Relations Between Teachers’ Conceptions of In-class and Out-of-class Interactions and Reported Teaching Practices

Teachers’ Belief Study

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of Linguistics and Psychology, Macquarie University, 19, May 2006
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Abstract

Spoken interaction with others is one of the most powerful tools in learning and teaching a second language. This investigation is concerned with uncovering and categorising the ways a group of L2 teachers’ describe their experiences and beliefs of two types of spoken interaction; those that occur in the classroom (ICI) and those that occur outside the classroom (OCI). Twenty-eight EAP teachers were interviewed using phenomenographic and ethnographic investigative approaches and asked to describe their experiences and how they thought about and used spoken interactions in the teaching and learning of a situated lesson. The conceptions that emerged as consistent (reported as experienced most frequently across the group and within individual transcripts) were identified and categorised into two sets of categories of description (COD) one for each type of interaction. Across the group of teachers, five stable ICI categories of conceptions were identified and four stable OCI categories of conceptions were identified. These categories describe the range of conceptions that emerged across the group as a whole and do not attempt to rate the understandings of individual teachers.

The conceptions of interactions in both sets of categories followed a hierarchal pattern of development from less complete to more complete understandings of these interactions. These descriptions formed two frameworks that are supported by similar patterns describing less complete and more complete understandings of various concepts in sets of categories published in other education settings (Marton & Booth, 1997). Exploration into the teaching and learning approaches reported in the teachers’ experiences of ICI and OCI indicated that the utilization of interactions was constrained by the ways these interactions were conceived. Relations between more developed conceptions of both phenomena emerged in situations where more developed conceptions were reported. In these situations both ICI and OCI were simultaneously present in the teachers’ awareness and perceived as different aspects of the same teaching/learning situations. Across the group the teachers reported less powerful ideas of how to utilize OCI than how to utilize ICI.
Declaration: Statement of Authorship

I certify that this work is the result of my own research and that this work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. References to work of other authors have been properly acknowledged within the text of the thesis and cited in the bibliography. Epigraphs from well-known educators and philosophers used to illustrate some of the points on learning and teaching in the individual chapters have been cited in a special section page (xi). I certify that the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length (93,098), exclusive of bibliographies, appendices and footnotes.

Signed: 

Date: ......May 19th, 2006..........................
Sources of Epigraphs

Epigraphs used in thesis are well known teaching and learning quotes that can be

Accessed on multiple links at the following sites:

Teachers Talk http://brownvbaord.org/brwnqurt/01-2/01-2h.htm

World of Quotes http://www.worldofquotes.com/author/index.html

Quotes from famous people http://www.nonstopenglish.com

Educational Quotes http://www.oregonparentsunited.org/educational_quotes.htm
Acknowledgments

I had the support of many people in the completion of this thesis. My warmest appreciation goes to Associate Professor David Hall for his thoughtful support and insightful supervision, which helped greatly towards making the project an enjoyable and rewarding exploration. I also need to thank the administration and staff in the postgraduate section of the Linguistics Division at Macquarie University: Collette, Robyn and Lorraine in particular for going out of their way to quickly assist with professionalism, speed and warm smiles with the various problems that come up in a long project.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to both the Linguistic Division and the Division of Higher Research for the additional support I received in being awarded conference grants and a postgraduate award that allowed me to attend conferences meet academics with specialised knowledge in various areas that influenced the project. The opportunities to meet and discuss the investigation with peers during significant points in the research were instrumental to the completion of the project. Reflection and consideration on points introduced by audience members and the nameless readers who took time to critically comment on manuscripts was particularly helpful. In some cases these opportunities resulted in publications in conference proceedings these have been clearly cited in footnotes in those sections of the thesis where those ideas are noted.

Special thanks also to Associate Professor Michael Prosse who agreed very kindly to work in an honorary capacity to assist with the phenomenographic analysis reported in the thesis. I also need to express gratitude to the people that helped in assisting with getting the thesis together; Teresa Kempe for her help in typing up the data; Nowick Gray for his help in editing and formatting; Yefim Levinski for his help with statistical analysis; and Kate Davis for helping with all sorts of organizing and odd jobs that were invaluable in keeping everything on track. I also owe a very special thank you to Samantha Pickering for her encouragement and interest throughout the process, her expertise in helping me to edit and check the referencing, and her selflessness in coordinating the printing and binding of my final submission.

In many ways, the greatest debt I owe is to my family who provided moral support throughout the process but in the last year especially assisted in so many ways when unexpected happenings made completion seem very difficult. And lastly my beautiful daughter Chenoa in particular was born just prior to the start of the project and has been so patient dealing with a preoccupied mother that “always has homework to do” I am finally finished and thank you for your love and understanding.
### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocating to the highest possible level:</strong></td>
<td>Refers to the categorization of individual transcripts as a whole through identifying the concepts or perceptions that are most prominent within each situation explored (12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belief or Conception:</strong></td>
<td>In this thesis, these terms are used simultaneously, refer to a more developed idea or an opinion that is the result of experience or a process of reflection, and are thought to be true (1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Categorical Framework:</strong></td>
<td>A set of descriptions that have been organized as separate conceptions that emerged across the group of individuals studied. In this thesis, the categories that emerged appeared to be related in that the ways individual experiences were described formed a pattern across the group of teachers’ that moved from less complex to more complex descriptions of the ways that the phenomena were conceived and understood (144).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Categories of Description:</strong></td>
<td>From a phenomenographic perspective, conceptions are considered as relations between individuals and a particular task and context. These conceptions are viewed as dynamic and dependent on the particular context and task in which they are being studied. At the same time, though, proponents of this view consider the number of conceptions and approaches about particular phenomena to exist in relatively small numbers, which can be identified and described (96).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicate:</strong></td>
<td>Within this thesis this term refers to the transfer of meaning or concepts through speaking in the target language rather than using written texts or non-verbal communication techniques (5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicative competence:</strong></td>
<td>In the field of language teaching this term generally refers to the students’ knowledge of the language and ability to use the target language effectively and appropriately (37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency:</strong></td>
<td>In this thesis this term refers to how the teachers’ described experiences of perceiving learning as occurring through Teachers’ Beliefs Study</td>
</tr>
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observing the language learners' successful use of the language (51).

**Constitute:**
A phenomenographic term that describes change in the way something is experienced that comes about through developing an awareness of different aspects and or understanding details of those aspects (59).

**Constitutionalist perspective:**
A non-dualistic perspective, which holds that the world and the individual are internally related through the individual's awareness of the world and the aspects of the world, that he or she experiences (20).

**Event:**
In this thesis a term that refers to an action described in the lessons reported by the EAP teachers. The primary event in many of the lessons described was the task or activity assigned or arranged by the teacher. During these events, instances of planned interaction and unplanned interaction were described (32).

**Formal experiences:**
In this thesis this term refers to the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers' individual experiences as a learner or teacher that occurred outside of the lesson reported but originated within a formal academic context. These formal experiences were reported as informing the individual teacher's understanding of a particular situation described in the interview (268).

**Highest category:**
In phenomenographic studies categorising or classifying perceptions in terms of the highest category means the identification of concepts for which there was substantial evidence within the transcript (128).

**Informal experiences:**
In this thesis this term EAP teachers' individual experiences as a learner or teacher that occurred outside of the lesson reported but originated within an informal context. These formal experiences were reported as informing the individual teacher's understanding of a particular situation described in the interview (268).
**Instance:** In this thesis specific instances of spoken interaction reported by the teacher for example when a teacher described students as ‘working together to discuss the task’ the teacher was then asked to reflect on how they experienced learning and teaching in that particular moment or instance (123).

**Learning:** From a phenomenographic perspective, learning is described in a series of steps or as a growing awareness. Learning is perceived as internally connected to what is experienced—what is learned cannot be separated from the person’s experience of that phenomenon (ix, 1).

**Less complex, less complete or limited descriptions of conceptions:** In this thesis, these terms were used interchangeably to identify differences in conceptions of interactions in the experiences reported. The categorization of these descriptions where organized using phenomenographic methods however they were also grounded within a large body of L2 literature and educational research outlining surface approaches to teaching and learning (90).

**More complex or less complex ways of experiencing:** Aspects of a phenomenon often are separated and experienced separately in a sequential order. For instance, when learning numbers, children experience different aspects of the number. The number 6 might first be understood as the sound that follows the sound of the number 5, the child might then learn to recognise the symbol for that sound, then recognize the number sequentially, then understand the value of the number when counting objects and so on. Complexity refers to the fuller ways of experiencing a phenomenon that emerge when multiple aspects or parts of the whole are experienced simultaneously and described (x, 156).

**More complex, more complete descriptions of conceptions:** In this thesis, these terms were used interchangeably to identify differences in conceptions of interactions reported by the EAP teachers. The categorizations of these descriptions were organized using phenomenographic methods however they were also grounded within a large body of L2 literature describing...
deep approaches to teaching and learning (359).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Object of study:</strong></th>
<th>What the teacher was trying to teach in a specific situation (166).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome space:</strong></td>
<td>The compilation or grouping of the different ways, a phenomenon is experienced across a group which (as a rule) form a hierarchy (287).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-class interactions:</strong></td>
<td>In this thesis the term specifically refers to spoken interaction in the target language with speakers of the target language occurring outside a classroom context (I, 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outside Experiences:</strong></td>
<td>In this thesis refer to experiences reported by the teachers describing the learning and teaching experiences that occurred outside the formal context of the classroom but were reported as naturally emerging either from the teacher or from the students within the spoken interactions described in a particular lesson (ix, 217).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perception:</strong></td>
<td>In this thesis this term refers to a single meaning or idea that may be based only on intuition, feeling, or a brief experience (I, 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phenomenography:</strong></td>
<td>A research method that is concerned with the collective aspects or manifests of phenomena those become apparent across a group of individuals and are described in pictures or words. This method is specifically useful when describing phenomena as others see them and describing the variation in ways of experiencing something within an educational context. (19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Real life data:</strong></td>
<td>In this thesis refers to those interactions that the teacher had firsthand knowledge of, either as a participant or as an observer, rather than interactions that they had not experienced themselves (17).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation:</strong></td>
<td>A phenomenographic term that describes the wholeness of what is experienced is the situation. The situation occurs in a specific location, time and place. In this thesis, these situations occurred in a specified location, time and place, with a particular type of teacher teaching students of similar proficiency levels for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
similar purposes, which has been described as a situated context by the researcher. The specific situations in the lessons reported by the teachers refer to the whole group of instances where a particular learning or teaching experience is described. These descriptions of specific teaching and learning situations didn’t always happen in chronological order. As in most real life conversations, the teachers’ descriptions of a lesson (or a series of tasks in one lesson) did not follow a linear process but occurred within teachers’ individual narratives of the entire experience of the lesson. When describing a task that occurred in the lesson for example the EAP teachers often expressed multiple types of learning or teaching situations experienced (4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher cognition:</th>
<th>A term used to describe the general body of research into language teachers’ thinking, beliefs, perceptions, conceptions, knowledge, transfer of knowledge, constructions, etc. (53).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The object experienced:</td>
<td>In this thesis is (collectively) the different ways that a group of teachers report their awareness of how they experience in-class and out-of class interactions in the teaching and learning of second language (20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation in ‘Ways’ of Experiencing:</td>
<td>Phenomenographic term that describes differences in how relevant aspects of a particular phenomenon are not always simultaneously present in an individual’s awareness. In one situation, one aspect may be separated from other aspects of the phenomena and more evident in an individual’s awareness whereas other aspects may not be discernable (156).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation:</td>
<td>A change in an aspect or the structure that surrounds the person experiencing a phenomenon (107).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Introduction: The Influence of Second Language Teachers’ Conceptions and the Role of Interactions in Language Learning

1.1 Introduction

The way that second languages\(^1\) are taught today has been influenced by theories of language learning and research that focus heavily on the language student (Anderson, Greeno, Reder, and Simon, 2000; Detaramani & Chan, 1996; Geddes & Stutridge, 1997). Language teachers, however (like other teachers), also embody values, attitudes, and ways of being and thinking that influence what goes on in the classroom. So questions naturally arise about how these ways of being and thinking influence the students. In other subject areas, *teacher perceptions*\(^2\) of their teaching roles, along with their *beliefs* regarding teaching and learning, are considered particularly powerful and have been found to have a strong impact on student success (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999b).

Studies in mathematics and sciences have shown that teachers’ conceptions of learning and teaching are consciously altered in relation to subject area and their perception of student ability (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Trigwell, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999). Therefore, we cannot expect to generalize from what has been learned about teachers’ conceptions of teaching a subject at one level of ability (e.g., novice language learners) to apply to the same subject taught to learners at vastly

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\(^1\) In this thesis I use a broad definition of “second language learning” proposed by others, which includes the learning of any language to any level, if the learning of the second language takes place after the first language has been acquired (Mitchell & Myles, 2001)

\(^2\) Although some researchers may prefer different definitions, in this paper the term “perception” refers to a single meaning or idea that may be based only on intuition, feeling, or a brief experience. The terms “conception” or “belief,” however, are used simultaneously and refer to a more developed idea or an opinion that is the result of experience or a process of reflection and is thought to be true.
different levels of ability. Nor is it possible to simply transfer information on teacher perceptions and beliefs gathered in one subject area and assume it to be relevant to another.

The subject of language is distinct in many ways from the teaching and learning of other subjects, owing to its social and communicative nature (Allwright, 1979; Saville-Troike, 1982). The teaching and learning of a second language, in particular, involves developing cultural knowledge and understanding of the target language community, which differentiates it from other subject areas (Chen, Stevenson, Hayward, & Burgess, 1995; Hudson-Hickling, 1997; Jiang, 2000; Kubota, 1999). These "sociolinguistic" properties of second language (L2) teaching and learning suggest that the relations between teachers' conceptions and their teaching approaches, along with the influence this has on students, will also be unique and should be investigated as a subject on its own.

