.) It's my first piece of advice.

(T2) E : So em my my first advice is the the the Mr. Kwok em the marketing manager should express the concern about xxx advertising company and because em he he is the main controller of the [emphasized] of the whole market xxx and he should know er the com the whole company should not wholly dependent on the on the advertising company and and more importantly em Mr. Kwok should not like that interrupt and disturb the whole budget because the budget is (pause : 1.29 sec.) is carefully planned and they should not em add some they should not the advertising company should not ask them to add the budget. Because it is the responsibility of the advertising company to carry out the advertisement within the budget. (pause : 1.95 sec.)

(T3) C : Em what is the disadvantage of your advice?

(T4) E : disadvantage em (pause : 1.43 sec.) but actually er (pause : 2.23 sec.) er especially in Hong Kong, the advertising company er like to (pause : 2.09 sec.) express the idea very (pause : 1.64 sec.) not not and they and actually they don't want the company to control that. Em and I think it is very difficult to (pause : 1.76 sec.) to control the budget just like the proposed by the marketing department.

(T5) C : ah [murmuring the word 'difficult'] em (pause : 4.31 sec.) em (pause : 2.31 sec.) let me introduce my second piece of advice. I would like to advice Mr. Kwok to have a look of the planning. Em it seems to to me that lack of understanding of this planning since he is [slowed down] very concerned with (pause : 1.29 sec.) this advertising programme em but he he have em any em he have haven't any understanding of it he will be very difficult to understand this the real situation and (pause : 1.81 sec.) ths and within the plan they sh em the budget the budget set is er maybe erm fully explained em which aspect should be used and xxx effect. He can er evaluate the event of this planning whether this is worth to do it and (pause : 1.35 sec.) it's very em useful for him to understand the si the present situation and em have a preview of the future but em it is very difficult for him to er to change what happened within this planning. This has gone and all this becomes past. He cannot make any changes to it.  
(pause : 2.68 sec.)

(T6) E : em so my my second advice is that em I think the (pause : 1.76 sec.) the communication between the advertising company and the marketing department is not very enough. Er em I suggest that er the the whole communication process should be should be more frequent

(T7) C : Mhm

(T8) E : and the xxx and the advantages is that em they know exactly both of each other each of them and they know exactly er what what they are doing now. Em I think the advertising company is the is the custom er oh sorry I think the marketing department is the customer of the advertising company and and [slowed down] the Marketing department should know exactly what what the services being provided.

(T9) C : Your your advice like my second advice but xxx combining combined together that is er to increase the communication and understanding of

(T10) E : Mhm

(T11) C : each other?

(T12) E : Yeah.

(T13) C : Erm (pause : 2.63 sec.) Your advantage is to er have more understanding

(T14) E : Not more understanding but the real situation you know em the marketing department is not the only customer, the advertising company they should they (pause : 1.01 sec.) they will not send the whole time on how to explain explain the the processes

(T15) C : Mhh

(T16) E : the projects (pause : 2.05 sec.) to the [slowed down] marketing.

(T17) C : emm I think since em they want to er to keep every customer tey may like to provide the best service to them and I think they will er need er em send a present person to xxx er to Mr. Kwok

(T18) E : But I think in this situation because it is er I think extremely over budget

(T19) C : xxx

(T20) E : I think (pause : 1.56 sec.) person should should come xx more communicate more frequent

(T21) C : Then what is our our disadvantage?

(T22) E : Disadvantage?

(T23) C : Ssss Strategy.

(T24) E : Er (pause : 2.26 sec.) actually (pause : 1.56 sec.) just just I have mentioned. Em the manpower of the advertising company may not may not enough to explain the whole process because the the people at the ads advertising company have their own idea

(T25) C : aha

(T26) E : And I think the the personnel at their er their mind are some difference from other people.

(T27) C : I I I also think it is quite time consuming doing this.

(T28) E : Mhm (pause : 1.61 sec.) but actually is necessary.

(T29) C : Yes.

(T30) E : Yes. So how about the xxx another advice?

(T31) C : Em To (pause : 2.73 sec.)

(T32) E : xxx my last advice is that mhm I think the budget er (pause : 1.71 sec.) should should be carried out by both company.

(T33) C : aha

(T34) E : And so that so that er they know how to how to spend and where to spend the money on xxxx

(T35) C : mhm

(T36) E : Em (pause : 1.96 sec.) it's er important for them for the advertising company to control and easier [emphasized] for them to control the budget.

(T37) C : Yes.

(T38) E : (pause : 1.85 sec.) I think (pause : 2.13 sec.) it's quite easier to carry out.

(T39) C : (pause : 2.95 sec.) em The same problem is it is quite time cosuming to em negotiate and and make compromise on the right em right of mind of budget to present.

(T40) E : Mhm

(T41) C : The advertising company may want to er to em do many thing em

(T42) E : they don't want to

(T43) C : they want [emphasized] advertising company want to em make any many ad advertising in many er places many advertisement but at at the xxx time the the company may not be able to provide this huge amount.

(T44) E : Em I think that

(T45) C : we will xxx get to compromise.

(T46) E : And I thinks em (pause : 1.91 sec.) the advertising company should should make er responsible to the marketing.

## Group 4 - First Discussion Information

Date : 1st April, 1995  
Time : 11:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
Venue : KK Leung Rm 609  
Content : Convergent  
Planning Time : Yes, 5 mins planning time  
Subjects : Alex (M -19), Joanne (F - 20)

Data

<i>Length of discussion</i>	: 6.35 mins = 395 seconds
<i>Total no. of words</i>	: 815 words
<i>Total no. of turns</i>	: 58 turns
<i>Total no. of pauses</i>	: 27 pauses
<i>Total no. of hesitations</i>	: 18 hesitations
<i>Total length of pauses</i>	: 55.83 seconds
<i>Average length of turns</i>	: 6.81 seconds per turn
<i>Average no. of words per turn</i>	: 14.05 words per turn
<i>Average length of pauses</i>	: 2.07 seconds per pause
<i>Frequency of hesitations</i>	: 1 hesitation in every 45.28 words 1 hesitation in every 21.94 seconds
<i>Frequency of pauses</i>	: 1 pause in every 30.18 words 1 pause in every 14.63 seconds

(T1) A : Er we have to discuss about the problem faced by (pause : 1.42 seconds) by Mr. Kwok about the overbudget of the advertising expenditure.

(T2) J : But what's your topic?

(T3) A : Er to give advice to Mr. Kwok about (pause : 1.33 seconds) how to solve the problem he face now.

(T4) J : Mhm.

(T5) A : [Do you think

(T6) J : [But have to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the advice.

(T7) A : Aha (pause : 1.95 seconds) advantages and disadvantages the

(T8) J : the advantages and disadvantages of the advice.  
(pause : 3.92 seconds)

(T9) A : Yeah, Er, I think the advices is given by us.

(T10) J : Mhm.

(T11) A : After I tell you about the advice, I I I will suggest to Mr. Kwok xxx speak out the opinion about my advice.

(T12) J : And what's your fact? What's your advice?

(T13) A : Do you have any?

(T14) J : Er, I advise Mr. Kwok to give a maximum limit amount of advertising budget to that company (pause : 2.24 seconds). As the advertising company is using too much money and it is not possible for Mr. Kwok's company to continue to let [emphasized] the advertising company to continue.

(T15) A : I I I think he has already er (pause : 1.04 seconds) he has already given the advertising company a budget investment budget on about. I don't know what is the amount but I I xxx I I know that em during the last four months it is already used up the budget.

(T16) T : Mhm.

(T17) A : About 70 % and and I don't know what what will be happen but [ xxx

(T18) J : [ I think I think it's not bad if the result is good.

(T19) A : Aha

(T20) J : Er because you cannot ad adjust the effect only in a few months. You if you can er use up all the budget in only few months but the result is great, this is this is okay I think.

(T21) A : Mhm, Yeah, do you mean you give another maximum budget to to xxx?

(T22) J : No, no, but just an and to give and to pleasurable them. To want the advertising company to give us a more concrete plan of their advertising.

(T23) A : I agree with you, that is I I I the first advice of mine is also about er (pause : 2.57 seconds) I suggest Mr. Kwok to (pause : 1.15 seconds) to have the proposal of the advertising company about what will be [ about what will be

(T24) J : [ And the estimated result I think.

(T25) A : Mhm

(T26) J : That is my our first advice.

(T27) A : Is it er the (pause : 2.10 seconds)

(T28) J : er

(T29) A : suggest the company to give a proposal before in advance and including the result they expect?

(T30) J : Yes.

(T31) A : Aha, and then the second one (pause : 2.27 seconds). I suggest that er although there is a proposal given to Mr. Ho in advance, I suggest Mr. Kwok has the advertising to (pause : 1.66 seconds) stop them from using any money.

(T32) J : Of course.

(T33) A : That means er if the company wants to spend any money,

(T34) J : Mh

(T35) A : er he should they should (pause : 1.51 seconds) get [emphasized] the approval from the Mr. Kwok

(T36) J : Yes okay.

(T37) A : before . Aha,  
(pause : 1.13 seconds)

(T38) A : Er (pause : 1.92 seconds)

(T39) J : That will be the second advice?