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.
—Henry Brooks Adams (1838-1919, American man of letters)

According to Adams' quote, a teacher's influence reaches beyond the content of a particular lesson; this has also been reported empirically (Knowles, 1999; Heyneman & Todoric-Bebic, 2000). Research in other areas such as mathematics and science report that teachers' beliefs of learning and teaching a subject influences how they approach the teaching of a subject (Berg, 2002; Driver, Asoko, Leach, Mortimer, & Scott, 1994; Handal, Bobis, & Grimison, 2001). Some studies strongly indicate a connection between these beliefs and teaching practices and how students approach

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3 In the case of international languages such as English and Spanish that can be situated within a complex system of communities within the context of multi-cultural societies, the definition of "target community" presents its own set of problems.
learning that subject (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993; Prosser, Trigwell, & Taylor, 1994). Teachers' influences are particularly important when we consider the numerous qualitative and quantitative studies that have reported an association between students' approaches to learning and their language learning outcomes (Freeman & Richards, 1993; Nunan, 1996; Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Williams, 1999). Yet, much of the past research on teachers in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom has focused on what they do in the classroom (teaching methodologies) rather than investigating the conceptions behind particular teaching approaches.

This lack of inquiry into the relations between teachers' beliefs and actual teaching practices in the area of second language teaching seems to suggest a dualistic view. Unlike the prominence and effort that has gone into understanding the relations between ESL learners' conceptions and their approaches to learning, ESL teachers' conceptions are somehow regarded as separate from the teaching approaches they adopt. Much more consideration is given to the influence of teacher training on teaching practices, with calls of more or improved training frequently reported (R. Brown, 2000; Jochums & Rodriguez, 1994; Reichelt, 2000). Yet, investigations into teaching practices report that teaching methodologies and theoretical perspectives taught in teacher-training programs appear to have little influence over what actually occurs in the classroom (Archer, 2000; Freeman & Richards, 1993; Zahorik, 1986).

Still, the influence of language teachers in the language classroom and on the language learning process is implicitly and continually emphasized in course evaluations where learners are frequently asked to evaluate their teachers' skills and continually report that their teachers' input is an important factor in their learning (Schellekens, 2003). The beliefs that underpin these skills and practices are still largely a mystery. It is my belief that if the purpose of research into language development is to
improve teaching and learning, then we need to shift the focus from merely evaluating current teaching practices to understanding the thinking behind these practices. In particular we need to try to understand the relations between these teachers’ conceptions, what is taught in the classroom, and what second language students learn (K. Patrick, 2000). The only way to uncover these conceptions and develop an understanding of how these conceptions relate to practice is to go to what Ginott (below) terms the “decisive” element and ask the teachers themselves.

I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. My personal approach creates the climate. My daily mood makes the weather. As a teacher, I have a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.

—Dr. Haim G. Ginott (1922-1973)

In this thesis, I will be reporting findings from an investigation that explores the relations between teachers’ beliefs and reported practice through what could be termed a key element of second language development: out-of-class interactions.\(^4\)

1.2 Background

1.2.1 STLM Project

The questions I propose to investigate began to form during a study I conducted in 1998 as a Master’s in Education student, called the “Self Time Learning Modification” (STLM) project. This study focused on problems with outside

\(^4\) The term “out-of-class interactions” in this proposal specifically refers to spoken interaction in the target language with speakers of the target language.
interactions from the learners' perspective. The focus came about naturally from students' complaints that they were unhappy with the interactions they were having with Australian English speakers outside the classroom, and expressions that this was impacting their progress in SLA. Therefore, the study was directly based on learners' needs, thus according with current pedagogical beliefs that successful language teaching methodologies should be centred on student needs (Nunan, 1988).

The students were adults attending courses at a private ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) centre who had reached a level of "upper-intermediate" to "advanced" proficiency in English. In other words, they had the language knowledge and skills to communicate in a manner that could be understood by speakers of the target language outside the classroom. Therefore, these interactional problems could not be attributed solely to teaching methodologies or lack of ability. The aim of the study was to look at ways in which the students could improve their English language learning through effecting changes in their out-of-class interactions.

Over the course of the project, the students closely observed their own interactional experiences and described their conceptions of how these interactions related to their language acquisition both individually (taped and written journals) and with others (focused discussions with other participants). In addition, they reflected on the perceptions (held individually and represented in the group) of factors viewed as barriers to language learning. They then developed goals and learning strategies to overcome specific interactional problems they had identified. The project itself could be viewed as successful owing to both the group reports and individual assessments provided at the end of the project by the students. An additional, unexpected outcome
of the investigation was that the classroom teachers, of their own accord, were also reporting significant changes and improvements in individual students’ second language development within the classroom context. The students’ classroom teachers or in-class interactions had not been explicitly considered in the STLM study. Yet the different ways these students’ had focused on improving their outside social interactions appeared to have impacted how these students had interacted in classroom contexts as well. Differences in how students’ interacted or improvements in their formal classroom learning were noticed by a number of these students’ teachers who approached me voluntarily and informally to ask why so and so’s listening or speaking had improved so quickly, or what it was that students were doing in self-access because—“Student X or student Y is really doing well in my class; their proficiency has notably improved.”

Initially, I attributed this success to changes or modifications in the students’ learning approaches as a consequence of self reflection and co-operative learning, which were observed through the students working together in groups and pairs discussing their weekly out-of-class interactions in self-access as well as individually outside of class (for an overview see Bunts-Anderson, 2000a). The steps the students went through in developing their learning processes were closely analysed. The similarities these learning processes had with current research on the development of learners’ self-regulatory skills were given particular attention (see Bunts-Anderson, 2000a).

5 The term “communicate” within this thesis refers to the transfer of meaning or concepts through speaking in the target language rather than through the use of written texts or non-verbal communication techniques.
1.2.2 Current Investigation

In planning the current thesis the next step in the research process appeared to be further investigations that considered the current opportunities students had to work on these spoken interactions in their language development. The self-study time allocated by language institutions nationally and internationally, and the growing body of research on self-access centres (for examples see Chun, 1997; D. Gardner, 1993; Gremmo & Riley, 1995; Martyn, 1993) clearly indicated that this would be an appropriate context in which to situate the research. This focus was particularly viable in the Australian context, as many institutions have allocated 5 out of 25 hours of tuition time to self-study (frequently termed “self-access”) in response to NEAS (National English Accreditation Scheme) accreditation requirements (Bowyer, 1995; Thurlow, 1995).

However, it was through the continued process of analysing findings from this initial study, and reflecting on remarks received from administrators and academics in the area, that I began to closely consider the relations between the teachers’ involvement in such learning processes, and outcomes. When I had presented the results of the STLM study I received comments from peers such as, “You are a very good teacher; I wish I had time to do that”—or, “That seems like a productive focus for students’ self-study time; could I have a copy of your materials?” Focusing on students’ language learning strategies had seemed like a natural and logical focus for a self-study situation—was a teacher’s involvement with language development outside of class really that unusual? If focusing on out-of-class interactions seemed unusual for a self-access situation, how would it be perceived within the classroom context? If these interactions were approached in the classroom, how were they approached? Did the
teachers initiate a focus on these interactions or did the students, as had been the case in the STLM study? Did teachers’ beliefs regarding these interactions somehow influence how they were approached in the classroom?

There is ample evidence in the literature that approaches to learning which focuses on “real life” social interactions are considered to be not only beneficial to the language learner but an integral part of the developmental process. Krashen, well known for his \((i+1)\) hypothesis, describes the teachers’ role as providing comprehensible input and helping students to obtain input outside the classroom: “Our goal, I think, is to bring students to the point where they can improve on their own from the informal environment” (Krashen, 1981, p. 106). Yet, there is very little information on how current teaching practices address these out-of-class interactions. In fact it could be argued that such teaching practices are perceived as rare rather than the standard, as evidenced in the excerpt below (taken from notes of an interview I conducted with the Director of Studies (DOS) at a NSW ELICOS centre).

The DOS stated that although she viewed working on problems with outside interactions to be an appropriate use of self-access, she felt that the teachers lacked the motivation and training to use this time on the students’ behalf. She explained that “only isolated packs of dedicated teachers were willing to put in the effort” and that it would not be possible to expect this effort from all teachers. Arguing, “You can’t because where the industry is built on casual staff who have realistically very little hope of becoming permanent staff, uhh it’s almost .... Why do they have to go the extra mile?” (Bunts-Anderson, 2000b)

This statement seemed to confirm what I was reading in the literature; but if learners’ out-of-class interactions were considered to be outside the framework of

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6 Many of the findings mentioned are described in detail in the following published references: (Bunts-Anderson, 2000a, 2000c).

7 In this hypothesis, for learners to acquire a language it is necessary that learners understand the meaning of the communication or language input (either in written or oral form) presented by the teacher, in a structure that is just a “little beyond” the student’s current level of ability (K. Johnson & Johnson, 1998).

Teachers’ Beliefs Study
students’ self-study time, how were they approached in classroom teaching? When was an appropriate time to focus on out-of-class interactions? Teachers clearly were considered to have some responsibility over the management of classroom discourse: designing courses, planning lessons, deciding what was taught as well as assessing what was learned. What were teachers’ conceptions of out-of-class interactions in second language learning? Why was there so much research on the various types of interactions that occurred in the classroom, but very little insight published on L2 teachers’ conceptions of classroom discourse? Were teachers’ conceptions of interactions both in and outside the classroom considered important; and what sort of influence did teachers’ conceptions have on how they approached the teaching and learning inside and outside of the classroom?

1.3 Second Language Literature: Teachers’ Conceptions and Out-of-class Interactions

1.3.1 L2 Learners and Teachers

An initial review of literature (see Table 1.1) on these topics suggested a definite imbalance between the large amount of literature published on second language learners’ conceptions of L2 learning and interactions (40 publications) and second language teachers’ conceptions of the same phenomena (20 publications). Studies and publications of learners’ conceptions are numerous and varied; researchers have explored the influence of students’ knowledge on the process of learning a target language in terms of acquiring or improving literacy skills, vocabulary, question forms, 

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8 Table 1.1 only outlines literature in a preliminary search; it does not attempt to represent the multitude and complexity of studies that have been done on learners’ perceptions and conceptions of language learning. Oxford, for example, almost twenty years ago used 60 strategies identified from previous literature on L2 learning to develop the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL). SILL classified the relations between learners’ thinking and actions as cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social and affective (Oxford, 1986).
grammar, etc.). In comparison there seemed to be only a few studies conducted specifically on teachers’ conceptions (see S. Borg, 1998b; Freeman, 1993; Woods, 1991). The vast majority of publications on L2 teachers’ beliefs, however, appeared to be referring to these beliefs as a contextual factor that may or may not hinder or promote various curriculum innovations, the implementation of teaching methodologies, or the design of classroom learning environments (Boekaerts, 1994; A. L. Brown, 1994).

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In an article outlining advances on learning and the impact of theory on teaching practices, A. L. Brown (1994) describes learning as an active process where learners benefit from sharing knowledge and experience with others—in “a community of learners” where the teacher learns along with the students “as well as assists their efforts” (p. 8). The implication is that the teacher as part of the group would be sharing knowledge and experience; however, within the article the teacher is explicitly positioned outside the learning process as “a provider of expert guidance” or as a tool: “Instruction is a major class of aids and tools to enhance the mind” (p. 4).

The imbalance I discovered between our understanding of learners’ conceptions and teachers’ conceptions of interactions was also noted by others (Bruer, 1994; Cooper, 1989; Freeman & Richards, 1993), and it was illustrated not only by differences in quantity but also in quality. Learners’ conceptions of classroom interactions were often the topic of research, whereas teachers’ knowledge and practices were often described as factors or tools external to the actual interactional/learning process. This contrast between how L2 teachers’ conceptions and L2 learners’ conceptions were reported was commented on by Freeman and Richards (1993) who argued that the lack of research on L2 teachers’ conceptions represented a large gap in our current understanding of the L2 learning and teaching process, and that such research was both critical and overdue:

In the field of second language instruction, we have been slow to recognize that teaching needs to be examined and understood on its own terms. Conceptions of language teaching and the work of language teachers which shape the multiple activities in the field of second language instruction are generally tactic and often go unquestioned.” (p. 193)

Teachers' Beliefs Study
1.3.2 Out-of-Class Interactions

A similar imbalance between the available L2 research on in-class and out-of-class interaction was also evident in the literature. In Table 1.1, for example, 11 of the 60 publications reviewed specifically focus on the teaching and learning that occurs through L2 in-class interactions. In comparison only 3 out of 60 publications mention out-of-class interactions in L2 learning in great detail (Cooper, 1989; Norton, 1998; Wallerstein, 1983). The focus of these publications was to raise awareness of the important role that both in and out-of-class interactions play in developing L2 learners’ social and cultural identity, rather than outlining specific teaching and learning processes related to these interactions. More explicit descriptions regarding the relations between interactions and teaching and learning were evident in the general education literature such as in reading comprehension (Kucan & Beck, 1997), in science instruction (Driver et al., 1994), and in descriptions of social processes in children’s learning (Hudson-Hickling, 1997; Light & Littleton, 1999).

Information regarding L2 teachers’ conceptions of out-of-class interactions was conspicuously absent in the literature. However, the influence of teachers’ conceptions was highlighted by Cooper’s work where L2 teachers were encouraged to reflect on these interactions in the planning process (1989) and by both Boyd and Norton who discuss the emergence of teachers’ conceptions during classroom discussions and the impact this may have on students’ learning both in and outside the classroom (Boyd & Maloof, 2000; Norton, 1998). From a L2 learner perspective, the beliefs learners hold regarding the influence of both in-class and out-of-class interactions on individual language learning appeared to be widely acknowledged and were briefly mentioned or referred to in many of the publications reviewed—most particularly in the literature.
focused on learners' choices or the development of an independent learning process (Lemos, 1999; Littlejohn, 1985).

The large number of students that choose to attend education institutions in countries where the target language is spoken also underlines the fact that language learners perceive their language learning to be highly influenced by the opportunity to interact with members of target language community (see Literature Review Part A, Section 2.11 for Australian statistics; for international statistics see United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1996; for educational implications see Fasold, 1984; Heyneman, 2000a, 2000b, 2001). In fact, these out-of-class interactions have been perceived by both learners and language theorists to be the most important factor in second language development in a number of studies (Nesdale, Simkin, Sang, Burke, & Fraser, 1995; O'Donnell, 1994; Pica, 1998; Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996; Polanyi, 1995). However, to date there has been very little research into teachers' perceptions of these interactions and how their conceptions relate to their teaching approaches.

1.4 Current Investigation

Much of the past research on language teachers has focused on teaching methodologies; that is, what they do in the classroom (Oxford, 1990; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998; Slavin, 1994; Wallace, 1998). The conceptions behind particular teaching approaches or activities is a relatively new focus of research in the area of language learning. This focus on language teachers’ beliefs emerged in the last decade and has increasingly emerged as an area of importance that should be investigated:

It is obvious that what teachers do is directed in no small measure by what they think … to the extent that observed teaching behaviour is “thoughtless,” it
makes no use of the human teacher's most unique attributes. In so doing, it becomes mechanical and might as well be done by a machine” (National Institute of Education [NIE], 1975, p. 1).

Research into student learning has clearly shown the importance of shifting the focus from learning approaches to learning conceptions in developing and improving the outcomes of student learning (Little, 1996; Norton, 1998; Swan & Smith, 1987; Van Lier, 1988). Studies have also reported on the relationships between informal and formal learning in related areas; examples include Guinella's work with migrant children and literature (1992), D. W. Johnson and Johnson's work on comparisons of children's learning through structured classroom discourse and individual study (1985), and Boulton-Lewis's work on minority university students' conceptions of learning (Boulton-Lewis, Marton, Lewis, & Wilss, 2000).

Numerous qualitative and quantitative studies have also reported an association between approaches to learning and students' learning outcomes (Freeman & Richards, 1993; Nunan & Lamb, 1996; Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Williams, 1999). A few studies have attempted to explicitly map the links between learners' prior conceptions, conceptual development, learning approaches and eventual learning outcomes (Abraham & Vann, 1987). If these studies on learners are any indication, investigations into the relations between conceptions and approaches to teaching will greatly enhance our understanding of ways of improving teaching (and student learning).

To my knowledge, this is the first investigation to focus on relations between second language teachers’ descriptions of conceptions of out-of-class interactions and actual teaching practices. Support for this inquiry comes from the importance placed on these interactions in L2 learning research and on previous work on teachers'
conceptions in other fields. Research into teachers’ conceptions is a relatively new focus of inquiry in the field of language teaching (Constantino, 1994; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Goodlad, 1990). Although there has been a growing body of work in the area of literacy (Anstey & Bull, 1996; Bull & Anstey, 1996), the absence of such research is particularly evident when the subject is the teaching of speaking and listening skills in a second language (Duarte, 1998).

To borrow a metaphor from Bruer (1994), “The world didn’t need Isaac Newton to know that apples fall off trees. It did need Newton to give us a general theory of why apples fall off trees” (p. 17). Similarly second language educators and researchers know that L2 teachers influence the process of learning and teaching language. We also know that much of the teaching in L2 classrooms is done through discourse in the target language and that much of individual language learning takes place outside the classroom context. It follows that how these teachers conceive of learning and teaching through these interactions influences how learners approach their own learning. What we don’t know is how and why this occurs. Knowing why or how something occurs is an important achievement. Knowing why leads to other discoveries; knowing why apples fall off trees has allowed us to explore space travel to the moon. Still, before we can discover how and why L2 teachers’ beliefs and actions influence this process, we must first identify what these conceptions are.

At this point I realised that the investigation would need to attempt to identify more than one teacher’s conceptions of out-of-class interactions. If teachers’ conceptions regarding these out-of-class interactions were completely unique or if there were general conceptions shared by a group of teachers, this could only be discovered by exploring the beliefs of a group of individuals. In addition, if the results of such an exploration were to be practically useful, the investigation would also need to explore
how these interactions were approached in the learning and teaching that occurred in the classroom. This realisation situated the investigation within a classroom context rather than in a self-access situation; it also provided the opportunity to explore teachers' conceptions of real life data (in-class interactions).

Intuitively I decided that if conceptions of one phenomenon could be identified, then perhaps a description of one would inform my understanding of another. From an investigative standpoint, this appeared to be a good decision, as regardless of the results, both questions could be asked; and a comparison of responses, whether completely different or similar, seemed to be a logical approach. As it turned out this was a fortuitous turn in the inquiry because, as in any investigation of the unknown, deciding to investigate L2 teachers' conceptions of two rather than one phenomenon provided some interesting and unexpected results. What had initially begun as an expanded exploration into the current opportunities students had to work on these spoken interactions in their language development had evolved into questions regarding teachers' conceptions of phenomena: what were these conceptions; how did they develop; did these conceptions influence practice; and more specifically, how were out-of-class interactions approached (if at all) in the actual teaching and learning that was experienced in the classroom. After much reflection the scope of the investigation was limited to the following four questions.

1.4.1 Research Questions:

1. What are the L2 teachers' conceptions of out-of-class interactions?

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9 The term "real life data" here refers to those interactions that the teacher had firsthand knowledge of, either as a participant or as an observer, rather than interactions that they had not experienced themselves.
2. What, if any, is the relationship between L2 teachers' conceptions of out-of-class interactions and their descriptions of actual teaching practices?

3. What are the L2 teachers' conceptions of in-class interactions?

4. What, if any, is the relationship between L2 teachers' conceptions of in-class interactions and their descriptions of actual teaching practices?

1.4.2 Statement of Topic

Studies of adult student learning have shown that students enter a learning situation with pre-existing conceptions of language learning that sometimes change (Horowitz, 1988); and most importantly, these conceptions appear to relate strongly to how they approach study (Anderson et al., 2000; Boekaerts, Pintrich, and Zeidner, 2000b; A. L. Brown, 1994; Duke, Forbes, Hunter, and Prosser, 1998). This project looks at the parallel situation for teachers. It looks at the understanding that teachers have of in-class and out-of-class interactions in language learning and the relationship this has on their approach to teaching (see Figure 1).
In planning the investigation two possible outcomes of the inquiry were suggested: 1) from a broad review of L2 literature it was generally expected that those teachers with a better understanding of either phenomena would be more likely to integrate these interactions in practice (Freeman & Richards, 1993; Janzen, 1996; King, 1994; Nunan & Lamb, 1996); and 2) as there was significantly more information in the literature on in-class interactions than out-of-class interaction, it was more likely that teachers would have a better understanding of the former than the latter.

1.4.3 Investigative Approach

The overall aim of all second language research is to develop an understanding of language development. Generally, it could be argued that theoretically this investigation is underpinned by a firm interactionist stance. That is, I believe that when spoken second language is the subject, it is best learned within a social context and
through social interactions. Instead of focusing on English as a second language as a "whole subject," this investigation will specifically focus on the topics outlined in the "Thesis Aims" as they pertain to the teaching and learning of out-of-class interactions. This is a new form of inquiry in the area of second language teaching and learning, and for that reason the proposed investigation does not build directly on previous research or conveniently fit into a clear gap identified through reviewing literature on language development except in so far as the whole areas of out-of-class interactions and L2 teachers' conceptions represent "gaps." Instead, this proposal attempts to address current issues of concern in second language teaching and learning through reviewing our current understanding and applying knowledge and methodology developed in other disciplines.

Through much deliberation and reflection, I believe that many of these issues will be best addressed, and ensuing questions best approached, by methodologically applying the "constitutionalist"\textsuperscript{10} model and using one of its forms, "phenomenography" (for a more in-depth description see Chapter 3). Phenomenography has both theoretical and methodological elements. In general it is a research approach that focuses on describing how a phenomenon is understood by identifying the various ways it is experienced by a group of individuals in a very similar context. This research approach has been successfully implemented in other educational fields for a number of years and has been described as "an approach to identifying, formulating, and tackling certain sorts of research questions, a specialisation that is particularly aimed at questions of relevance to learning and understanding in an educational setting" (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 111). Methodologically, the purpose of explorations into conceptual understanding is to
uncover what (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999) describes as “a relationship between the person experiencing and the object experienced” (p. 13). In this case the person experiencing is the teacher, the “object experienced” is (collectively) the different ways that a group of teachers report their awareness of these out-of-class interactions in the teaching and learning of second language. It is my belief that such an investigation will also provide new insights into the role of these out-of-class interactions in language development; and by so doing; it will inform our understanding of ways of improving teaching and learning of languages.

Epistemologically a constitutionalist perspective is a non-dualistic perspective which holds that the world and the individual are internally related through the individual’s awareness of the world and the aspects of the world he or she experiences (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999, p. 13).

In many theoretical approaches, what is to be learned is identified as “X” and the process of learning X is described in a series of steps or as a growing awareness. From a phenomenographic perspective what is learned is perceived as internally connected to what is experienced—what is learned cannot be separated from the person’s experience of that phenomena. We have to understand the different aspects of what is experienced before we can attempt to describe it. However, we can explore those situations when a particular phenomenon is at the forefront of someone’s awareness. In this case, I will be specifically exploring teachers’ experiences of in-class and out-of-class interactions through their own descriptions, and the object of experience at this point would be best described as the relations between L2 teachers’ awareness of out-of-class interactions and the teaching and learning of second language.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

A man who reviews the old so as to find out the new is qualified to teach others.

– Confucius (K’ung Fu-tzu) 551-479 BC

Chinese philosopher, textual translation

Wing-tsitchan, *Analects* Ch. 2, VII, 1963

2.1 Part A: Focus On Out-Of-Class Interactions

To better understand how the aims of this thesis fit into what we already know about second language education, the literature review will begin with background information on the questions posed and will then further explain the *object experienced* (in-class and out-of-class interactions) through a critical overview looking at the key role these interactions are perceived to play in language development, from three perspectives: the learners’, learning theory, and dominant models of teaching/learning. The review will also give a historical overview of the types of research that have been done previously on the relationship between teaching practices and learning in the area of ESL. These will be contrasted with phenomenographic studies conducted in other areas. Finally, the researcher will situate the investigation proposed within the literature discussed.

2.1.1 The Overseas ESL Learner in Australia

In the Australian context, the education and training of overseas students has become a huge and rapidly increasing business. The number of full-time overseas students enrolled in Australian education institutions was reported to be 322,776, as of Teachers’ Beliefs Study
December 2004. Almost half of the total enrolments of full-time overseas students has been in the higher education sector, with numbers significantly increasing over the past few decades—from 13,700 overseas students reported to be enrolled in tertiary institutions in 1983, and 42,600 students in 1993, to 151,798 students in 2003 (Australian Education International [AEI], 2005a, 2005d; Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs [DETYA], 2000).

The purpose of study for many of these overseas students from non-English-speaking countries clearly includes a desire to improve their proficiency in English as a second language, both through taking content courses in English and receiving formal language training. This is evident in the large selection of courses designed specifically to cater to the needs of those with non-native speaking (NNS) backgrounds on offer across Australian education sectors; most dominantly, the largest growth sector has been the institutions of higher learning, with a 12% increase in student enrolments reported in December 2004. Large numbers of overseas students also enrol directly in formal English training institutions, and these numbers have increased as well, with 36,831 students reported to have attended ELICOS courses in 2000 (AEI, 2000) and 61,649 enrolled in 2004 (AEI, 2005a).

The impact of these students on the Australian economy is evident, with an average stay of 12.1 weeks reported for overseas students with student visas enrolled in English programs in Australian educational institutions, and $849 million in annual revenue reported to be generated by overseas students enrolled in ELICOS institutions alone in 2003 (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2000; AEI, 2005b). The intent of learning language through use is also supported by frequent reports claiming that learners consider the ability to socially interact effectively with a target language
community to be a major factor in their language progress (Nunan, 1996; Stoneberg, 1995).

Yet, despite L2 learners' evident belief that social interactions promote language learning, the reality suggests that merely having the opportunity to practice the target language is not enough. Two detailed studies of overseas students who have completed high-level tertiary degrees in Australia reported that a majority of these students did not perceive their interactions with Australians to be successful. In fact, the majority of the students that participated in the studies perceived problems with these outside interactions as major barriers to progress in their language acquisition (Nesdale et al., 1995; O'Donoghue, 1996).

Some researchers claim that these interactional problems could be related to individual learning characteristics such as intelligence, aptitude, and personality (Lightbown & Spada, 2001). Others suggest that problems are related to "attribution"; that is, if students view these social interactional problems to be caused by external factors out of their control, they will be less motivated and less likely to continue the learning process (Boekaerts & Minnaert, 1999; Boekaerts et al., 2000b). External factors viewed as relating to interactional problems include things such as: prejudice (Nesdale et al., 1995), racism (O'Donoghue, 1996), gender, lack of social acceptance (Polanyi, 1995), and stereotyping and cultural differences (Chen et al., 1995; Norton, 1998; Halliday, 1975; Hudson-Hickling, 1997; Kubota, 1999; Volet, 1999). From an attribution perspective, upon perceiving these external obstacles as barriers to language development, students would slow or cease in their learning progress.

I would agree that both individual learner characteristics and external factors might inhibit a student's progress as claimed. I would argue that explanations attributing a lack of progress primarily to one or a combination of these factors
identified in a particular study or settings are too simplistic. We know this, because just as some students seemingly fail to progress because of these learner characteristics or external factors, others under the influence of the same factors continue to succeed. Perhaps we need to take a closer look at the social environments in which the learning and teaching of language takes place.