(T40) A : Yeah and then the last one, do you have any opinion?  
(pause : 6.03 seconds)

(T41) A : I I I think that they Mr. Kwok can fight for more budget from Mr. the er from the Managing Director because there's not so much budget left for the more than half a year.

(T42) J : Mhm

(T43) A : And then it seems the sales have been increased 5 percent and it can it can give it back to the Managing Director and ask for more money.

(T44) J : However, it *depends* [emphasized] on the proportion of the *budget* [emphasized] and the increase in the sales, increase in the percentage of sales. If you spend too much money in [emphasized] advertising and you just

increase may be just 10 % of sales, you cannot recover.

(T45) A : Mhm (pause : 1.05 seconds) er (pause : 3.51 seconds) But do you think that the 25 % left can afford the adver advertising expenditure in the company

(T46) J : [ But he has already spend 75 %

(T47) A : [ in next month?

(T48) J : It means it has done something. There there must be some some return to our company first I think. But that 25 % it depends on how effective that advertising company. It's it's their job. If you say that you use all my money and I continue, and you don't have money to give me so I cannot help you, but this is not a reason I think.

(T49) A : You don't think increase the budget will increase the xxx for them

(T50) J : [ Yes.

(T51) A : [ just in

(T52) J : It's not practical.  
(pause 1.93 seconds)

(T53) J : And [emphasized] Mr. Kwok has a conservative positive attitude, it is not very good for him (pause : 2.56 seconds). And my third advice, what's that?  
(pause : 1.84 seconds)

(T54) A : the third third advice.

(T55) J : We will hire another advertising company [giggled].  
(pause : 2.45 seconds)

(T56) A : Yes, (pause : 1.99 seconds) the two advices we have discussed is for the short term only. It quite impossible to terminate is advertising company up up till now but er for the next year, you may consult another advertising company because

(T57) J : (!) [ but you may not have the money.

(T58) A : for the next year. That is the next financial year. You can hire consult another advertising company to see whether their their planning of advertise advertisement can be more [emphasized] effective than this one (pause : 2.34 seconds). That means the third

advice of us is to em (pause : 1.38 seconds) to (pause : 1.27 seconds) see (pause : 1.88 seconds) other to see there is advertising company is more [emphasized] effective than this one.

## Group 5 - First Discussion Information

Date : 27th March, 1995  
Time : 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Venue : KK Leung Rm 808  
Content : Convergent  
Planning Time : No planning time  
Subjects : Wendy (F -19), Law Chi Kong (M - 20)

*Data*

<i>Length of discussion</i>	<i>: 7.13 mins = 433 seconds</i>
<i>Total no. of words</i>	<i>: 907 words</i>
<i>Total no. of turns</i>	<i>: 43 turns</i>
<i>Total no. of pauses</i>	<i>: 10 pauses</i>
<i>Total no. of hesitations</i>	<i>: 23 hesitations</i>
<i>Total length of pauses</i>	<i>: 22.93 seconds</i>
<i>Average length of turns</i>	<i>: 10.31 seconds per turn</i>
<i>Average no. of words per turn</i>	<i>: 21.60 words per turn</i>
<i>Average length of pauses</i>	<i>: 2.293 seconds per pause</i>
<i>Frequency of hesitations</i>	<i>: 1 hesitation in every 39.43 words</i> <i>1 hesitation in every 18.83 seconds</i>
<i>Frequency of pauses</i>	<i>: 1 pause in every 90.7 word</i> <i>1 pause in every 43.3 seconds</i>

(T1) Law : Okay, let us start the discussion. First of all em let me em may be we can start by considering ing that is it disadvantage for the company to run to use all the costs in in advertising.

(T2) W : Mhm certainly it it an advantage.

(T3) Law : Because it is [murmuring]. You can see in the passage you know that there is only a slight increase [emphasized] in the em in the number of sales. However, er it cost a lot. So what should be the con, the solution? Maybe should we cut the cost of advertising first (pause : 1.17 seconds)?

(T4) W : er

(T5) Law : In short term.

(T6) W : (pause : 4.73 seconds) I think cost of advertising is too high and we should and we must to cut off to cut the price of the (= ) the price of advertisement. Er (pause : 1.34 seconds) I think it is the first solution.

(T7) Law : Yes, in short term we should cut the advertise the cost of advertisement, advertising. Then in long term, we see that from the past we only we only spent only a small proportion of

budget in advertising. But now what's the situation is that in 4 month we spend over two-third of the money in that. So I think there should be another plan. It should em may be take some investigation to the *market* [emphasized] to know what is the needs of the customers and thent to plan another and to have another plan for advertising. Maybe em it cost less than what it should be.

(T8) W : May be we can [emphasized] er okay the er your suggestion of the research is very useful. May be we can er (pause : 2.24 seconds) we can see the point of the advertising. We can use the we can use the advertising in a [slowing down] lower lower proportion or in a lower budget that means that em [giggled]

(T9) Law : It costs less.

(T10) W : It costs less. We we put a little proportion of our budget in the advertising or we can use er other other method to promote our (pause : 1.16 seconds) s promote our goods.

(T11) Law : Yes, such as introduce this to other boutiques? and and also talk send letters to other companies to pro for promotion or give them some demonstrations to our products and so on and so forth.  
(pause : 2.24 seconds)

(T12) W : May be. About the research I think we can use some we can employ not using not use our own staff or may be may be we can employ some part time workers such as the er (pause : 1.68 seconds) undergraduates in university or some part time workers from the secondary school or the housewife. It may cost much lower.

(T13) Law : But however, we should consider one point is the training cost for these *workers* [emphasized]. Since they do not may be have not have not so much er background experience, it may cost *money* [emphasized] and also *time* to train themt in order to become a good researcher in in for the investigation. And it may cost too much.

(T14) W : No, I mean that about in investigation *part* [emphasized], we should use our own staff to investigate and an analysis our result of the research. But er when we go when we conducting a research, we should em employ some other part-time workers for us to go to the may be

(T15) Law : distributing?

(T16) W : Ha, may be distributing the questionnaire er so so such this untech, use less technique swork.

(T17) Law : Mhm I agree with you. Lawet us let us er summarize the points arise from the past to now. First advice is that in short term, we cut off the advertising price [emphasized] and the cost. And then afterwards we conduct an investigation em what is what problems and what products should we provide so as to meet the needs of the customers. And for the promotion technique, we can change it a bit. May be we can have a demonstration or an exhibitiont so that er other companies can have a look and got the products they want. (pause : 2.74 seconds)

(T18) Law : Mhm, any point to add?

(T19) W : er (pause: 1.16 seconds) the last advice [slowing down] I want to mention is that, we can have an open house. That means invite others companies, similar compnay com similar company sho come to our company and see what and have a visit maybe. Er may be we can promote our products to them at that time.

(T20) Law : That means *competitors* [high pitch]?

(T21) W : You can see you can treat them as a competitor when you are in the *same market* [emphasized]. But competitors also can be treated as friends.

(T22) Law : Mhm I think mhm it may be possibly it's right. One thing that I am worry is that mhm maybe the competitors will have a look and then copy your ideas and produce other products similar to what you will produce and there is a loss of market and market share. Maybe result.

(T23) W : Ah

(T24) Law : So

(T25) W : I haven't consider this part.

(T26) Law : So I don't consider this as a good point.

(T27) W : Okay (pause : 3.87 seconds)

(T28) Law : [ Any other

(T29) W : [ Shall we make three pieces of advice?

(T30) Law : Yes, I think we have we have made. Let's sum up it.

(T31) W : But only two?

(T32) Law : Two? 2 Oh. You summarize first. I don't know why there is two.

[laugh]

(T33) Law : I think three.

(T34) W : The first one is cut down to cut down the er advertising cost and the second one is to have a research.

(T35) Law : And the third one I think is to use another kind of promotion

(T36) W : Ah

(T37) Law : is that using advertisement.

(T38) W : Ah Ah Ah but I treat it I I I put it into the group of advertising.

(T39) Law : Oh, never mind.

(T40) W : (= 我) Okay.

(T41) Law : Okay, I think there will be no more discussion

(T42) W : (= 我).

(T43) Law : from this point.

**Appendix 12 - Divergent Task****Group 1 - Second Discussion Information**

**Date** : 29th March, 1995  
**Time** : 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
**Venue** : Language Resource Centre  
**Content** : Divergent  
**Planning Time** : Yes, 5 minutes planning time  
**Subjects** : Katherine (F-20), Kelvin (M-19)

**Data**

*Length of discussion* : 7 mins = 420 seconds  
*Total no. of words* : 980 words  
*Total no. of turns* : 24 turns  
*Total no. of pauses* : 1 pause  
*Total no. of hesitations* : 32 hesitations  
*Total length of pauses* : 1.52 seconds  
*Average length of turns* : 1.52 seconds per turn  
*Average no. of words per turn* : 40.83 words per turn  
*Average length of pauses* : 420 seconds per pause  
*Frequency of hesitations* : 1 hesitation in every 30.63 words  
                                  1 hesitation in every 13.13 seconds  
*Frequency of pauses* : 1 pause in every 980 words  
                                  1 pause in every 420 seconds

(T1) Ka : Em in my opinion, I think that em Mr. Ho is still doing wrong although Mr. Smith haven't informed Mr. Ho er beforehand em when he take out the souvenir. But as she say em some some of the souvenirs have already sent out em it should not be em returned back em because it may destroy the company destroy the commission image.