Recently the influences of social environments on teaching and learning (both inside and outside the classroom) have become the focal point of much motivational research, as they are thought to catalyse interpersonal differences in motivation and personal growth (R. C. Gardner, 1985; Mathews, Schwean, Cambell, Saklofske, & Mohamed, 2000; Natasi, Clements, and Battista, 1990; O'Donnell, Dansereau, Hall, and Rocklin, 1987; Pica, 1998; Vauras, Rauhanummi, Kinnunen, and Lepola, 1999). Studies report that various reactions to social contexts seem to result in some people being more self-motivated and better integrated in some situations or cultures than in others (Pintrich, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Salili, 1995).

Such research is particularly important in the area of language learning when we consider the growing numbers of language learners that travel and study abroad precisely for the opportunity to interact outside the classroom. It is evident that from a learner's perspective these out-of-class interactions are viewed to be a necessary element to successful language development. Problems with these out-of-class interactions are not confined to individuals or particular groups and have been reported in a variety of second language situations (Kubota, 1999; Polanyi, 1995). For the student studying a language in a target-language-speaking country (ESL student studying in Australia) there appears to be a tenable relationship between the spoken interactions that occur in a social context outside the classroom and the learner's language development (Aiken & Pearce, 1994; Natasi et al., 1990). Thus developing an
understanding of the relationship between teachers’ conceptions of these out-of-class interactions and teaching practice has important implications for the teaching and learning of language both in Australia and abroad.

2.1.2 Theoretical Perspectives

When we begin to review the literature, it is unarguably clear that learners’ social interactions (or, for the purpose of this paper, the spoken language used to communicate with others) is considered an essential element of learning in a number of theories (DeVries, 1997; Feuerstein, Klien, and Tannenbaum, 1991; McLaren, 1999; Von Glaserfeld, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978; M. Williams & Burden, 1997; see also the General theories and models of self-regulation section in Boekaerts et al., 2000). It is also evident that many language-teaching methodologies are closely tied with theory on learning and knowing. This is not surprising in that language is considered a primary tool for knowledge development from a number of these theoretical perspectives. Regrettably, this inseparable link between language and learning complicates the task of clarifying exactly how these various theoretical implications pertain explicitly to the teaching and learning of language as a subject.

With the risk of oversimplification, I will discuss a few of the most well-known theoretical perspectives on learning, in an attempt to show how these link to dominant theories of language learning, teaching practices, and significantly for the purpose of this paper, perspectives on spoken interactions in second language development. I must also emphasise that I will specifically discuss the teaching of English as a second language rather than other languages in general. I do this in recognition of the many countries today where multilingualism is the norm and these second languages are still
for the most part learned informally rather than taught in the language classroom (Knight, 2001).

One perspective on learning often described as the "cognitivist or information processing perspective" views information as coming to the learner from the outside. It is then stored for a short time, processed internally, and then kept in longer-term storage, or some type of output is generated to the outside world (Nolan, 1994; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). A model of teaching from this view would be termed "teacher-centred" with knowledge viewed as a commodity that is transferred from the teacher to the student (empty vessel) (Moore, 2001).

Another perspective referred to as the "individual constructivist perspective" views knowledge as constructed internally. The individual continually tests this knowledge through interacting with the outside world (Von Glasersfeld, 1995). From this perspective, knowledge is seen to be acquired by the learners themselves. A model of teaching would view the learner to be like a plant that grows in response to the correct "nutrients" provided at just the right time (Moore, 2001).

In the "social-constructivist perspective," like the individual constructivist perspective, knowledge is thought to develop internally, but the process is driven or guided through social interactions between the individual and the outside world (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). Therefore, the teacher's role would be to provide opportunities for learning and developing. The learner's role would be to consider the learning opportunities and make choices about what is to be learned and when (Mercer, 1995). Learning is viewed as collaboratively and socially constructed through active participation in sociocultural activities (Rogoff, Matusov, & White, 1996). From this perspective the teacher and learner collaborate and negotiate learning as part of a "community of learners" (Wells, 1994). Researchers have discussed the effect of being
a part of a community both in and outside the language classroom, and the importance of interaction opportunities to language learning (for an overview see Norton & Toohey, 2001).

When discussing theories of learning, “interaction with others” could describe a number of communication forms (symbols, visual communication, written texts and so on); however, as this project is concerned with spoken interaction, I will focus on spoken language. Language in each of these perspectives is conceived very differently; yet, whether it is considered as the means by which knowledge is transferred, tested, guided or socially constructed, it is clear that from each of these perspectives spoken interaction plays a key role in the process of learning. In the context of learning language, these interactions with others are doubly important; not only are they viewed as integral to the process of learning, but they are also critical as the subject learned is the language used in these interactions with others.

2.1.2.1 Theories of language development

When we take an historical overview of theories on language development, it is evident that these theories are very closely aligned with the perspectives on learning discussed previously. One of the better-known perspectives is the “Biological or Innatist perspective.” According to Chomsky, the human mind is pre-programmed to acquire symbolic systems, such as language and knowledge of the physical and social environment (Vosniadou, 1996). He believes that children are born with a special ability to learn language and that the language learner first learns grammatical rules and structures. We could infer then that from this perspective the quality and quantity of the out-of-class interactions a learner engages in, along with any support provided by teachers or peers, should impact upon language progress.
Critiques of this perspective claim the problem with this theory is that the way the learners put this knowledge to use to carry on conversation is unknown (Boulima, 1999). Nevertheless, the influence of this perspective on teaching methodology can be evidenced in the number of textbooks on language learning that continue to teach grammar based on a syntactic, "how words are put together to form phrases or sentences" system, derived from research on how children learn their L1 (Lightbown & Spada, 1993)

2.1.2.1.1 Critical Pedagogy Perspective

Paulo Freire, generally considered the inaugural philosopher of the "Critical pedagogy perspective," believed that schools should be spaces where uncoerced interaction could be created, and he generally emphasised the connectedness between the school, the state and the wider social community (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). He stressed non-distorted or practical language teaching that would be useful to the student, and this perspective is often viewed as the basis of teaching approaches such as whole language instruction and adult literacy programs. Unfortunately, in regard to the relationship between out-of-class interactions and language development there is only one area that has been researched sufficiently enough to justify claims that social factors play a significant role in the L2 learning process.

This area, sometimes termed "community of practice," has developed from the findings of a number of studies conducted on children learning a second language and the impact of the value the learners' own community perceives the target language to hold. The academic achievement in immersion programs for majority children, such as the French immersion programs in Canada (Swain, 1985, 1995, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1995, 1998), have been far less successful with minority students, as for example with
those implemented for Hispanic children in the United States (for an overview see Mohan, 1986).

Unfortunately, most of these studies have applied to the second language learning that occurs in a situation where the learner is a child who has immigrated to the country but lives within a community that speaks their first language. The influence of the “community of practice” does not appear to be as applicable to the situation of the adult overseas student who lives in a country for the express purpose of learning a L2 but may use their native language with new acquaintances of the same first language background (see section 2.1.4.3 or the work of Elsa Auerbach [Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987] for community-based programs with adults).

The best-known hypothesis for the influence of social factors in adult second language learning would be the “Acculturation” hypothesis proposed by Schumann, which attributes the failure or success of language acquisition to the learner’s social and psychological integration within the target language community (1978, 1988). He described these factors under the notion of social distance; if the learner was a member of a group that isolated itself, or of a group that was very small, or if one group dominated the other, the social distance would be high and consequently the success at language learning low.

Like the attribution theory, the acculturation theory relates to groups in an immigration situation, whose members, due to culture shock, fear of identity loss, or low motivation, may have low success at language learning. Intriguing as this idea is, little support for the applicability of this hypothesis to language learning has materialised. Schumann’s hypothesis has been widely criticised by researchers that claim 1) second language theory cannot be based on the inability of a single learner.
(Alberto) to acquire a second language (K. Johnson & Johnson, 1998), or 2) it does not apply to short visits abroad or to foreign language situations (Andersen, 1990).

2.1.2.1.2 The Behaviorist Perspective

"The Behaviorist perspective" is often attributed to the psychologist Skinner (1957), who claimed that language learning is simply a matter of habit formation, developed when the learner imitates the sounds and patterns they hear around them. Teaching approaches such as the "Audio lingual method" (ALM) directly originated from the behaviorist perspective. Learners were presented with target language patterns for memorisation and learning was thought to occur through practice dialogues and drills (Freeman & Richards, 1993).

For a long time this perspective was put aside in favour of a more complex view on language learning, or an emphasis on communication skills (Lightbown & Spada, 1993). Nevertheless there has been a recent resurgence of behavioristic approaches, due in part to a reaction to findings from a wide range of immersion and naturalistic studies, which suggest that when L2 learning is solely focused on communicative success, some linguistic features do not develop to target-like accuracy (Harley, 1992; Harley & Swain, 1984; Spada & Lightbown, 1989; Williams, 1999). The teacher again is viewed as having an active role in the language learning process, as it is believed to be their role to draw the learners' attention to form and structures in the language (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Long, 1996; N. Ellis, 1993; Robinson, 1996, 1997). It has also been claimed that grammar instruction and a curriculum emphasising literacy is particularly effective within a communicative context (Doughty & Verela, 1998; Long, Inagaki, & Ortega, 1998; Spada & Lightbown, 1993; Swain, 1998; J. Williams & Evans, 1998).
Dewey, known for his "learning by doing" perspective, agreed with Skinner (1957) that the process of language learning was best investigated through applying "scientific methods." Dewey was particularly interested in the role of language in adolescent learning, and he developed a series of school laboratory experiments, stating, "The assumption of an educational laboratory is rather that enough is known of the conditions and modes of growth to make intelligent inquiry possible; and that it is only by acting upon what is already known that more can be found out" (Dewey, 1915, p. 89). Bibliographic research into Dewey's life and philosophies suggest that Dewey's scientific approach to education was due in part to scientific advancements that occurred in Dewey's lifetime, and that his "experiential" approach to learning is better elucidated in his later works (e.g., "Lessons of Art") than in his early comments on the philosophy of education (Boisvert, 1997). Central to Dewey's beliefs, though, was the role of language and social interaction; he considered communication as the means by which events were transformed into meanings, and termed language "the tool of tools" (cited in Garrison, 1996, p. 134). The behaviorist perspective is perhaps the most frequently criticized and is often termed "traditional" or "teacher-centred," and condemned for not providing students with the skills needed to communicate in the real world. In spite of this criticism, of the three perspectives discussed, the behaviorist seems to provide the most obvious support for a focus on out-of-class interaction.

Dewey in his writings and lectures often underlined the role of "natural language," stating, "There is a natural bridge that joins the gap between existence and essence, namely communication, language discourse" (cited in Garrison, 1996, p. 53). A reporter following Dewey and his daughter through the Chicago laboratory school experiments noted that many of the "learning by doing" classes were held outside the classroom (Boisvert, 1997). In discussing learning outside the classroom, Dewey
(1915) claimed that the presence of physical stimuli or knowledge of a subject taken out of social context was insufficient: "Studies of childhood have made it equally apparent that this socially acquired inheritance operates in the individual only under present social stimuli" (p. 91). Dewey's belief that the coordination of social behavior was the heart of language and the origin of meaning has caused his views to be categorized by some as social constructivism rather than purely behaviorist in nature (Dewey, 1925/1981; Prawat, 1995). Today his writings are also frequently cited as support for "experiential" approaches to teaching (see Task-Based Teaching, Section 2.1.5).

2.1.2.2 Problems with theories

In relation to the thesis presented, the biggest difficulty with these theories is their lack of definition in regard to interaction. There is also no observable differentiation made between interactions that occur in the classroom and outside the classroom. This might account for the disproportionate amount of research that has been largely classroom-based (A. L. Brown & Palinscar, 1989; Oxford, 1994; M. L. Simpson, Hynd, Nist, & Burrell, 1977; Topping & Ehly, 1998), rather than focused on out-of-class interactions (Aiken & Pearce, 1994; Bunts-Anderson, 2000c).

Another obvious weakness with many theoretical explanations of how languages are learned is that they have been based on how a child learns their first language (L1). It is clear, however, that a child or an adult learning a second language differs from a child acquiring their first language in terms of the conditions for learning and personal characteristics (Lightbown & Spada, 1993).

In an attempt to address the latter issue, Stephen Krashen, a follower of the Innatist perspective, brought together research findings from a number of diverse areas
for the purpose of developing an all-inclusive theory of language development termed the "Creative Construction Theory" (for an overview see Krashen, 1982, 1985). His theory consists of five central hypotheses: The "acquisition-learning hypothesis," the "monitor hypothesis," the "natural order hypothesis," and the "input hypothesis." Krashen's theory was met with a flurry of research both in support (R. Brown, 1973; Larson-Freeman & Long, 1991) and in refutation of his claims (Boulima, 1999; Day, 1991; Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1995; Tomlin & Villa, 1994). Most of the criticism against his theory is concerned with the vagueness of his hypotheses, suggesting that his definitions are too ambiguous and viewed as impossible to validate. Others have claimed that his "input theory," in particular, is not inclusive enough and focuses only on the knowledge received by the learners without considering what is learned through the production of the language by the learner himself or herself (Swain, 1991).

Nevertheless, it could be argued that only a general theory such as Krashen’s could account for the variances in learning characteristics that exist between a child learning their first language and a child or adult learning a second language, while attempting to build on what has been previously discovered about language learning (Lightbown & Spada, 1993). Krashen’s work highlighted two points that seem to be the impetus of two primary areas in language development, though often presented in opposition; these areas provide heavy support for a focus on out-of-class interactions. The first is the focus is placed on the learner, rather than the teacher; individual learning is thought to be affected by such things as the motives, needs and emotional states, and attitudes of the learner. The second is that language is acquired when a learner engages in meaningful interaction with others.
2.1.3 The Good Learner Perspective

Much of the research focused on the learner has significant ties with the behaviorist perspective and draws from the area of cognitive psychology, which is particularly interested in the characteristics and learning strategies of successful language learners (see *The Good Language Learner* [Naimen, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978]), and in how language is understood. In relation to language research, a large body of educational research has been conducted on the relationship between motivation and the development of students' self-regulation skills, or “a learner’s ability to regulate their own learning” (see Borowske, 1990, as cited in Boekaerts, 1994; Boekaerts, 1996, 1998; Boekaerts et al., 2000b).

The evident interest of language learners to work on their outside interactions is especially significant, as lack of motivation, on the part of ESL students, has been one of the major problems cited in their development of self-regulatory skills and learner autonomy (Bowyer, 1995; Cotterall, 1995; Detaramani & Chan, 1996; Gremmo & Riley, 1995; Zimmerman, 1998). These skills are thought to develop through a learning process frequently termed “self-regulated learning” (SRL) and considered to consist of students’ self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions, which are systematically oriented toward the attainment of their goals. Teaching methods and tools have been introduced specifically to aid teachers in assisting learners through this process—for example, Willing’s *Teaching How to Learn* (1989a, 1989b).

Many researchers believe that it is essential for students to go through this type of learning process, as it encourages learners to be aware of their own learning needs, as well as equipping them with the skills and strategies to learn language in a self-

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12 The Behaviorist perspective, which links language structure to human thinking and learning process, has been especially influential, particularly to SLA researchers interested in the development of linguistic structures in language.
directed or "learner autonomous" way (R. Ellis, 1990; R. E. Snow & Lohman, 1984; Boekaerts & Niemivirta, 2000; Weinert & Helmke, 1987; Brownlee, Leventhal, & Leventhal, 2000; Carver & Scheier, 2000; Creer, 2000; De Corte, Verschaffel, & Op't Eynde, 2000; Demetriou, 2000; Endler & Kocovski, 2000; Jackson, Mackenzie, & Hobfoll, 2000; Kehr, Bles, and von Rosenstiel, 1999; Kuhl, 2000). The concept of developing learner autonomy has been particularly influential in the area of second language education, and has been cited by many as the primary goal of educational research and educators (Cotterall, 2000; Natasi et al., 1990; Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Tang & Yang, 1999; see also Benson, 2001).

One reason for the great popularity of the "autonomous learner" concept stems from a belief that once a learner has achieved this state, not only will the student be able to self-direct their own learning, but they will also have more success in their future learning endeavours. The benefits of self-directed learning have been more widely reported in other areas and are often predicted in L2 learning (Maes & Gebhardt, 2000; Mathews et al., 2000; Pintrich, 2000; Randi & Corno, 2000; Rheinberg, Vollmeyer, & Rellett, 2000; Schunk & Ertmer, 2000; Shah & Kruglanski, 2000; Shapiro & Schwartz, 2000; Vancouver, 2000; Weinstein, Husman, & Dierking, 2000; Winnie & Perry, 2000; Zeidner, Boekarts, & Pintrich, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000). Direct support for this belief is evidenced in learners' accounts of their own out-of-class interactional experiences, reported in a few studies, where language learners claim to have used the skills and knowledge acquired in other interactional situations (Aiken & Pearce, 1994; Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987; Wallerstein & Auerbach, 1987).

From a good learner perspective, a focus on interactions is also supported by the fact that students' interest and evident motivation to work on and develop their social interactional skills outside the classroom clearly originates in their desire to improve
their social dealings in the target language community; for a good overview see *Changing Perspectives on Good Language Learners* (Norton & Toohey, 2001). Developing learning communities in and outside of the classroom is a topic that most recently has been the focal point of much discussion in motivational research, as influences of social environments are thought to catalyse interpersonal differences in motivation and personal growth (R. C. Gardner, 1985; Mathews et al., 2000; Natasi et al., 1990; O'Donnell et al., 1987; Pica, 1987). Researchers claim that this "new" area is worthy of our most intense investigation particularly in light of the fact that various reactions to social contexts seem to result in some integrated in some situations or cultures than in others (Pintrich, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Salili, 1995). Thus from a research perspective, a focus on students' in-class and out-of-class interactions appears relevant to understanding not only the relationship such interactions have to L2 acquisition, but also how students may improve their social dealings in Australia.

2.1.4 The Communicative Teaching Perspective

The Innatist perspective, particularly Krashen's hypotheses, have been very influential in second language teaching and are reflected in the numerous communicative language teaching (CLT) methodologies that are perhaps the most prevalent influence on teaching today. CLT methodologies also arose in reaction to the behaviourists' grammar-based teaching methods that prevailed in the 1960s. The basis of the communicative teaching movement was primarily formed through convincing critiques of the inadequacies of the linguistic and pedagogical theory underlying grammar-based teaching like the *audio-lingual approach* discussed previously (Freeman & Richards, 1993). Much of the early support for CLT methodologies came from reports of students attaining higher levels of achievement through immersion
programs, where subjects are taught in the target language (TL), in comparison to students that study the TL through formal instruction, as with both the Canadian French immersion programs and adult overseas students studying English (for an overview, see Swain, 1974, and Mason, 1971, as cited in Mohan, 1986). On the other hand, findings from a wide range of immersion and naturalistic studies have also shown that when language learning is solely focused on communicative success, some linguistic features do not develop, strongly suggesting that second language teachers have an important role in the process.

Consequently, the debate that launched and has supported communicative language teaching appears to be more philosophical than empirical, with learning seen to be more successful when it is “communicative” or when the learner is encouraged to interact as much as possible, than when it is predominantly grammar-based. Interestingly, communicative teaching approaches also incorporate the belief that learner needs should be the focus of learning, and therefore teaching approaches have often been encouraged to consider learners’ perceptions of what makes a good learner, and to develop classroom teaching based on those particular students’ needs (Nunan, 1988, 1989; Willing, 1989a, 1989b).

From the communicative teaching perspective, the overall goal of most language teachers is to assist their students to attain communicative competence in the target language. This term, usually attributed to Dell Hymes, refers to the students’ knowledge of the language and ability to use the language effectively and appropriately (Hymes, 1972). To achieve this aim there have been a number of communicative teaching approaches developed from focusing on specific elements of language use and communication observed in outside interactions, with the goal of incorporating these elements into a classroom context. Unfortunately, studies ascertaining the impact of
such approaches suggest that although communicative activities are often based on “real communication,” the function of these approaches seems to have been interpreted by many as communicative competence inside the classroom rather than outside the classroom (Oxford & Green, 1996; Pica et al., 1996; K. E. Johnson, 1995; Norton, 1998; Nunan, 1989; Pica, 1998). There are CLT methodologies that claim to have especially strong ties with out-of-class interactions, and to illustrate the important role these “real life” interactions are thought to play in language development, I will briefly discuss three of these “communicative approaches.”

2.1.4.1 The functional approach.

The “functional approach” is one of the better-known CLT methodologies and deals with the appropriateness and purposes for which people speak or write (for an overview see Blundell, Higgens, & Middlemiss, 1982). Typically, the functional approach takes in a situation such as “giving an opinion” and asks the students to consider the setting of the conversation, the topic under discussion, and their own psychological attitude towards the topic, along with the student’s social relationship with the person(s) speaking (Mohan, 1986). Expanding on this theme, some studies have researched a functional approach to teaching specific elements of language; one very well-known model is Halliday’s (1989, 1994) “functional grammar.” This model has been a central theme in immersion research, where students that have learned language through content have been found to be lacking in grammar and form (Swain, 1998, 2000). Much of the literature on functional approaches now claims that content-based teaching is most effective when there is a combined focus on form and meaning, both in written and oral discourse (M. L. Jones, 1996; Pica, 2000).
Others claim that a focus on meaning needs to be expanded; that if both social interaction and a focus on form are necessary for language learning (but not sufficient) then we need to look beyond the meaning expressed in the microstructure of a text or contextualized interaction and consider learner identity within the macrostructure of society both in and outside the classroom (Morgan, 2004; Norton & Toohey, 2004). Norton encapsulates this position in an interview with *The Language Teacher*: “In my research I take the position that every time language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with their inoculators—they are also constantly organizing and reorganising a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world” (Churchill, 2002, p. 3).

I agree with Norton’s position and argue that while a functional approach to language learning might be successful in increasing communicative competence, it does not take into account the constantly changing context, spontaneity and role changes that occur in “real world” social interaction. Actually, this stance is now becoming more widespread, for just as the benefits of functional approaches for developing proficiency in specific areas of language are widely appreciated, it is generally acknowledged that this approach is not sufficient in itself; this is noted by Mohan and Beckett (2001); “We are not aware of any evidence of explicit and detailed claims that the correction of errors of grammatical form is a sufficient condition for the development of oral and written language as a medium of learning.” (p. 3).

2.1.4.2 The simulations approach.

It was to address these issues specifically that the “simulations approach” was developed. The focus of this approach is to provide learners with role responsibility and reality in a language context by encouraging the students to actively participate in an
event (for an overview see K. Jones, 1982). This event is based on a problem in the real
world, and the students are given a real task, such as to produce a radio program, and
are frequently encouraged to interact with others outside the classroom to achieve the
task. The students then take on real roles (journalists, announcer, interviewer, and
producer) and actually produce a radio program that is aired. This approach supports a
focus on outside interactions, in that it provides opportunities for increased problem
solving skills, and effective communication with peers and sometimes native speakers.

Recently simulation approaches are often tied in with computer simulations or
electronic media, and they have been extended to involve role play of specific outside
interactions (such as business negotiations) that are considered to fit more with
students' specific needs such as business negotiations (see R. S. Davis, 1995; Fannon,
2003a, 2003b; Krauss, 1998). The use of an electronic medium is believed to provide a
more real-life simulation for learners and also a means by which students' language
proficiency can be better assessed by teachers (Littlejohn, 1990). Yet, I would argue
that this approach is limited precisely for being what it is: a simulation rather than a
real event. Someone other than the learner often develops the simulation task, so it is
doubtful that the task could address all the learners' needs. It is also highly questionable
whether a teacher or a textbook would be able to develop the number and variety of
simulated tasks required to meet the individual problems currently occurring with the
learners' outside interactions.

Ninety years ago Dewey (1915) commented on the limitations of simulated
education: "[New knowledge] must be assimilated, not as mere items of information,
but as organic parts of his [the student's] present needs and aims which in turn are
social" (p. 92). Legutke and Thomas (1997) expand on this idea of active involvement
of both teacher and student in society, with their review of "project learning"
(discussed further in 2.1.5) as rooted in educational philosophy and not merely a teaching methodology proposed for second language teachers (p. 158). Legutke and Thomas elucidate the role of outside interactions in three types of projects: "the encounter projects" that take place in "real live encounters" with native speakers in the target language in L1 and L2 environments, "text projects" that take in experiences of native speakers in text form, and "class correspondence projects" that involve encounters and interaction with native speakers through mediated mediums (letters, video) (see pp. 161-166).

2.1.4.3 The problem solving approach.

A more recent communicative-based methodology in language teaching is the "problem posing approach" originally developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (McLaren, 1999). Although there are a number of studies that report the benefits of problem solving in learning language through content by means of classroom discourse (Chamot, Dale, O’Malley, & Spanos, 1992; Natasi et al., 1990; Swain, 1991), there are relatively few studies in ESL problem solving in the realm of student's outside interactions are usually attributed to Elsa Auerbach and Nina Wallerstein (for description and examples, see Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987). Perhaps more appropriately termed "methodology," their approach has three phases: listening or investigating (issues of the community), dialogue (codifying issues into dialogue for critical discussion), and action (strategising the changes students envision after reflection). It specifically looks at problems the learners are having in their social interactions in the community outside the classroom and encourages students to act on these problems.
This approach contains all three elements previously discussed as supporting a focus on out-of-class interactions: the classroom conversational aspect of CTM, the inclusion of social dealings in the community, and the opportunity for learners, both individually and as a group, to develop strategies to change these social interactions. In the limited published information currently available on this approach, the focus has been placed on interactional problems that are generalisable to the entire class, such as doing an interview or dealing with stress. I would argue that this general strategising, while encouraging individual reflection and action, does not reflect the very specific and unique goal setting that would occur if the process was based specifically on individual learners' out-of-class interactions.

In addition, publications based on Auerbach and Wallerstein's work, such as the AMES study at Macquarie University (Aiken & Pearce, 1994), generally report only surface-level reflections and initial strategies. There is no evidence that these goals have been continually monitored, reflected upon, re-evaluated, and changed, as should occur in a developed Critical Thinking Cycle (McLaren, 1999) or in the learning process based on developing self-regulation skill and learner autonomy previously discussed.

2.1.5 Task-Based Teaching

One teaching methodology, "Task-based Teaching," should be mentioned here because it developed from the idea that learning occurs through free practice (Prabhu, 1987). Prabhu calls this "deployment," where the second or foreign language is used in the process of completing a task. Some have argued that task-based teaching is another strand of communicative methodology (Nunan, 2001). Oura (2000) describes task-based teaching as communicative but outlines two distinct differences: "target tasks,
which students need to accomplish beyond the classroom, and pedagogical tasks, which form the basis of classroom activity during instruction” (p. 72). Generally proponents of task-based teaching (TBT) have focused on specific aspects of interaction: meaning, focus on form, skill-based learning, authenticity of materials and interactions, and most recently, authentic learning (Kilickaya, 2004).

Some view task-based teaching as completely separate from CTM. Prabhu, for example, with his “Procedural Syllabus” claims that learning is an outcome of communicational meaning and that communicative methodologies focusing on talk without meaning is only another type of form-based instruction (K. Johnson & Johnson, 1998, p. 72). A. Simpson (2003) appears to agree that there are limits to classroom discourse but argues that current opportunities to focus on form through using modern electronic resources represent real interaction. He claims, “There are clear instances in TBL (Task Based Learning) in which the learner has opportunities to privately practice the language, using it fluently, and publicly show other learners that they can use the language in a fluent and accurate manner. There is no such opportune necessity in other language approaches” (p. 3). Oxford (2001) agrees, summarising TBT as a type of instruction that provides opportunities to integrate multiple learning skills with a focus on the authenticity of the language learned. This integrated skill approach “exposes English language learners to authentic language and challenges them to interact naturally in the language” (p. 2).