(T2) Ke : But I think Mr. Ho has done the right thing. Be because er if Mr. Ho does not make concessions, I think both sides will not gain advantage and the result will be the lowering of working efficiency. I think a in such a situation both side should accept that there is a cultural difference between the two sides and I think just quarrelling is not constructive. It's simply destructing the company. I think they should meet regularly and to communicate with each other but not just stand firm and do nothing and just quarrelling with other. I think making concessions are very important in such a situation.

(T3) Ka : However, we should we should focus on the case that some of the sourvenirs have already been

sent to the guest. Then how can we em get back the souvenir?

(T4) Ke : But I think Mr. Ho has done right because if they just stand firm and do nothing, I think both sides will not gain advantage. And in sit this situation, both sides can come to meet and have a meeting and discuss the possible solutions and to find out the best way to solve the problem but not just stand firm and quarrel with each other and just doing foolish thing. I think communication is not enough in this case. So to solve the problem, I think to have a to gain an access for communication is very important.

(T5) Ka : Yes, may be the the ['the' was pronounced as 'de'] must have some er they must have compromise each other after this after this case. That em I think em in this case xxx is still wrong. This I I emphasize on some sourvenirs that has already been sent. Em as Mrs Smith has said we can't have er some some guests get the sourvenirs and some has not.

(T6) Ke : So you think that they should er get the compromise after the event?

(T7) Ka : Yes, because the event had had already happened.

(T8) Ke : But do you think er how so er if you disagree with Mr. Ho er does what, can you think for hims to do?

(T9) Ka : Em may be em we should talk to Mr. Smith afterwards because em he can't do anything in this case. Because em em there is we we can't ask the guest to return the sourvenirs or just left em some of them haven't got the sourvenirs.

(T10) Ke : But I think em (pause : 1.52 seconds) the most important point is that er they should respect that or accept that there is a cultural difference or mentally difference between the two sides. But I think if they just do nothing and and just stand firm and just quarrel with each other and doing nothing, I think both sides will suffer a loss.

(T11) Ka : Yes, but they should also respect their guests.

(T12) Ke : But I I think em in this situation if both side do not make concessions, I think the working efficiency will will be very low in this case and I think there is no grounds for

cooperation. And I think the best way is to act in a in a sensible way and to have a peaceful meeting so that they can work in a harmonious manner.

(T13) Ka : So, em what is your solution in this case?

(T14) Ke : I think the best thing is to sit down and have a talk and to find out the best solution but not just but not just to follow the things that they are put into. So the best way is to of course to have a good [emphasized] access for communication

(T15) Ka : Mhmm

(T16) Ke : and to find out the possible and the best solution for the xxx.

(T17) Ka : So but er in this case you agree that Mr. Ho is right em for asking Mr. Smith to return the souvenir. Em do you think that em he is doing right?

(T18) Ke : Yes, I think he is doing right.

(T19) Ka : Then how about the other guest?

(T20) Ke : But the main case is that the main problem is the lack of communication and I think they should sit down and to find to find the best solution but not just but xxx in this situation that follows that MR. Ho but do not follow the instructions. I think this does not help to solve the problem from the root. I think a meeting is very important for them to communicate with others and to find out the or or to find out the opinions of others. And I think this can help to prevent the same thing from happening again in the future.

(T21) Ka : [ Yes, I agree that they should have meetings, they should sit down and have a calm meeting.

(T22) Ke : Open meeting

(T23) Ka : Open communication. But I think Mr. Ho has doing em the first step wrong. I think that em em he should em so let it be this time and they should have they should gather together and have a compromise each other and as you say, prevent em the same thing happen.

(T24) Ke : But I think the root of the problem is that there is basically a cultural difference between the twos and the working style of the two is totally different or mutually exclusive. So in this case, it's a it's the

result of this problem. So to solve the problem from the root, I think just I think a an access for communication is very important and more importantly the to prevent the same thing from happening. That's the best solution and I think Mr. Ho has done absolutely right this time.

**Group 2 - Second Discussion  
Information**

**Date** : 31th March, 1995  
**Time** : 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
**Venue** : Language Resource Centre  
**Content** : Divergent  
**Planning Time** : No planning time  
**Subjects** : Lin Sze (F-19) , Daniel (M-19)

**Data**

*Length of discussion* : 9.25 mins = 565 seconds  
*Total no. of words* : 1175 words  
*Total no. of turns* : 32 turns  
*Total no. of pauses* : 10 pauses  
*Total no. of hesitations* : 119 hesitations  
*Total length of pauses* : 25.19 seconds  
*Average length of turns* : 17.66 seconds per turn  
*Average no. of words per turn* : 37.03 words per turn  
*Average length of pauses* : 39.5 seconds per pause  
*Frequency of hesitations* : 1 hesitation in every 9.87 words  
*Frequency of pauses* : 1 hesitation in every 4.83 seconds  
*Frequency of pauses* : 1 pause in every 117.5 words  
*Frequency of pauses* : 1 pause in every 56.5 seconds

(T1) D : Em I think Mr. Ho is wrong since er once the souvenirs are presented, em there is no way to to collect them back.  
 (pause : 5.93 seconds)

(T2) Lin : But em the souvenir er erm er (pause : 2.13 seconds) but the souvenir er possessed by Mr. Ho and before Mr. Ho know that the souvenir will be given to anyone em the souvenir was gone. Then no one will inform er no one inform Mr. Ho em in advance. And so al although em you say that the souvenir is given out and can't collect back. The point is that it is not em (pause : 1.27 seconds) it is not the right thing to do. Em (pause : 1.85 seconds) the arrangement of the souvenir is er have some problems em (pause : 1.15 seconds) it must inform Mr. Ho before hand.

(T3) D : Mhm I I I think er the problem is happen betweened his assistant and Mr. Ho, em that's not Mrs. Mr. Smith's problem. Er I think the solution to this occasion is to try to em buy er substitutes to for the souvenir or em to make another one er as soon as possible. Em I think Mr. Ho is is wrong if he he em collect all back of souvenir.

(T4) Lin : Then if Mr. Ho em sou souvenir em will given to someone else, and then you suddenly em er collect all his er souvenir and give to others

then who will em er then em before Mr. Ho can give the souvenir to er the one he em he wanted to give em er er he wanted to give to and then he know that oh now all my souvenir has gone. Then what can I do? I Promise to give them to someone and then you just em get them all out. And who who can it do? I just I promise to give for example I promise to give them a shield. Then you em you get them out. And then I you em you tell me that er I can get some em some substitute. But I promise to give them a shield. Then how can I collect them back?

(T5) D : I think the problem is that em Mr. Ho is angry with em the out of stock of shield without without any advanced infor information. But I think it it is not very difficult to to to buy an any substitute for the souvenir just like shield or er some glad.

(T6) Lin : Aha

(T7) D : I think the most important is Mr. Ho should find solution to this problem not to not to er argue or or find find find back the shield given out.

(T8) Lin : Er Then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy some er substitutes for example some sh er er another kind of shield em to substitute the one er the ones given to the guest. Then why can em er Mr. Mr Smith buys another kind of s er sheild to the guest and return the original one to Mr. Ho.?

(T9) D : Oh I I think it's so very embarrassed and it will affect the image of the company once you withdraw of withdraw the souvenir. And I don't think em that shield is very special then it can be em just give any of guests. I think er Mr. Ho only angry with the the incident em he he can't he can he can do anything em to to substitute the shield given out.

(T10) Lin : Mh, if Mr. Ho em allow the happening of this event and then in the future the same kind of event will happen em again. If er Mr. Ho can take action at this moment and collect er the whole situation and then no one will em follow such a situation in the future and it is a problem that if if once it has done and then er later may be another kind of event like this will also be em done in the future.

(T11) D : I think em the problem of this occasion is the communication problem between the assistant and Mr. Ho. Em er after this event, I think

Mr. Tai will will be allowed em this thing happened. So when em, just when another similar happenings, em I think it will inform Mr. Ho as soon as possible.

(T12) Lin : Mhm

(T13) D : Er er so there is no need to worry about the er happening of this event again.

(T14) Lin : Erm but the fact is that em this em this situation er is erm happen er which concern about Mr. Ho, Mr. Smith and his assistant. And then other department may not know the situation. And They may be er have a chance to em to find such situation in the future. Then if Mr. Ho can take the action, and the whole company will know what is what's happening and So they won't em follow. And So I think Mr. Ho's decision is correct.

(T15) D : I don't think so because such action will will affect the image of the company and er may be there is an alternative to this problem is that any souvenir which will be sent to other department should have the approval of Mr. Ho or or his signature. So I think em at least he will be informed.

(T16) Lin : Mhm (pause : 2.51 seconds)

(T17) D : Do you think this practice is okay?

(T18) Lin : Er may be may be this may be I'll better solution in the future. Er but the question is that (pause : 1.74 seconds) the souvenir is er the souvenirs are gone and Mr. Ho cannot get back. And then what can he do in the present? He will just be very angry and cannot find any solution. Though you say that souvenir can be buy er buy in other areas. But er sometimes em sometimes the time arrangement will be em will will get er problem. Er For example if Mr. er Ho plan to give two hundred souvenir to em a company and then er at tomorrow. And then you now give er get all the souvenir gone. And then how can er sometimes can he buy such souvenir immediately? It is not a em a very easy thing to do.

(T19) D : But em the situation is now that Mr. Ho is no need to give the souvenir at present so

(T20) Lin : Mhm

(T21) D : er I don't is not em immediate problem. Em The souvenir can be brought in the coming future as soon as possible.

(T22) Lin : Mhm (pause : 5.17 seconds). So er (pause: 1.95 seconds) may be now Mr. Ho can do nothing and just accept the fact. Er and in the future may be as you say that em all the souvenir that em er that is going to er to be given to the guest will be informed er er informed em to Mr. Ho beforehand. And So now [laughed] Mr. Ho will just em give the souvenir out and take no action.

(T23) D : Mhm

(T24) Lin : is the em best solution in the present

(T25) D : Err

(T26) Lin : xxx

(T27) D : I think the solution is to bluy some buy another souvenir

(T28) Lin : Mh

(T29) D : and set up the rules

(T30) Lin : Mh

(T31) D : that avoid the similar patterns.

(T32) Lin : Mh (pause : 1.49 seconds) . Yes it's will be a em will be best solution at present.

**Group 3 - Second Discussion  
Information**

**Date** : 5th April, 1995  
**Time** : 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
**Venue** : KK Leung Rm 724  
**Content** : Divergent  
**Planning Time** : Yes, 5 minutes planning time  
**Subjects** : Eugene (F-20) , Cathy (M-20)

**Data**

**Length of discussion** : 8.8 mins = 528 seconds  
**Total no. of words** : 526 words  
**Total no. of turns** : 14 turns  
**Total no. of pauses** : 16 pauses  
**Total no. of hesitations** : 41 hesitations  
**Total length of pauses** : 48.42 seconds  
**Average length of turns** : 37.71 seconds per turn  
**Average no. of words per turn** : 37.57 words per turn  
**Average length of pauses** : 3.03 seconds per pause  
**Frequency of hesitations** : 1 hesitation in every 12.83words  
**Frequency of pauses** : 1 hesitation in every 12.88 seconds  
**Frequency of pauses** : 1 pause in every 32.875 words  
**Frequency of pauses** : 1 pause in every 33 seconds

(T1) E : Em basically, I think er Mr. Ho's decision is correct. Em I have some I have mainly two reasons. The first is that er I think relationship between the staff in the company is very important. And I think it sometimes er it may it may have to do some compromise between the staff. Erm otherwise the small conflict in the company will be expand into the very serious matter. Em it will say affect the the relationship between the staff. And also em in in more serious case em this will affect the operation and the coordination in the company. And my second reason is that em in the in this er multicultural corporation, em the relationship between the different er different xxx group is also very important. And I think er the harmony is very important in such a corporation. There should be er mutual respect between the different cultures. And in this case er Mr. Ho er make a right decision em basically it's not it's not to submitted to the for foreign staff. But basically er it wants to maintain the relationship.

(T2) C : Mh

(T3) E : Mh so

(T4) C : Em, however I I don't think em Mr. Mrs Ho Ho's decision is right. As I think he should gives

er give the actual reason to to the other the manager rather than giving out su such excuse as the give er the gift cannot be given to local guest. In this way, he em he may not offend him. Er if he really tell the other manager that er the new situation and and they em can understand their position better, therefore the erm there there is a smooth running of the company and they can em have better understanding and communication (pause : 2.04 seconds) than before (pause : 3.03 seconds). That's all of my xxx.

(T5) E : [ but

(T6) C : argument.

(T7) E : But er (pause : 1.81 seconds) I think in your point you you have say er the better understanding or communication is very crucial. But em (pause : 2.52 seconds) but in this case er (pause : 1.60 seconds) this is erm it may it may not not it may not have very good understanding between the staff. But er but basically Mr. Ho's decision is to correct the understand the correct to correct and to improve the communication. Because er (pause : 2.18 seconds) before we can make any improvement er we should have the good relationship first. Aha (pause : 2.39 seconds) Do you understand? I don't know.

(T8) C : Mh, the situation is if Mr. Ho and (pause : 1.18 seconds) the er didn't give out the such excuse, it may not it may not offend the manager. Then the situation em may not be as work as as worse as (pause : 1.63 seconds) and this one.

(T9) E : Yes, em yes I agree that both of them have some (pause : 1.19 seconds) communication problem. But em (pause : 1.44 seconds) but they but we are arguing is that Mr. Ho decision. But er Mr. Ho decision is basically to correct correct the situ the situation and improve them. (pause : 3.14 seconds) Mhm. (pause : 14.72 seconds)

(T10) E : So, so I agree em if if erm we have to have some er improvement in the communication, we should er we should have the good relationship first.  
(pause : 2.05 seconds)

(T11) C : Yes. Em (pause : 2.91 seconds) [xxx

(T12) E : [ And I think some compromise should be made in this case. Aha.

(pause : 4.59 seconds)

(T13) C : Then I I agree with you.

(T14) E : Ah.

**Group 4 - Second Discussion  
Information**

**Date** : 11th April, 1995  
**Time** : 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
**Venue** : KK Leung Building Rm 605  
**Content** : Divergent  
**Planning Time** : Yes, 5 minutes planning time  
**Subjects** : Joanne (F-20), Alex (M-20)

**Data**

*Length of discussion* : 7 mins 13 seconds = 433 seconds  
*Total no. of words* : 973 words  
*Total no. of turns* : 43 turns  
*Total no. of pauses* : 9 pauses  
*Total no. of hesitations* : 3 hesitations  
*Total length of pauses* : 14.14 seconds  
*Average length of turns* : 9.41 seconds per turn  
*Average no. of words per turn* : 22.63 words per turn  
*Average length of pauses* : 48.11 seconds per pause  
*Frequency of hesitations* : 1 hesitation in every 31.39 words  
                                   1 hesitation in every 2.25 seconds  
*Frequency of pauses* : 1 pause in every 108.11 words  
                                   1 pause in every 48.11 seconds

(T1) A : I'm not agree with Mr. Ho's about his decision to just let the matter go and say sorry to Mr. Smith.

(T2) J : But what do you think he has to do with this situation?

(T3) A : Aha, I I know that er (pause : 1 second) peace is peace is the is very important in a company. There's no other argument or er even no fighting among the staff especially among the senior staff. But I I do think that er he should discuss this matter with em Mr. Smith and not just to say sorry and to do nothing.

(T4) J : In my opinion, from the situation, I found that Mr. Smith is Western style and Mr. Ho is some kind of Chinese style.

(T5) A : Mhm

(T6) J : Aha, Mr. Ho just want to er avoid conflicts with him rather than doing nothing.

(T7) A : Aha . But I I I'm not I'm not say that Mr. Ho should Mr. Ho should go to Mr. Smith Smith's office or phone to him and scold scold him about his manner. But I I I I think I suggest him to discuss this matter. I I if Miss Mr. Smith and then to see whether there is any problem about communication among the

department or among the staff. And to see whether there is an improvement not just for

(T8) J : Yes. I agree with you. At this time Mr. Smith has er has already done the thing so this time if I were Mr. Mr. Ho, I would let you do it. And I will find some ways to talk to him to include the communication first and to make sure the position of Mr. Ho. Is that he is top management?

(T9) J : Mr. Ho?

(T10) A : Yes, Mr. Ho is manager.

(T11) J : Manager.

(T12) A : Yeah.

(T13) J : Is he greater than Mr. Smith?

(T14) A : I I I I think there is not wrong about not their position but er er I think that em (pause : 1.99 seconds) to improve the communication [ with among between them.

(T15) J : [ No, I think the their position is important too. If Mr. Smith is greater than Mr. Ho.

(T16) A : Aha.

(T17) J : If I am Mr. Smith, I don't have to consult you before I do anything.

(T18) A : But they are come from different depart department and Mr. Ho is take in charge of the sen er in the er senior staff relations department.

(T19) J : So Mr. Smith have to (pause : 1.20 seconds) [inform

(T20) A : [ in order

(T21) J : [Mr. Ho first

(T22) A : Yeah, but er I see that er there there may be it is it may be not the fault of Mr. other Mr. Smith or Mr. Ho. It may be the problem of Mr. Ho's assistant of not consulting Mr. Ho's in advance.

(T23) J : Yes.

(T24) A : So,

(J laughed)

(T25) A : So mhm it's not the fault of Mr. Ho and the he no need to say sorry to Mr. Smith and

(T26) J : Did he say sorry?

(T27) A : The text said he is in contact. But er (pause : 1.22 seconds) so why don't him phone to Mr. Smith or go to his his office and talk about his matter right now. (pause : 1.81 seconds) But just in but just do nothing and sit down, phone to him. Okay let you go.