A quick search of Internet resources for L2 teachers suggests that there continues to be a heavy focus in ESL for teachers to integrate authentic real-world materials into their classroom teaching. Using the key words “ESL task based teaching” resulted in 2,974 pages of links to resources and publications on task-based teaching for ESL teachers. When learning language in conjunction with a subject or for a specific
purpose (such as the English for Academic Purposes context of the studies presented later) some educators propose that task-based teaching should be organized in a “project form,” and that learning occurs through the various processes made up of a series of tasks that fluctuate and change based on needs (Legutke, 1986; Schiffler, 1980). In project task-based approaches, language learning is believed to occur individually, as well as with peers and teacher. Learning occurs through a shared ownership of the project and through experientially going through various process stages: planning, experiencing, evaluating, presenting, reflection, and so on. Legutke and Thomas (1997), well-known supporters of the project and process approach to teaching and learning, claim that one of the most exciting aspects to project learning is “learning in the here and now”; that the object of learning is to apply it in action; and that the relevancy of action of students’ work is immediate (p. 215).

A mere copier of nature can never produce anything great.
- Joshua Reynolds (1723-92)
Discourses on Art (ed. R. Wark, 1975) No. 3 (14, Dec. 1770)

Within the context of the formal language classroom, the strength of communicative teaching methodologies also appears to be their greatest weakness. These methodologies attempt to model real-life interactions within a classroom context. These replications are often oversimplified, focused on limited aspects of interaction, and based on interactional situations considered generalisable to an entire group of learners. This is understandable, due to the limitations and confines of teaching within a classroom context; however, no model can accurately portray the intricacies that occur in natural conversation, or represent the specific language learning needs of individual students. These approaches using authentic materials and attempting to emulate real-
world interaction may be the next best thing, and appropriate for students studying a second language in a country in which the target is not spoken (Gebhard, 1996; Kippel, 1991). Then again, for L2 students living in a country precisely for the opportunities to speak the TL outside the classroom, such as ESL students studying English in Australia, we need to ask, “Why aren’t more teachers using the real thing?”

2.1.6 The Missing Link—Teachers’ Perspectives

When we consider the research previously discussed, a gap in knowledge becomes gravely apparent, as the teachers’ perspective seems to have been left out of the equation. The review clearly indicates that social interactions in the target language are considered essential to the process, both from the learner’s and a theoretical perspective. There is also an evident correlation between these perspectives and current second language teaching methodologies. From a review of past research, we can ascertain that the perceptions of the learner as well as the opportunity to interact in real life all appear to have a bearing on eventual learning outcomes. This process does not uncover what the perspectives of teachers regarding these out-of-class interactions might be, or in fact suggest what influence they may have, if any, on eventual learning outcomes. Knowledge of learners’ perceptions is considered as a necessary element, and learning is viewed to occur primarily within a classroom context (Engel, Bouwhuis, Bösser, & d'Ydewalle, 1992; see Table 2.1).
### Table 2.1 Teaching Methods and Learner Perceptions affecting learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Perceptions</th>
<th>Instruction Methods that impact learning outcomes</th>
<th>Learner Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>emphasis on success or failure</td>
<td>Perception of Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>feedback</td>
<td>Goal orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assessment procedures</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>controlling techniques</td>
<td>Self-concept of ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>autonomy supporting techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructional density</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from table on teaching practices reported to impact learning outcomes, in Boekaerts, M. (1994), Motivation in Education. (p.4).

It has also been reported that self-regulatory strategies are not easily learned or developed, and that the instruction and scaffolding provided by teachers are viewed as necessary components of the process (Brownlee et al., 2000; De Corte et al., 2000; Pintrich, 1999). Teaching methodologies such as Dufeu’s “Language Psychodramaturgy” have been developed to assist the teacher in supporting language learners to develop positive conceptions of themselves and their own language learning (Dufeu, 2001, 2002). Knowledge of the teacher’s role in the process seems to be confined to the actions they are expected to perform in practice, rather than understanding the teachers’ perceptions of the learning and teaching processes themselves.

Again, when we look specifically for the types of information required in CLT methodologies, which is based on the information learners give and receive through interactions, we find a similar result (see Table 2.2). The information concerning learners’ social networks, language goals, background learning experiences, and
perceptions of their ability are considered necessary to achieve second language acquisition. Teachers are encouraged to inquire and develop an in-depth knowledge of the learners’ conceptions in their classrooms (King, 1993; McDonough & McDonough, 1997). Conversely, no such knowledge about the teacher is thought necessary (Table 2.2). This is despite the fact that the teacher’s role is considered that of a facilitator, a counsellor to the learners, and a manager in the learning process (Nunan & Lamb, 1996). The evident involvement of teachers in a learning process based on students’ interactions surely implies that teachers’ perceptions are considered to have some influence in the success of L2 learners’ learning outcomes.
Table 2.2 Information on Learners Teachers Need to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF INFORMATION REQUIRED</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learners’ life goals</td>
<td>So that teachers have a basis to determine or predict learners’ language goals, communicative networks and social roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Language goals,</td>
<td>So learners may be placed in a group based on common social roles, and the teacher may make preliminary decisions about course content appropriate to learners’ social roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative networks and social roles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Objective needs, patterns of language use, personal resources</td>
<td>So learners can be grouped according to their needs and/or interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Language proficiency and learning difficulties</td>
<td>So that learners can be grouped according to their language proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Subjective needs, including learning strategy preferences, affective needs, learning activity preferences, pace of learning, attitude toward correction</td>
<td>So that teachers may adapt learning activities to learning strategy preferences, individual needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Information about learners’ attainment of objectives</td>
<td>So that the teacher can monitor performance and modify program accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Information about the developmental processes in second language learning, including learners’ communicative strategies</td>
<td>So that teacher can gear language content and materials to learners’ stage of development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This is an important omission. According to Lemos (1999), the successful implementation of motivational research findings into classroom practices relies heavily on the teachers’ individual perceptions and conceptions of the students and learning situation. Similar claims have been made regarding the impact of teacher perceptions on the development of self-regulated learning skills (Martyn, 1993; Randi & Corno, 2000) and the learner’s use of the target language inside the classroom (Morita, 2000; Saravanan & Gupta, 1997). The impact of these teachers’ beliefs on classroom practices and motivation are areas of intense investigation in other educational fields such as mathematics (Corrigan, 2000; Crawford, Gordon, Nicholas, and Prosser,
Yet, in the field of ESL education, teachers’ perceptions are relatively unknown. Perhaps there is some reluctance to view individual teachers’ perceptions as having a unique impact on learning outcomes. Giving significant importance to these perceptions makes a slight movement away from current pedagogy on language learning. Since the 1970’s, the focus of language educators and linguists has shifted away from what is often termed as “traditionalism” or the teacher-as-authority role to pedagogy that views learning to be centred on the learner (Nunan, 1996). From this learner-centred perspective it is common to ask, what does the student believe, instead of, what does the teacher believe.

2.1.7 Summary

From the literature reviewed, we know that out-of-class interactions are considered salient in both learners’ and theorists’ perspectives. It is also evident that we have very little information regarding the teachers’ perceptions. Our present understanding of how out-of-class interactions function in the development process is still rather ambiguous. To date, few studies have focused on the effect of outside interactions on the process beyond a generally held belief that social interactions are a means of providing practice in the target language and serve as a source of input to the learner (Long & Crookes, 1992; Pica, 1998; Marini & Genereux, 1995; Martin, 1997). Historically, most of these studies that have focused on interactions have been classroom-based and learner-focused, and although they provide strong support for target language interactions in the acquisition process, most have been inconclusive as to how interactions specifically function in language learning (R. Ellis, 1994).
Consequently, the applicability of class-based findings to other contexts is unknown. A rapidly increasing body of research focused on various aspects of TL interactions in general (Damon & Phelps, 1989; R. Ellis, 1997; Izumi & Bigelow, 2000; Jiang, 2000; Schmidt, 1990) indicates that educators and researchers consider a better understanding of social interactions to be essential in completing the picture. Language teachers' roles should not be viewed as only beneficial for the development of learners' grammatical or linguistic competency (K. E. Johnson, 1996; Long, 1996). Ever apparent is the fact that in many learners' situations the way that teachers perceive and address these out-of-class interactions in their daily teaching practices may relate to the students' learning outcomes (Battista, 1994; M. Williams & Burden, 1997). The uniqueness of this thesis is that it attempts to better understand the phenomenon of out-of-class interactions and language learning from a new vantage point, the perspective of the teacher (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Missing Piece L2 Teachers' Perceptions of In and Out-of-Class Interactions: Teaching & Learning

- L2 Teaching Research
- L2 Teachers' Perceptions
- L2 Learners' Research
- L2 Learners' Perceptions

- Teachers' Perceptions
- Motivation
- Self-Efficacy
- Self-Regulation Skills
- Goals
- Self-Concept of ability
- Opportunities to interact
- Learning Outcome
- Students' Approach to Learning
- Language
grammar form
- Problem solving
- Peer-learning, Cooperative approach
- Communicative approach
- Teaching Methodologies
- In-class Interactions & Out-of-class Interactions
- Attribution

Teaching & Learning
2.2 Part B: Focus On Teachers’ Perspectives

In the previous section, I discussed the significance of focusing this thesis on out-of-class interactions, and pointed out the relative lack of knowledge available in L2 research from the teachers’ perspective (see Figure 2.1). In this section of the literature review, I will explore our current understanding of language teachers’ perceptions in relation to what is known in other subject areas. This includes examining the status of language teacher cognition research in order to discover if developing a framework or base from which we can better inform our understanding of these perceptions is needed. In addition, I present an overview of why it is necessary to have knowledge of such factors as the origin of teachers’ perceptions, language teachers’ perceptions of “role,” and the value teachers perceive out-of-class interactions to have in language development, if we are to fully understand how these perceptions may influence L2 outcomes.

2.2.1 The Focus on Language Teachers’ Perceptions

Research on teachers’ perceptions of language learning is rather a new area in the field of language learning. In fact, calls for a better understanding of language teachers’ conceptions of teaching and learning are a relatively recent phenomenon (Archer, 2000; Constantino, 1994; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Goodlad, 1990). A general review of literature indicates (see Table 2.3) that learners’ conceptions dominated the field of second language research on conceptions in the 1980s and 1990s. Inquiries regarding the possible influence of teachers’ conceptions on practice emerged in the early 1990s, followed by a few focused studies on teachers’ conceptions of various aspects of teaching, which started to appear in the latter part of that decade.
### Table 2.3 Learners' and Teachers’ Conceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Abraham</td>
<td>Strategies of Two Language Learners: A Case Study</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>Strategic competence and the learner's strategic control of the language learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Boekaerts</td>
<td>Self-Regulated Learning: where we are today</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Norton</td>
<td>Changing Perspective on Good Language Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Boekaerts</td>
<td>Handbook of Self-Regulation</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Nunan</td>
<td>The Learner-Centred Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Boxer</td>
<td>Complaints as Positive Strategies: What the Learner Needs to Know</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Nunan</td>
<td>Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Collins</td>
<td>The accent ceiling</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Strevens</td>
<td>New Orientations in the Teaching of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Ellis</td>
<td>Learning to learn English: A course on</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Vauras</td>
<td>Motivational Vulnerability as a Challenge for Educational Interventions</td>
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<td>1985</td>
<td>Ellis</td>
<td>Understanding Second Language Acquisition</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Wallenstein</td>
<td>Language and Culture in Conflict: Problem posting in the ESL Classroom</td>
</tr>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Ellis</td>
<td>The Study of Second Language Acquisition</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Lightbown</td>
<td>How Languages are Learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Gass</td>
<td>The Effects of Task Repetition on Linguistic Output</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Social Processes in Children's Learning</td>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>Graves</td>
<td>Learner Managed Learning</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Lemos</td>
<td>Students' goals and self-regulation in the classroom</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Hatano</td>
<td>Commentary: alternative perspective on transfer and transfer studies</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Lambiote</td>
<td>Manipulating Cooperative Scripts for Teaching and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Heath</td>
<td>Inner City Life Through Drama: Imagining the Language Classroom</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Kucan</td>
<td>Thinking Aloud and Reading Comprehension Research: Inquiry, Instruction, and Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Heyman</td>
<td>Achievement Goals and Intrinsinc Motivation: Their Relation and Their Role in Adaptive Motivation</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Kubota</td>
<td>Japanese Culture Constructed by Discourses: Implications for Applied Linguistics Research and ELT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Hickin-Hudson</td>
<td>Knowing Ourselves: Australian teachers and cultural diversity</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>Guiding Knowledge Construction in the Classroom: Effects of Teaching Children</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>Jerzen</td>
<td>Teaching Strategic Reading</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Kahr</td>
<td>Self-Regulation, Self Control, and Management Training Transfer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One area frequently mentioned in general L2 literature during this time was the impact that teachers' perceptions of the teaching environment (curriculum demands, class size, support from staff, etc.) may have on teaching practices (Faltis & Merino,
1991; D. R. Hall & Hewings, 2001; Penfield, 1987). This focus brought on a flurry of small case studies and teaching texts outlining ways that learning environments could be optimised through reflective teaching practices (McDonough & McDonough, 1997). There were also a number of studies uncovering the teacher’s voice in areas such as classroom management (Norton, 1998), curriculum (Nunan & Lamb, 1996), and teacher education (Freeman & Richards, 1993). More recently there have increasingly been calls for empirical data on how teachers’ perceptions may relate to specific teaching approaches, evidenced in reports (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999a; Nespor, 1987; Richards, 2001) and in the general L2 literature (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4 Calls for a better understanding of L2 teaching and more investigations into teachers’ beliefs and knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Andrews</td>
<td>Teacher Language Awareness and the Professional Knowledge Base of the L2 teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Richards</td>
<td>30 years of TEFL/ESOL: A Personal Reflection</td>
</tr>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Berg</td>
<td>Teachers’ Meaning Regarding Educational Practice</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Burgess</td>
<td>Focus on grammatical form: explicit or implicit?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Farrell</td>
<td>Learning to Teach English language during the first year: personal influences and challenges</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Borg M.</td>
<td>Teachers’ beliefs</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Ben-Peretz</td>
<td>When Teaching Changes, Can Teacher Education Be Far Behind?</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Hargreaves</td>
<td>The Paradoxical Profession: Teaching at the Turn of the Century.</td>
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<td>Hyde</td>
<td>Teachers as learners: beyond language learning</td>
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<td>Putnam</td>
<td>What Do New Views of Knowledge and Thinking Have to Say About Research on Teacher Learning</td>
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<td>A pedagogical Framework for Bilingual Education Teacher Preparation Programs</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Jarvela</td>
<td>The changes in learning theory and the topicality of the recent research on motivation</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>Aalsvoort</td>
<td>New perspectives in learning and instruction. Report of the EARLI Special Interest Group 'Social Interaction' the organised an Expert Meeting at Leiden University, the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Saravanan</td>
<td>Teacher input in Singapore English classrooms</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Ellis</td>
<td>Teaching and Research: Options in Grammar Teaching</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>A review of research on teacher beliefs and practices</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Jochums</td>
<td>Grandfathered ESL teachers development: Assessment of Change and Lessons Learned</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers’ Beliefs Study
Why this sudden interest in language teachers' perceptions and how their beliefs might influence their practices? One reason is that in other areas (such as mathematics, sciences, and reading comprehension) empirical evidence is accumulating that these beliefs relate to teachers' approaches to teaching which in turn influences learners' approach to learning (Bull & Anstey, 1996; Crawford, Gordon, Nicholas, & Prosser, 1998b). Another might be the urgency expressed by a number of countries with rapidly growing immigration populations (US, Australia, Israel). Many report that teachers of traditionally all-English-content classrooms are ill equipped to deal with needs of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) student. It has been suggested that in order to develop successful professional training programs, it is paramount that we have an understanding of what it is that ESL teachers know and practice (Canales & Ruiz-Escalante, 2000; Constantino, 1994; Geva-May, 1998; Hildago & Huling-Austin, 1993).