(T28) J : If you phone to him, will you do you think they will argue (pause : 2.66 seconds) rigourously?

(T29) A : Mhm er (pause : 1.85 seconds). It is depends on what their manner in especially Mr. Ho. If he is in a good manner, in a xxx, he is trying to find out some improvement in the company in the community. That's okay. I I I don't see they may they may have a rigourous argument.

(T30) J : As er the situation is Mr. Smith has already some souvenirs to some of the guests

(T31) A : Mh

(T32) J : And I think for the sake of the company, it is better to send all the souvenirs first

(T33) A : Mh

(T34) J : and then to solve the internal problems.

(T35) A : Mh I think that er yeah Mr. Smith has sending out er some of the the souvenirs already. I I I'm not (pause : 1.52 seconds) disagree with Mrs Ho Mr. Ho decision to let him go and distribute the rest remaining er souvenir out. But er I'm not er I'm not agree with his decision about doing nothing, not going to er not going to talk ab er to talk to Mr. Smith.

(T36) J : Er in my opinion, is in this time Mr. Ho just let him do it and and then Mr. Ho must go to (pause : 1.45 seconds) talk with him.

(T37) A : Yes, that's what what I suggest. But I I I'm not agree with him, not not doing nothing not doing anything to try to improve the situation, to try to improve [ the communication.

(T38) J : [ But what do you think he can do?

(T39) A : Er

(T40) J : Stop him to send the [ souvenir to xxx.

(T41) A : [ I I I agree I agree that he should let Mr. Smith to send out the remaining souvenirs. But I am not agree with him that er he he is not going to discuss this matter with Mr. Smith because I I I see that er there may be many other occasions that er Mr. Smith Smith has to er obtain some souvenirs from the the department in the future. And if Mr. Ho do not em find out find out the solution to improve the to avoid to avoid this incident from happening a again, then there may be in the future there may be many er other occasions and just let these things happen again and again.

(T42) J : So that the (pause : 1.27 seconds) main them is they must communicate better.

(T43) A : Yeah, but not do making such a such a mh wrong decision xxx doing nothing to discuss about it.

**Group 5 - Second Discussion****Information**

**Date** : 12th April, 1995  
**Time** : 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
**Venue** : KK Leung Building Rm 813  
**Content** : Divergent  
**Planning Time** : No planning time  
**Subjects** : Law Chi Kong (M-20) Wendy (F-19)

**Data**

*Length of discussion* : 12 mins. = 720 seconds  
*Total no. of words* : 1273 words  
*Total no. of turns* : 21 turns  
*Total no. of pauses* : 0 pauses  
*Total no. of hesitations* : 47 hesitations  
*Total length of pauses* : 0 seconds  
*Average length of turns* : 36 seconds per turn  
*Average no. of words per turn* : 60.62 words per turn  
*Average length of pauses* : 0 seconds per pause  
*Frequency of hesitations* : 1 hesitation in every 27.09 words  
*Frequency of pauses* : 1 hesitation in every 15.32 seconds  
*Frequency of pauses* : 0 pause in every words  
*Frequency of pauses* : 0 pause in every seconds

(T1) Law : O.k., let's start by considering whether Mr. Ho's decision is right or wrong. Can you have points to start, maybe?

(T2) W : O.k., er, I think Mr. Ho's with, er, decision is correct because, er, the beginning, Miss Chan, the assistant of Mr. Smith sent a message to the assistant of Mr. Ho about the souvenir, about the request of souvenir that she doesn't tell Mr. Ho directly about the situation. And after, em, the assistant of Mr. Ho is accept, accept the requirement, ah, the request of Miss Chan, and after Mr. Ho know, knows the situation, he was very angry. Ab, not about the, er, stock was out, er, just because of the manner or the behaviour of Mr. Smith's assistant, not directly inform Mr. Ho but through his assistant. I think Mr. Ho's, after this, after all Mr. Ho do the same thing. He ask his assistant to inform Mr. Smith's assistant about his, er, rejection. And the main reason of this, I think is Mr. Ho want to, want to let Mr. Smiths to know his feeling.

(T3) Law : O.k. That's that point, I think. It may be, it may be right and on the surface. But when we look at it, it may be not the case. First of all, em, Mr. Tai's, em, do, first of all, Mr. Hos has the responsibilities to tell Mr. Tais if there is any souvenir or not. First

that's the point. So when Miss Chan ask Mr. Tais, so Mr. Tai can check for it and tell Miss Chan if there is, er, no more sh, shills. The second point is that, em, of course, er, the procedure of Mr. Smith may be wrong. Maybe he er, just ask a assistant to ask for any souvenir. But it doesn't mean that Mr. Hos has the right to do the things, to do the same kind of things because, em, this is a kind of communication problem. So one maybe do something wrong for us but we cannot do something wrong for them. Em, this situation, I think, a kind of revenge will be non-stop from time to time. This will break the relationships of the company. And I think Mr. Hos, maybe, em, he just put his feelings and try to reflect it to other business. This maybe not the right f, form of doing things.

(T4) W : But, I think, er, we can, when we face a situation or task, we have different formats different ways to treat the task or to treat the situation. Mr. Ho's decision is to, er, you, you can say that he is taking a revenge, but, er, in this situation I think it's, it's not a, I mean, in this situation, er, Mr. Ho can take this, take his decision to let Mr. Smith know his feeling through this way because, er, the situation is not an urgent.

(T5) Law : Yes, of course this is a way but not a correct way. Ah, ah, wit, that will, em, affect other things else. Of course we have a lot of resent on something else but we have that other ways to express our, our feelings but not by this. And in additions, em, I think Mr. Hos, he has done something, he may be X and when he ask someone else, even though he ask someone else to tell Mr. Smith, he has to give the rates, what kind of rates and when can, er, Mr. Smith find Mr. Hos or something else. So in the X, em, so the situation, em, X will not be like that when Mr. Smith want to find, er, Mr. Ho. He cannot, he could not because, em, er, maybe Mr. Tais have not er, been informed the ways that Mr. Smith can find Mr. Ho. I think this may be, er, Mr. Ho maybe do something wrong afterward because, er, this is an, another kind of decision, he ask Mr. Tai to give the, em, to inform Mrs. Smith but without giving the rates to communicate.

(T6) W : But I think Mr. Ho's decision is the most effective one because as we can see it, many people do many things on other people that can affect that people, that person but, er, the person cannot understand what, er, I mean, er, A and B, A may have some, er, wrong things on

but B is very unhappy but A cannot understand what, what, what is the feeling of B. So, er, I think Mr. Ho's decision, Mr. Ho's behaviour is to let Mr. Smith know, knows his feeling and this is the most effective one.

(T7) Law : Of course, and you may find it is the effective ways to express his emotions, of course, I think is correct. However, is it the right to express his emotions in such a kind of way, that's another problem. Maybe it's effective, but is not, I think it's not good to everyone in the company because this is just the reflection of the emotions. And this will non-stop from time to time you see afterwards, em, Mr. Smith blame Mr. Ho's assistant and forth and then so forth and so on.

(T8) W : But afterwards you, you can see that Mr. Hos, although Mr. Ho, er, use this way, but this is the one part. After all, Mr. Ho also, er, agree with the Mr. Smith, with Mrs Smith, er, to send the two dozen shields to him and he use the correct form, the correct way of communication. He ask his assistant to inform Mr. Smith directly so that Mr. Smith can get the information and

(T9) Law : O.k., the final decision is right, I agree. However, what about the intermediate steps? If a companys do such a kind of things from time to times, everyone may be busy with such a kind of emotional speaking and this, no one will want this.

(T10) W : But you, you, you can see the situation is not so

(T11) Law : urgent

(T12) W : serious

(T13) Law : Serious, of

(T14) W : it's not so serious, so Mr Ho can, can have this way to let Mr. Smith knows, em

[Law laughed]

(T15) Law : That means that, em, we regard, we disregard the, whether, er, it's right or wrong but we just to see [ whether it's effective way to

(T16) W : [ I don't think that this way is wrong, I don't think that this way is wrong.

(T17) Law : That means that, er, you put your emotions to someone else who will put you in, er, who may, er, give you some emotional words and during his speaking and during this decision or during the relationship between XXX staff ors, or the, or in the company.

(T18) W : He's not taking the emotional revenge.

(T19) Law : Of course, em, he got the feelings he resent. This is a kind of emotion. Of course emotions can be in many forms.

(T20) W : Hm, hm.

(T21) Law : But this is a kind, a category. So I think there, there is no doubt that if we put this kind of feelings in doing things or transmitting information, it's a problem in the company for communication. Although someone may be put this emotions, that is not the excuse for Mr. Hos to do the same things to Mrs. Smith. What we look at is the, is the, what the point is that, Mr. Ho do the things wrong. We are not going to discuss whether Mr. Smith is doing the wrong things or not. Of course he may do some, but this does not the excuse for Mr. Ho to do the same thing.

**Appendix 13****Syntax - Convergent Task****Demonstrative Pronoun****'That' as a demonstrative pronoun**

(group 1)

1. that is our whole point

(group 2)

1. should increase the budget at that moment.
2. ah, that's we we we that's I I has said that er a medium or a communicator is necessary to put into that position.

(group 3)

1. ... they don't want the company to control that.
2. to only those young lady executives.
3. Mr. Kwok should not like that.

(group 4)

1. That is our first advice.
2. ... how effective that advertising company.

(group 5)

1. ... we spend over two-third of the money in that
2. ... to them at that time.

**'this' as a demonstrative pronoun**

(group 3)

- 1&2. This has gone and all this becomes past.
3. ... in this way.

(group 4)

1. ... but this is not a reason I think.
2. ... is more effective than this one.

(group 5)

1. ... introduce this to other boutiques?
2. ... cost for these workers?
3. so so such this untech, use less techniques work.

**Relative Clause****'That' as a relative pronoun**

(group 1)

1. So er, we are going to discuss the advice that Mr. Kwok should should adopt.
2. So the first advice that can be given to Mr. Kwok ...

(group 2)

1. ... I think Mr. Kwok should should appoint someone in the company that familiar with the erm with the executive process or or the the structure or the nature of the company that will be useful as the co-ordinator or the communicator.

**'who' as a relative pronoun**

(group 2)

1. Emm so em you suggest that our next step will be em er find someone er who in charge of the accounting department to em monitor em em the present er work.

**'which' as a relative pronoun**

(group 1)

1. ... in more effective ad advertising company which provides er effective advertisement...

(group 2)

1. Mhm er because there is a budget which has has already been set, ...

**Reporting Statements and Thoughts****'That' in reporting personal and other's statement and thoughts reporting personal statements and thoughts**

(group 1)

1. but from the above case we realize that the the (pause : 2.72 seconds) too much money have been spent on advertising.
2. Yes, er, but I think that the budget may be too small...
3. So the first advice that can be given to Mr. Kwok is that...
- 4&5. We have to make sure that when we throw..., we have to make sure that ...
6. so that we have to make sure that er we can have a ...

(group 2)

1. that that that we have compromised is that em to look er er year plan and adjust the budget.
2. em so em you suggest that our next step will be em er find someone er who in charge of the...
3. ah, that's we we we that's I I has said that er a medium or a communicator is necessary to put into that position.
4. Mhm but I think that is em xxx er em can em give him the emm er budget er every time...

(group 3)

1. Em so my second advice is that em I think (pause : 1.76 seconds) the communication between the advertising company and the marketing department is not very enough.
2. and the xxx the advantages is that em they know exactly both of each other...
3. xxx my last advice is that mhm I think the budget er (pause : 1.71 seconds) should should be carried out by both company.

(group 4)

1. ... I suggest that er although there is a proposal given to Mr. Ho in advance, I suggest...
2. I I I think that they Mr. Kwok can fight for more budget from Mr. the er from the Managing Director.

3. If you say that you use all my money and I continue, ... this is not the reason I think.

(group 5)

1. Then in long term, we see that from the past we only we only spent a small proportion of budget in advertising.
2. No, I mean that about in investigation part, we should use our own staff to investigate and an analysis is our result of the research.
3. First advice is that, in short term, we cut off the advertising price and the cost.
4. Er (pause: 1.16 seconds) the last advice I want to mention is that we can have a open house.
5. One thing that I am worry is that mhm maybe ...
6. You can see in the passage you know that there is ...

#### **reporting other's statements and thoughts**

(group 1)

1. Yes, I see your point and you say that you say that er the growth might go with some advertising ...

#### **Conditional**

##### **whether/whether or not**

(group 2)

1. so to judge whether it will continue or not.
2. and to judge to judge whether xxx should launch the campaign or not once ... the budget.

(group 3)

1. He can evaluate the event of this planning whether this is worth to do it and its...

**if**

(group 1)

1. ... because (pause : 2 seconds) if we advertise we cannot know the effect is is obvious or not obvious.
- 2&3. So we have to took look at the close side and see if the sales does increase due to the advertising effect we can ad advertise more.
4. But if the sales does (pause : 2 mins) not increase considerably so we can cut down some money on advertising.

(group 2)

1. ... if we just erm stop it then the project may be will em will not em be able to ...
2. em but if er if we do that that em I think xxx is highly restricted.
3. ... if xxx spend over this amount, he should report the expenditure.
4. if if erm erm we we set a co-ordinator or a communicator here that the ... Mr. Kwok.

(group 4)

1. ... if you spend too much in advertising and you just increase may be must 10% of sales, you cannot recover.

2. If you say that you use all my money and I continue, and you don't have money to give me so I cannot help you, but this is not the reason I think.

**Time Clause**

**When**

(group 1)

1. ... so we have to make sure that when we throw each coin into ...

(group 4)

1. You can see you can treat them as a competitor when you are in the same market.

(group 5)

1. But er when we go when we conducting a research, we should em employ some other part time workers for us to go to the ... maybe.

**Once**

(group 2)

1. and to judge to judge whether xxx (unclear words) should launch the campaign or not once once he spend more than the budget.

**Reason Clause**

**Since**

(group 3)

1. Since he is very concerned with (pause : 1.29 seconds) this advertising programme em but he he have em any em he have haven't ...

2. Emm I think since em they want to er to keep every customer they may like to provide the best service to them.

(group 5)

1. Since they do not may be have not have not so much er background experience, it may cost money and also time to train them in order to become a good researcher in for the investigation.

**As**

(group 4)

1. As the advertising company is using too much money and it is not possible for Mr. Kwok's company to continue to let the advertising company to continue.

**In order to**

(group 2)

1. So in order to continue the project mhm may be Mr. Kwok er can just em think of giving more money to ...

(group 5)

1. Since they do not may be have not have not so much er background experience, it may cost money and also time to train them in order to become a good researcher in in for the investigation.

**Because****(group 1)**

1. I think we should be controlled because if we spend money inadvertently I think, the the account of the whole company will not be healthy. Is
- 2-4. Okay I I I agree with you that the budget should be enlarged because the the exiting budget can is in fact is very s-m-a-l-l and accordings to the case we given, the budget *should* [emphasized] allow flexibility, that is it can be enlarged as as soon as possible because the existing budget is very small so the first advice that can be given to Mr. Kwok is that the budget should be enlarged so that there is no problem and se-ond-ly inspection of the sales should al should also be taken out because (pause : 2.24 seconds) if we advertise we cannot know the effect is is obvious or not obvious so the sales is the is the most (pause : 1.56 second) enlightening evidence
- 5-8. Em I think the attitude of the of the employers may not may not be good because when they spend they just throw too much money without thinking about the consequences and so I think em a department should be set up to to monitor the money being throw out to advertising because some money will just thrown into advertising Em this should be the main point. Because when we just spend money on it, it er the sales may not increase because the the strength of the competitors may be very strong.
9. yes, I think you are right because some advertising company may not be may not be suitable to our products D : Mhm er because there is a budget [slow] which has has already been set, I I I I suggest Mr. Kwok should follow it because once the budget is set that.

**(group 2)**

- 1&2. Mhm, er because there is a budget which has has already been set, I I I I suggest Mr. Kowk should follow it because once the budget is set that.
3. mhm (pause : 1.27 sec.) but if er but if er er er it's been it's Mr. Kwok em don't er give him any more budget or don't give any more em money and then the budget will stop (pause : 3.74 sec.) because em (pause : 1.22 sec.) actually er other marketing [very quick pronunciation] managers also em also also influence by xxxxx
4. Em because em M-r. Kwok only only er looks into the budget or the project

**(group 3)**

- 1-3. So em my my first advice is the the Mr. Kwok em the marketing manager should express the concern

about xxx advertising company and because em he he is the main controller of the ['the' is emphasized] of the whole market xxx and he should know er the com the whole company should not wholly dependent on the on the advertising company and and more importantly em Mr. Kwok should not like that interrupt and disturb the whole budget because the budget is (pause : 1.29 sec.) is carefully planned and they should not em add some they should not the advertising company should not ask them to add the budget. Because it is the responsibility of the advertising company to carry out the advertisement within the budget.

4. But I think in this situation because it is er I think extremely over budget

(group 4)

1. Er because you cannot ad adjust the effect only in a few months. You if you can er use up all the budget in only few months but the result is great, this is this is okay I think.
2. I I I think that they Mr. Kwok can fight for more budget from Mr. the er from the Managing Director because there's not so much budget left for the more than half a year.

(group 5)

1. Because it is xxx [unclear words].

### **Result clause**

#### **so that**

(group 1)

1. ... so that there is no problem.
2. ... so we have to monitor ... so that each this will maximize our profit.
3. ... so that we can make sure that er we ...
4. ... so that the company will...

(group 2)

1. ... Em so do you agree that em er Mr. Kwok should em give er or to ask the em authority to give him more budget so that the the em the whole process can run more smoothly.