Language teaching and research (see Table 2.4) is influenced concurrently by many factors: professional trends (Aalsvoort, 1999) and innovations, technology (Ben-Peretz, 2000; S. Borg, 1998a), academic disciplines (Jäverlå & Niemivirta, 1999), linguistics (Bull & Anstey, 1996), science, learner-based needs (see Table 2.3), etc., with some factors receiving more attention at times than others (Richards, 2001). Richards, in a historical review of language teaching over the last 30 years, suggests that the continual changes and implementation of new methodologies, research approaches, and so on, are perhaps most motivated by dissatisfaction (Richards, 2002). He states, "Despite the resources expended on second and foreign language teaching worldwide, in almost every country results normally do not match expectations, hence the constant pressure to adopt new curriculum, teaching methods, materials, and forms of assessment" (p. 27). Still from developing new models of teaching and learning, to
improving current teacher training, more and more educators and researchers are asking and looking for information on how, why and what does the teacher think? On S. Borg’s “Language Teacher Cognition” website, in the “background” section, a list of practical and philosophical reasons for conducting investigations into teachers’ beliefs is provided:

- to provide a conceptually more complete account of teaching than a solely behavioural model offers
- to understand teaching by gaining insight into the psychological context of instruction
- to understand discrepancies between theoretical recommendations based on research and classroom practice, and hence to attempt to explain the lack of influence of educational innovation on practice
- to provide quality portraiture of teaching in all its complexity
- to engage teachers in a form of reflective learning, by making them aware of the psychological bases of their classroom practice; to help teachers understand their mental lives, not to dictate practice to them
- to develop a new conceptualisation of teaching which supports and improves the quality of teachers’ professional practice
- to provide the basis of effective pre- and in-service teacher education and professional development
- to provide descriptive information about subject-specific teacher cognition and pedagogy
- to understand how teachers develop
- to enable researchers to test empirical theories against the processes of real classrooms


13 This site originated in 2002-2003; and has developed into an excellent source of current publications and developments on teachers’ beliefs and is regularly updated.
From the literature reviewed it seems the field of cognition research a new and growing area of research in the field of language teaching with over a 100 publications in the last five years; but it is also true that much of what has been published is fragmented and lacking frameworks in which to base future investigations. Borg (2002) confirms this in stating, “Research into language teacher cognition has increased in recent years. Overall, though, this field of research is relatively undeveloped; it is, in my opinion, fragmented and lacking any coherent guiding agenda or framework” (Background section, para. 1).

There are a number of reasons that language research continues to focus on teachers’ perceptions as incidental rather than essential to the learning process. Previously I suggested that one reason for this might be a resistance to a focus on the teacher, as this could be viewed as “traditional” or behaviouristic and not in line with current L2 pedagogy which is based on the learner. Others suggest that language lacks a sequence of competencies of the sort that researchers have identified in other subject areas such as mathematics or reading, and that this limitation has prevented the development of a working model that could be readily implemented by educators in the area of language teaching (Kuhn, 1999). This implies language researchers have been delayed in their investigation of factors that influence the learning process because they are still searching for a viable explanation for the language learning process itself.

The bulk of research into L2 teacher conceptions of subject content has focused on grammar and literacy (S. Borg, 2003a). The most extensive review of literature published to date on L2 teachers’ beliefs, conducted by S. Borg (2003b), outlines 64

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14 In 1996, Woods used the term “teacher cognition” as a term referring to our general understanding of language teachers’ beliefs (Woods, 1996). S. Borg, in a number of papers from 1999-2003, continued to use this term to describe the general body of research into language teachers’ thinking, beliefs, perceptions, conceptions, knowledge, transfer of knowledge, constructions, etc. I have also chosen to adopt this broad usage of the term to discuss the field generally within this thesis (S. Borg, 1999a, 2003a).

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Teachers' Beliefs Study
studies between 1976 and 2002. S. Borg pointed out that, out of the total located, a majority (47) had appeared since 1996, showing that the subject of L2 teachers' beliefs is a new and developing area of investigation. S. Borg identifies the current trend, stating, "In analysing teacher cognition in language teaching, then, 1990-2000 emerges as a decade of change" (S. Borg, 2003b, p. 83).

The overview of literature conducted for this thesis (see Table 2.5) was done prior to S. Borg's review; however, the results support his stated time frame of the field, as 26 of the 38 studies listed fall within that period. The focus for the "L2 teachers' conceptions of interactions review" was narrowed to studies that included spoken interaction (classroom practice and/or teachers' reflections of both in-class and out-of-class interaction, and their own experiences as teachers and learners as individuals or as a group). I've titled the review "L2 Teachers' conceptions," as the majority (34) of studies have occurred in second language teaching situations. Most of these studies were in English, however; only 4 studies reviewed were in languages other than English. The remaining 4 studies concerned teachers of English as a foreign language; however, the teachers in two of these studies were in ESL contexts themselves as learners. Studies that reported patterns of conceptual development or practices across groups of L2 teachers (preferably including spoken interaction) were also included to inform the general aims of the thesis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Basturkmen</td>
<td>Teachers’ Stated Beliefs about Incidental Focus on Form / Classroom practice</td>
<td>3 teachers at a private language school in Auckland, New Zealand.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Golombeck</td>
<td>A study of language teachers’ personal practical knowledge</td>
<td>2 MA candidates ethnographic</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Yoga Rocha</td>
<td>Experience of intercultural adaptation of experienced Egyptian EFL teachers in US professional development program overseas</td>
<td>50 EFL teachers ethnography: the role of interactions and culture shock on behavior attitude and performance</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Richards</td>
<td>Relationships between principles and practices of individuals and of a group of teachers</td>
<td>16 ESL teachers in Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Srimavin &amp; Darasawing</td>
<td>Teachers’ develop self-assessment through journal writing</td>
<td>4 teachers as learners self-assess their understandings through journaling weekly over 15</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Pennington</td>
<td>Comparison of the practices of ESL teachers in the Asia Pacific region</td>
<td>Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, and Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Donaghue</td>
<td>An Instrument to elicit teachers’ beliefs and assumptions</td>
<td>RGT 5 groups of 5-8 overseas teachers in UK methods program and 3 teacher trainers</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Baily</td>
<td>The influence of learning experience on teaching philosophies &amp; cultural assumptions</td>
<td>7 teachers on an MA course in USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Hulst &amp; Verloop</td>
<td>The use of analogies in language teaching: representing the content of form</td>
<td>8 experienced teachers, 8 lessons observations and interviews</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Baily</td>
<td>Experienced teachers’ decisions to depart from their lesson plan</td>
<td>8 experienced teachers intensive American ESL prog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Borg</td>
<td>Self-perception and practice in teaching grammar</td>
<td>2 teachers (knowledge of grammar and learning in practice)</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Bally</td>
<td>Teachers’ theories and practices in the beginning adult L2 classroom</td>
<td>6 experienced ESL teachers of beginning adult learners in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Breen &amp; al.</td>
<td>Relationships between principles and practices of individuals and of a group of teachers</td>
<td>18 experienced ESL teachers in Australia</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Woods</td>
<td>Planning and decision-making in the ESL classroom</td>
<td>8 ESL teachers in 4 university settings in Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Richards &amp; al.</td>
<td>Exploring teachers’ beliefs and the process of change</td>
<td>Questionnaire: 112 L2 teachers (beliefs that guide your practice)</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Kern</td>
<td>Questionnaire, 286 students enrolled in 1-2 year French and 12 instructors</td>
<td>6 experienced ESL teachers in adult education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Carlsson</td>
<td>Student teachers’ conceptions of literary understanding</td>
<td>How 25 Hungarian and 8 Swedish student teachers</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>The emerging beliefs and instructional practices of preservice and in-service teachers</td>
<td>4 preservice teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Cabanoglu &amp; Roberts</td>
<td>Development in student teachers’ pre-existing beliefs during a 1-year PGCE</td>
<td>2025 student-teachers at the University of Reading fact sheet/ in-depth</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Two Chapter I Teachers’ Beliefs about Reading and Practices</td>
<td>2 Primary Level Chapter I reading teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Morita</td>
<td>Discourse Socialization Oral Classroom Activities in a TESL Grad program</td>
<td>2 Instructors and 21 student/ participant observation and interviews</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Freeman</td>
<td>Rethinking Experience/ Reconstructing Practice: developing new understandings of longitudinal study of 4 French and 8 Spanish teachers in pre-service program</td>
<td>6 experienced teachers intensive in-service training program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Chan</td>
<td>Teacher Education Students’ Epistemological Beliefs- A cultural perspective on</td>
<td>365 Teacher education students of the Hong Kong Institute of Education</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Chandler</td>
<td>Unproductive Busywork</td>
<td>Questionnaire to Eng. Dept. Somerst England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>De Guerrero &amp; Villamil</td>
<td>Exploring teachers’ beliefs through metaphor</td>
<td>22 EFL teachers (experienced and in TT) written statement</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Horowitz</td>
<td>Pre-existing beliefs of beginning FL students impacted teaching</td>
<td>Bali 80 German 63 French and 88 Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Borg</td>
<td>Teachers’ theories/ grammar teaching</td>
<td>5 EFL teachers in Malta</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Farch</td>
<td>META Talk in FL Classroom Discourse in Danish secondary schools</td>
<td>6 teachers 7 lessons:; 3 in German and 4 in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Richards et al.</td>
<td>Pedagogical reasoning of experienced and less experienced teachers</td>
<td>10 trainee teachers, 10 graduate TESL teachers, and 12 practicing teachers in Hong Kong</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Elbaz</td>
<td>Teacher's active role in using knowledge professional knowledge and practical knowledge and meaning</td>
<td>3 participant case study 'imagin' and practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A variety of interaction in various contexts emerged, including: the role of in-class interaction on teachers' planning and decision making processes (Woods, 1996), the role of teacher training and professional terms in teachers' descriptions of their own practices and beliefs (Elbaz, 1981), the use of meta-talk in grammar teaching (Faerch, 1985), the use of analogies in practice (Hulshof & Verloop, 2002), and teachers' experiences of social interactions in their own learning (Morita, 2000; Rocha, 2004). Although spoken interaction was a component of these studies, conceptions of specific interactions inside and outside of the classroom were auxiliary and not the focus of these investigations. No systematic investigation was discovered that dealt with the variations in the ways teachers conceived of specific out-of-class interactions relating to learning or teaching in a specific situation.

2.2.2 The ESL Metaphorical Conceptualisation of Practice Study

At the start of this research, a single metaphorical study was located in the area of second language learning that expressly attempted to better understand language teachers' beliefs about themselves and the learners in the process of teaching and learning language in the classroom. The initial report, published in 2000, presented preliminary results of an ongoing study on ESL teachers' metaphorical conceptualisations of their professions, conducted by De Guerrero and colleagues (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). According to De Guerrero, an important preliminary finding was that the metaphors suggested that personal preferences and individual attitudes might impact on these conceptualisations. Instead of analysing the data in an attempt to identify the origin of these beliefs, in the initial report teachers' conceptualisations (represented by metaphorical uses) were simply categorised under
the pedagogy of current teaching practices, as we can observe from the descriptions provided from their data.

De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) categorises L2 teachers' beliefs as follows: "Some metaphors express a tendency toward learner-centred rather than teacher-centred instruction ("movie/theatre director"). A preoccupation with teaching critical thinking ("snag in the river"), and an awareness of the difficulties involved in certain ESL situations ("lion tamer"), all indicative of how the teachers' personal experiences have shaped their conception of the ESL teacher" (p. 348). The metaphors then were loosely categorised under various theoretical presuppositions, which again emphasised the need for a conceptual framework developed from detailed descriptions of what it is that teachers actually say rather than what researchers believe they meant.