(group 3)

1. And so that so that er they know how to how to spend and where to spend the money on xxx

### **Passive Voice**

(group 1)

- 1-3. So, er we are going to discuss the advice that Mr. Kwok should should adopt, em I think em in changing the image of the company from a conservative one to a new one trendy one, I think some money [slowed down] should be spent [emphasized] on the advertising but [strongly emphasized] from the above case we realize

that the the (pause : 2.72 seconds) too much money have been spent on advertising, I think we should be controlled because if we spend money inadvertently I think, the the account of the whole company will not be healthy. Is

4-9. Okay I I I agree with you that the budget should be enlarged because the the exiting budget can is in fact is very s-m-a-l-l and accordings to the case we given, the budget should [emphasized] allow flexibility, that is it can be enlarged as as soon as possible because the existing budget is very small, so the first advice that can be given to Mr. Kwok is that the budget should be enlarged so that there is no problem and se-ond-ly inspection of the sales should al should also be taken out because

10. Em I think the attitude of the of the employers may not may not be good because when they spend they just throw too much money without thinking about the consequences and so I think em a department should be set up to to monitor the money being throw out to advertising

11. So er if er you have er some points, er the budget can be settled it for flexibility, er we have to inspect the sales and to and to have a clos closer look how people spend it amount of money

(group 2)

1. Aha, I I I think adjusting the budget is possible but the the first first step which do is look [slowing down] look the planning that no more money will be given if er breaking of budget again.

2&3. Em I think em we don't need em to find a coordinator but the em but the er em the some of his expen expenditure should be em er given to er Mr. Kwok frequently er every time he spend, and the [emphasized] budget [emphasized] should be given to him

(group 3)

1. And because em he he is the main controller of the ['the' is emphasized] of the whole market xxx and he should know er the com the whole company should not wholly dependent on the on the advertising company and and more importantly em Mr. Kwok should not like that interrupt and disturb the whole budget because the budget is (pause : 1.29 sec.) is carefully planned and they should not em add some they should not the advertising company should not ask them to add the budget.

2. Em it seems to to me that lack of understanding of this planning since he is [slowed down]very concerned with (pause : 1.29 sec.) this advertising programme em but he he have em any em he have haven't any

understanding of it he will be very difficult to understand this the real situation and (pause : 1.81 sec.) ths and within the plan they sh em the budget the budget set is er maybe erm fully explained em which aspect should be used and xxx effect.

3. xxx my last advice is that mhm I think the budget er (pause : 1.71 sec.) should should be carried out by both company.

(group 4)

A: Er we have to discuss about the problem faced by (pause : 1.42 seconds) by Mr. Kwok about the overbudget of the advertising expenditure.

(group 5)

W: You can see you can treat them as a competitor when you are in the *same market*. But competitors also can be treated as friends.

#### **Indirect Question**

(group 1)

1. ... to have a clos closer look how people spend it amount of money.

(group 2)

- 1&2. and then he can Mr. Kwok can immediately immediately know er how much expand er or em er yeah how much he spend each time so that he can directly em er call him em em to ask him why he spend so much money and so em he ...

(group 3)

1. and the marketing department should know exactly what what the services being provided.
2. and so that so that er they know how to how spend and where to spend the money on...

(group 4)

1. I don't know what is the amount but ...
2. I don't know what what will be happen but ...
3. It depends on how effective that advertising company (is).

(group 5)

1. ... investigation to the market to know what is the needs of the customers and ...
2. we conduct the investigation em what is what problems and what products should be provided.

**Appendix 14****Syntax - Divergent Task****Demonstrative pronoun****'that' as a demonstrative pronoun**

(group 1)

That's the best solution

(group 2)

1. Mhm I I I think er the problem is happen betweened his assistant and Mr. Ho, em that's not Mrs. Mr. Smith problem.

(group 5)

- 1&2. ... many people do many things on other people that can affect that people, that person but er, the person cannot understand what er, er I mean ...
3. So in the xxx em, so the situation, em xx will not be like that.
4. Although someone may be put this emotions, that is not the excuse for Mr. Ho to do the same things to Mrs Smith.
5. ... in such a kind of way, that's another problem.

**'this' as a demonstrative pronoun**

(group 1)

1. ... he should em so let it be this time.
2. ... has done absolutely right this time.
3. And in sit this situation, both sides can come to meet and have a meeting ...
4. Yes, may be the the must have some er they must have compromise each other after this after this case.
5. That em I think em in this case xxx [unclear words] is still wrong.
6. This I I emphasize on some souvenirs that has already been sent.
7. But I I think em in this situation if both sides do not make concessions,...
8. So, em what is your solution in this case?
9. So but er in this case you agree that Mr. Ho is right ...
10. ... I think they should sit down and to find to find the best solution but not just but xxx in this situation ...
11. I think this does not help to solve the problem from the root.
12. And I think this can help to prevent the same thing from happening again in the future.
- 13&14. So in this case, it's a it's the result of this problem.

(group 2)

1. ... later may be another kind of event like this will also be em done in the future.
- 2&3. Em er after this event, I think Mr. Tai will will be allowed em this thing happened.

4. Erm but the fact is that em this em this this situation er is erm happen er which concern about Mr. Ho, Mr. Smith and his assistant.

(group 4)

1. ... should discuss this matter with...
2. But I I I think I suggest him to discuss this matter.
- 3&4. At this time, so this time
5. Er, in my opinion, is in this time ...
6. ... discuss this matter...
7. let these things happen again and again.

(group 5)

1. ... because em this is a kind of communication problem.
2. Em this situation, I think, a kind of revenge will be ...
- 3-5. I mean, in this situation, er Mr. Ho can take this, take his decision to let Mr. Smith know his feeling through this way ...
6. Yes of course this is a way but not a correct way.
- 7&8. I think this may be, er Mr Ho maybe do something wrong afterward because er this is an, another kind of decision,...
9. So, er I think Mr. Ho's decision, Mr. Ho's behaviour is to let Mr. Smith know, knows his feeling and this is the most effective one.
10. ... because this is just the reflection of the emotions.
11. And this will non-stop from time to time ...
12. ...but this is the one part.
- 13&14. ...with such a kind of emotional speaking and this, no one will want this.
15. I don't think that this way is wrong.
16. I don't think that this way is wrong.
17. ... and during his speaking and during this decision or during the relationship between staff ors, or the , or in the company.
18. This is a kind of emotion.
19. ... if we put this kind of feelings ...
20. But this is a kind, a category.
21. It's not so serious, so Mr. Ho can, can have this way to let Mr. Smith

#### Relative Clause

Used 'that' as a relative pronoun

(group 1)

1. This I I emphasize on some souvenirs that has already been sent.
2. I think the best thing is to sit down and have a talk and to find out the best solution but not just but not just to follow the things that they are put into.

(group 2)

1. D : I think the solution is to buy some buy another souvenir  
L : Mh  
D : and set up the rules

L : Mh  
 D : that avoid the similar patterns.  
 2. ... may be you say that em all the souvenirs that em  
 er that is going to er to be given to the guest...

(group 4)

1. But I am not agree with him that er he he is not  
 going to discuss this matter with Mr. Smith because I  
 I see that er there may be many other occasions  
 that er Mr. Smith Smith has to er obtain some  
 souvenirs from the the department in the future.

(group 5)

1. ... many people do many things on other people that  
 can affect that people, that person but er, the  
 person cannot understand what er, er I mean ...  
 2. Mr. Tais have not, er, been informed the ways that  
 Mr. Smith can find Mr. Ho.

**'which' as a relative pronoun**

(group 2)

1. ... this this situation er is erm happen er which  
 concern about Mr. Ho, Mr. Smith and his assistant.  
 2. ... is that any souvenir which will be sent to other  
 department should have ...

**'Who' as a relative pronoun**

(group 2)

1. Emmm so em you suggest that our next step will be em  
 er find someone er who in charge of the accounting  
 department to em monitor em em the present er work.

(group 5)

1. That means that er you put your emotions to someone  
 else who will put you in, er, who may er give you  
 some emotional words and during his speaking and  
 during this decision or during the relationship.

### **Reporting Statements and Thoughts**

**Used 'that' to report personal and other's statements and thoughts**

(group 1)

reporting personal statements

1. I think the most important point is that er they  
 should respect that or accept that there is a  
 cultural difference or mentally difference between  
 the two sides.  
 2. I think in such a situation both side should accept  
 that there is a ...  
 3. Do you think that they should er get the compromise  
 after the event?  
 4. So but er in this case you agree that ... to return  
 the souvenir.  
 5. But the main case is that the main problem is ...  
 6. Yes, I agree that they should have meetings, ...  
 7. I think that em em he should em so let it be  
 8. But I don't think the root of the problem is that  
 there is ...

## (group 2)

## reporting personal statements and thoughts

1. ... the point is that it is not em (pause : 1.27 seconds) it is not the right thing to do.
2. and I don't think em that shield is every special then it can be em just given any of the guests.
3. Erm but the fact is that em this em this this situation...
4. ... an alternative to this problem is that...
5. But the question is that the souvenir is er the souvenirs...
6. But em the situation is now that Mr. Ho is no need to give ...

## (group 3)

1. The first is that I ...
2. My second reason is that ...
3. I agree that both of them have some communication problem.
4. But we are arguing is that Mr. Ho decision.

## (group 4)

1. But I I do think that er he should discuss this matter with em Mr. Smith.
2. I I I agree I agree that he should let Mr. Smith to send out the ...
- 3&4. But I am not agree with him that er he he is not .... because I I I see that er there may be many other occasions that er Mr. Smith Smith has to ...
5. I see that er there there many be it is it may be
6. But I I I'm not I'm not say that Mr. Ho should Mr. Ho should go to Mr. Smith Smith's office or phone to him and scold scold him about his manner.
7. but er er I think that em to improve the communication with among between them.
8. I think that er yeah Mr. Smith has sending not ...

## (group 5)

1. But it doesn't mean that Mr. Hos has the right to dos the things, to do the same kind of things because em, this is a kind of communication problem.
2. The second point is that, em, of course, er the procedures of Mr. Smith may be wrong.
3. Maybe Mr. Tais have not, er, been informed the ways that Mr. Smith can find Mr. Ho...
4. There is no doubt that if we put this kind of feelings ...
5. ... what the point is that Mr. Ho do the things wrong.
6. That means that em we regard, we ...
7. I don't think that this way is wrong.

**reporting other's statements**

## (group 2)

1. And so al although em you say that the souvenir is given out and can't collect back.

2. And then I you em you tell me that er I can get some er some subsitute.
3. Then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy some er substitutes for example ...
4. Er then you say that em Mr. Ho can easily buy some er...
5. So er (pause : 1.95 seconds) may be now Mr. Ho can do nothing... as you say that em all the souvenir...

#### Condititonal Clause

##### whether / whether ... or not

(group 4)

1. I I if Mr. Smith and then to see whether there is ... or among the staff.
2. And to see whether there is an improvement not just for...

(group 5)

- 1&2. That means that em, we regard, we disregard the whether, er it's right or wrong but we just to see whether it's effective way to ...

#### if

(group 1)

1. Be because er if Mr. Ho does not ... I think both sides...
2. ... becuase if they just stand firm and do nothing, I think ...
3. ... if you disagree with Mr. Ho er does, what can you think for hims to do?
4. But I think if they ... I think both sides will suffer a loss.
5. But I I think em in this situation if both side do not make, I think ...

(group 2)

1. Em I think Mr. Ho is is wrong if he he em collect all back of souvenir.
2. Then if Mr. Ho em sou souvenir em will given to ...
3. Mh, if Mr. Ho em allow the ...
- 4&5. If er Mr. Ho can take action... no... that if if once it has done... like this will also be em done in the future.
6. Then if Mr. Ho can take ... and so they won't follow.
7. If Mr. Ho plan, ...

(group 3)

1. if he really tell the other manager, and they can ...
2. if Mr. Ho and the er didn't give out, it may not may not...
3. if if em we have to have some improvement..., we should er we should have the good relationship.

(group 4)

1. If I were Mr. Ho, I would let you do it.
2. If I am Mr. Smith, I don't have to consult you before I do anything.

3. And if Mr. Ho do not em find out find out the solution to improve the to avoid..., there may be in the future there may be ... again and again.
4. If you phone to him, will you do you think they will argue?

(group 5)

1. If a companys do usch a kind of things from time to times, everyone may be busy with such a kind of emotional speaking...
2. ... there is no doubt that if we put this kind of feeling... it's a problem...

### **Concessive clause**

(group 1)

1. ... although Mr. Smith haven't informed Mr. Ho er beforehand em when he take out the sourvir, but ...

(group 2)

1. And so al although em you say that ..., the point is that ...
2. Though you say that souvenir can be buy ... but sometimes em ... will get er problem.

(group 5)

1. .... although Mr. Ho, er, use this way, but this is the one part.
2. Although someone may be put this emotions, that is not the excuse for Mr. Hos to do the same things to Mrs. Smith.
3. Even though he ask someone else to tell Mr. Smith, he has to give the rates, what kind of rates...

### **Time Clause**

#### **Once**

(group 2)

1. Em I think Mr. Ho is wrong since er once the souvenirs are presented, em there is no way to to collect them back.
2. Oh I I think it's so very embarrassed and it will affect the image of the company once you withdraw of withdraw the souvenir.

#### **When**

(group 1)

1. Because when we just spend money on it, it er the sales may not increase because ...

(group 2)

1. Oh I I think it's so very embarrassed and it will affect the image of the company once you withdraw of withdraw the souvenir.
2. So when em just when another similar happenings, em I think it will inform Mr. Ho as soon as possible.

(group 5)

1. But when we look at it, it may be not the case.

2. ... em xxx will not be like that when Mr. Smith want to find er Mr. Ho.
3. But I think er we can when we face a situation or task, we have different formats, different ways to treat the task or to treat the situation.
4. ... he may be xxx and when he ask someone else,...

### **Reason Clause**

#### **As**

##### **(group 3)**

1. As I think he should gives er give the actual reason to to the other the manager rather than giving out su such excuse as the give er the gift cannot be given to local guest.

##### **(group 4)**

1. As er the situation is Mr. Smith has already some souvenirs to some of the guests

##### **(group 5)**

1. But I think Mr. Ho's decision is the most effective one because as we can see it, ...

### **Because**

#### **(group 1)**

1. But as she say em some some of the souvenirs have already sent out em it should not be em returned back em because it may destroy the company destroy the commission image. But I think Mr. Ho has done the right thing.
2. Be because er if Mr. Ho does not make concessions, I think both sides will not gain advantage and the result will be the lowering of working efficiency.
3. But I think Mr. Ho has done right because if they just stand firm and do nothing, I think both sides will not gain advantage.
4. Yes, because the event had had already happened.
5. Em may be em we should talk to Mr. Smith afterwards because em he can't do anything in this case.
6. Because em em there is we we can't ask the guest to return the sourvenirs or just left em some of them haven't got the sourvenirs.

##### **(group 4)**

1. But I am not agree with him that er he he is not going to discuss this matter with Mr. Smith because I I see that er there may be many other ocassions that er Mr. Smith Smith has to er obtain some souvenirs from the the department in the future.

##### **(group 5)**

1. O.K. er I think Mr. Ho's with er decision is correct because er, the beginning, Miss Chan ...
2. Ah, not about the, er, stock was out, er, just because of the manner of the behaviour of Mr. Smith's assistant, ...

3. But it doesn't mean that Mr. Hos has the right to do the things, to do the same kind of things because, em, this is a kind of communication problem.
4. ... take his decision to let Mr. Smith know his feeling through this way because, er, the situation is not an urgent.
5. He cannot, he could not because, em, er ...
6. Mr. Ho maybe do something wrong afterward because, er, this is an, another kind of decision...
7. But I think Mr. Ho's decision is the most effective one because as we can see it, ...
8. I think it's not good to everyone in the company because this is just the reflection of the emotions.

### **Result Clause**

#### **So that**

(group 4)

1. So that the (pause : 1.27 seconds) main them is they must communicate better.

(group 5)

1. He ask his assistant to inform Mr. Smith directly so that Mr. Smith can get the information and

### **Reported Speech**

(group 1)

1. Em as Mr. Smith has said we can't have er some some guests...

(group 3)

1. I think in your point you you have say er the better understanding or communication is very crucial.

### **Rhetorical Question**

(group 2)

- 1-3. Then what can I do? I promise to give ... And who who can it do? I just I promise to give ... but I promise to give them a shield. Then how can I collect them back?

(group 4)

1. so why don't him phone to Mr. Smith or go to his his office and talk about his matter right now?

### **Passive Voice**

(group 1)

1. But as she say em some some of the souvenirs have already sent out em it should not be em returned back em because ...
2. However, we should we should focus on the case that some of the souvenirs have already been sent out to the guest.
3. This I I emphasize on some souvenirs that has already been sent.

(group 2)

- 1&2. But em the souvenir er erm er (pause : 2.13 seconds) but the souvenir er possessed by Mr. Ho and before

Mr. Ho know that the souvenir will be given to anyone em the souvenir was gone.

3. And so al although em you say that the souvenir is given out and ...
4. Then if Mr. Ho em sou souvenir em will given to someone else and ...
5. ... he can't he can he can do anything em to to substitute the shield given out.
6. ... like this will also be em done in the future.
7. ... is that any souvenir which will be sent to other ...
8. So I think em at least he will be informed.
9. Em the souvenir can be brought in the coming future as soon as possible.
- 10&11. .... all the souvenir that em er that is going to er to be given to the guest will be informed er ....

## (group 3)

1. Erm otherwise the small conflict in the company will be expand into the very ...
2. ... as the give er the figt cannot be given to local guest.
3. And I think some compromise should be made in this case. Aha.

## (group 5)

1. ... Mr. Tais have not , er , been informed the ways that ...

**Indirect Question**

## (group 2)

1. Then if Mr. Ho can take the action, and the whole company will know what is what's happening and So they won't em follow

## (group 4)

1. It is depends on what their manner is in especially Mr. Ho.

## (group 5)

1. even though he ask someone else to tell Mr. Smith, he has to give the rates, what kind of rates and when can, er Mr. Smith find Mr. Hos or something else.
2. er I mean, er, A and B, A may have some er wrong things on but B is very unhappy but A cannot understand what, what, what is the feeling of B.