An evident weakness of the initial findings was that the metaphors were constructed directly in response to the researchers' request to complete a statement ("An ESL teacher is like ..."), rather than elicited spontaneously during discourse, and so may not represent the participants' actual conceptualisations of themselves" (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2002, p. 99). De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) acknowledged this in stating, "We tend to see these metaphors as providing access to prevalent notions about what an ESL teacher is and about the roles ESL teachers are expected to perform" rather than as categories of the actual conceptions of the participants themselves (p. 348).

Without appearing overtly critical, particularly as I very much support the focus of De Guerrero's study, the reason I chose not to use this study as a starting point was primarily that statement. I was interested in exploring the actual conceptions of the participants themselves. In addition, there were two methodological problems evident in De Guerrero's initial report that made it difficult to build on these findings.
The first problem was the lack of information regarding the participants in the study. There was no information regarding the teachers' background experience and education—a limitation which hinders replication and may influence the conceptualisations reported. This information was later provided in a final report of the study “Metaphorical conceptualisations of ESL teaching and learning” (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2002). Data for De Guerrero's study was collected on two occasions in workshops offered by the researchers at a TESOL convention (12 participants) and at a workshop in a MATESOL class (10 participants) at a private university. The group of participants itself was heterogeneous in character, with the two common denominators being that all the participants were currently teaching in ESL contexts in Puerto Rico.

In neither report was there mention of analysis conducted regarding differences in conceptions of the participants that attended the two workshops. De Guerrero reported that 10 of the participants were graduate students; while of the remaining participants, 6 had doctoral degrees, and 6 had master's degrees in TESL and applied linguistics. There was a clear difference in educational backgrounds between both groups. There also appeared to be variation in teaching experience between the two groups that participated: for seven participants, 15 or more years; for six participants, 6-15 years; and for nine participants, 1-5 years. Although the findings reported were not broken down by groups, De Guerrero addresses these variations by asserting that due to small sample size the data did not yield significant patterns of responses according to educational or teaching experiences (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2002, p. 100).

The second problem with De Guerrero's study was that specific detail was lacking regarding the context in which the participants taught or had taught, which was particularly important in the light of former studies which indicate that teachers' concepts of knowing and learning directly relate to the students' level of proficiency.
(Archer, 2000; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Prosser et al., 1994). In the second report, it was stated that 12 of the participants were working at the higher education level. While this fact is potentially significant for the purpose of this thesis, unfortunately no information regarding the type of classes taught or the proficiency of the students was provided.

Due to the lack of detail provided on the participants in the initial report, it was not possible to build the thesis on the initial findings published on De Guerrero's study. However, the information presented in subsequent reports regarding the similarities in sample size and, more significantly, the descriptions of metaphorical conceptions under specific conceptions of teachers' roles and general beliefs, provides corroboration and consideration for future investigation of the findings reported here (see Chapter 8).

2.2.3 Developing an Overview of Language Teacher Cognition Research

Although the number of total studies in language teacher cognition appear to be relatively small, the studies themselves are difficult to locate. Therefore, it is possible that some studies that include brief statements or excerpts on in-class or out-of-class interaction may have been missed. The main reasons for this are that L2 research on teachers' conceptions has been based on a variety of theoretical paradigms and frequently grounded in other educational or scientific fields; thus, publications are listed under a confusing array of terms referring to various aspects of teacher's beliefs and knowledge (for an overview of terms see S. Borg, 2003b). Currently the empirical studies published on L2 teacher cognition have covered a variety of factors considered important to L2 teaching and learning, such as; subject knowledge (Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989), pedagogical knowledge (K. E. Johnson, 1994), epistemological beliefs (Chan, 2000), and practical knowledge (Golombeck, 1998; see Table 2.5).
In reviewing a dominant area in current L2 cognition research, 11 out of 38 sources reviewed appear to be investigations into the relationship between teacher training and L2 teachers’ cognition. Table 2.5 includes studies that have looked at conceptual development during teacher training, explorations into the influence of teacher training on pre-existing beliefs, and research into whether teacher training has an impact on actual teaching practices (Carlsson, Fülüp, & Marton, 2001).

There have also been investigations of unique factors that appear to influence teachers’ conceptions of specific teaching contexts, such as textbook use (Richards & Mahoney, 1996), or social factors such as differences in culture and language backgrounds (Faerch, 1985; Pennington et al., 1997). This multiplicity of research aims, methodologies, theoretical perspectives and contexts makes it difficult to ascertain from titles, abstracts and reported findings whether the focus of a particular investigation was an exploration of a specific factor or general factors in L2 learning/teaching, or an intention to uncover particular thinking processes behind a specific learning or teaching activity.

In the body of literature discussed here, five general areas of focus in current L2 cognition research emerged (see Table 2.6). These focuses often overlap; that is, a study such as (Johnston & Goettsch, 2000) may be conducted on how teachers understand grammar, but all the subjects will be labelled “experienced teachers” and the questions will ask how the subjects experienced grammar in their own learning and how they perceived their teacher training. Therefore in Table 2.6 I have attempted to list the studies under the focus that was most discussed in each one.
Table 2.6 Areas of Research in L2 Teacher Cognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research focus</th>
<th>Number of studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Grammar, literacy and reading</td>
<td>• 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conceptual development or acquired knowledge in teacher training</td>
<td>• 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practical knowledge and practice</td>
<td>• 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The influence of experience on practice and pedagogy</td>
<td>• 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The influence of unique context or situation on practice (i.e., policy, culture, subject matter, classroom)</td>
<td>• 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dominant subject-specific research area in this review appears to be grammar, literacy and reading, as described in S. Borg’s (2003b) review, and so it is listed as the first research focus in Table 2.6. In these studies, researchers are at the forefront of L2 teacher cognition, as they have begun to focus on teachers’ conception of the role of the subject (S. Borg, 2001b) and how teachers’ understandings of the subject and the processes of learning and teaching affect how they practice (S. Borg, 1999c). Similar to mainstream education studies, L2 cognition research focused on subject-specific knowledge consistently emphasises that knowledge is not just the knowing of facts but a process, and that L2 teachers’ understanding does or should continually develop (Johnston & Goettsch, 2000).

The second area of research focus in the L2 cognition literature concerns differentiating types of knowledge, such as practical knowledge or professional knowledge (listed as the second and third research focuses in the table), and attempts to identify where that knowledge comes from and how it develops (Grossman, 1989; Hulshof & Verloop, 2002). There also appears to be a growing awareness that different types of knowledge are evident in actual practice (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, &
Thwaite, 2001). Twenty-two of the studies reviewed had some mention of type, origin, and development of knowledge.

A fourth and rather new focus in the research situates the participants based on experience. For example, among the studies reviewed in Table 2.5, the majority before 1995 were reporting on the conceptual development of student teachers; however, since 1996 most of the studies situate their findings either with beginning L2 teachers or with experienced L2 teachers. Teachers' experience is beginning to be acknowledged as an important factor not only in how they practice (Golombeck, 1998), but in how they develop expertise (for an overview of the influence of experience in developing teaching expertise, see Tsui, 2003). This conscious inclusion of experience as a factor in current explorations is supported by consistent reports from the L2 teachers that they generally attribute their beliefs or knowledge to personal experiences as learners or teachers rather than to the training they received (Grossman, 1989; K E. Johnson, 1994). A participant in a study conducted by Freeman, for example, claimed, "Everything I liked and learned [about Spanish] was outside the classroom, and [I'm] trying to bring that into the classroom. It's not in the book, and it's to heighten awareness of the outside world and get them excited about it as I was living it, but through the classroom" (Freeman, 1993, p. 488).

The fifth area identified in the teacher cognition research was a methodological one. Studies increasingly report observations of specific teaching practices, and show teachers reflecting on specific situations in their teaching and learning. Breen in his study of 18 experienced ESL teachers argues that teaching pedagogy and practice cannot be explored by simply observing practice or asking the teacher; these need to be done in conjunction. He also argues that to develop our understanding of what it is teachers think and do, the teacher must describe a specific situation rather than a
generally held belief (Breen et al., 2001, p. 498). This development in research has probably occurred from continual reports that what teachers say they believe is not always evident in practice (Graden, 1996; Howe, Grierson, & Richmond, 1997). There appears to be a growing awareness that teachers’ plans and decisions and image of what is learned or taught is dynamic or changes when they are in a specific situation (M. M. Davis, Konopak, & Readence, 1993). An excellent study on how teachers’ plans and decisions evolve during classroom situations is Wood’s work on teachers’ decision making (1996). Some studies also report that the context of a specific situation may override a teacher’s belief (Andrews, 2003; Howe et al., 1997; Hulshof & Verloop, 2002; Richards & Mahoney, 1996).

One type of reporting that is starting to emerge more consistently in language teacher cognition research relies on excerpts or descriptions from the teachers themselves regarding how the interactions that occur in specific situations impact the ways that teachers make sense of the actual learning and teaching in the particular situation studied (Breen et al., 2001). The Basturkmen et al., study, for example, noted differences in types of interaction and teaching and learning that occurred during unplanned events such as “time-outs,” versus planned interactions. (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004). Hulshof outlines one specific difference in teacher interaction, claiming that analogies that the teachers used in that study were pre-planned interaction, and were structurally related to the materials presented; they did not often occur spontaneously (Hulshof & Verloop, 2002). Golembeck’s study explores tensions a teacher experiences in practice with error correction, as the teacher wants to avoid “silencing” her students with too much correction as had occurred in her own experiences as a language learner (Golombeck, 1998). Ollin’s study, for example,
describes the differences in teachers’ use of silence in classroom teaching after
reflection on how they use silence in their own everyday lives (Ollin, 2004).

In this review of language teacher cognition literature, I have discussed the
newness and incoherency of the field. However, it is also clear that this research area is
rapidly developing and growing. Growth is evidenced in the recent emergence of
empirical studies over the last decade. Almost half of the studies reviewed here have
occurred after I had situated and started the investigations presented in the thesis. With
a few exceptions, the studies reviewed have been qualitative in nature and been done
with a small number of teachers over a short period; thus most of the investigations
have had little or no followup to confirm or refute findings by other researchers. Still,
the field of language teacher cognition draws heavily on what has previously been
discovered about language learners’ conceptions and on the large body of work that has
been published on teacher cognition in other areas.

A definition of language teacher cognition is emerging. Currently three general
types of knowledge have been identified: professional (knowledge of subject,
theoretical knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge), practical (classroom management
techniques and knowledge of a situated experience), and personal (knowledge
developed through the individual’s experiences as a teacher and learner). There is also
evidence to suggest that teachers’ understandings of language learning and teaching can
be a situated in specific experiences and are not always explicitly clear in practice.
Furthermore, the contextual factors of a specific teaching situation may override a
teacher’s stated principles.

What teachers know seems to be heavily influenced by personal experiences.
This knowledge, however, may be subconscious and not articulated by the teacher.
Asking the teachers themselves about learning and teaching in a specific situation
seems to afford the best insights into what it is that teachers think. Thus far, there is not enough research to definitively describe the relationship between what teachers think and do. However, many of the current published studies suggest strong correlations. Finally, there is evidence particularly from studies assessing teacher-training programs that some conceptions held by teachers are resistant to change; though some teachers adopt changes in practice after reflection on particular situations.

Literature on language teacher cognition has also provided a number of insights into what methodologies appear to be most affective in developing and understanding language teacher conceptions. 1) To understand what a person thinks you must ask the person. 2) Quantitative methods may assist in developing an overview of specific subject or pedagogical knowledge held by teachers, but to understand the individual’s perspective it is important to ask the individual. Open-ended or reflective questions concerning particular situations are the most effective. 3) The stated beliefs of a teacher may not be evidenced in practice, so the context of a study should either be situated in or informed by actual practice. 4) Teachers’ understandings are dynamic, and they change according to specific experience and the contextual factors of particular situations. Therefore, if we are to develop an understanding of the types of conceptions language teachers hold, we need to try to uncover the patterns of conceptual development as they emerge in real situations. While these general methodological insights are helpful, to situate new research on language teaching cognition it is also helpful to look at the more developed strands of research based in other educational fields.
2.2.4 Research Findings on Teacher Perspectives in Other Areas

The impact of teachers' perspectives on the learning process has been widely reported particularly in the areas of medicine, science, mathematics and literacy, where studies have shown that teachers' beliefs affect classroom practices (Altrichter et al., 1993; Ben-Peretz, 2000; Bull & Anstey, 1996; Handal et al., 2001; Putnum & Burko, 2000; Secada et al., 1999; M. Williams & Burden, 1997). To explicate the importance of teachers' perceptions on learning outcomes, I have chosen to review a series of studies that have been conducted on the perceptions of mathematics and science teachers at the tertiary level. I chose these studies for two reasons: 1) the findings clearly detail the impact of teachers' perceptions on learning outcomes in a fashion that is understandable to those not directly involved in those subject areas; 2) the studies were conducted using the phenomenographic approach that I am using with this thesis (outlined in Figure 2.2 below).

Figure 2.2. Review of Prosser and Trigwell studies

Adapted from Trigwell 1999 (p.60)
Prosser and Trigwell began their research using a phenomenographic methodology based on earlier work done on the categorisation of learners' conceptions of learning (for an overview see Marton & Booth, 1997). They began their research with a study designed to develop a range of first-year physics and chemistry teachers' conceptualisations of teaching in learning at two Australian universities (Prosser et al., 1994). After identifying these conceptions, they compared them to the teaching strategies used by the teachers in their actual practice and found that these beliefs significantly impacted the teachers' approach to teaching (Trigwell, 1996). Trigwell and Prosser then hypothesised that the teachers who had reported beliefs and strategies that were seen to support learners' deeper approaches to learning (i.e., teaching viewed as helping students develop conceptions of the subject area) would have higher levels of success in learning outcomes than those who had reported beliefs and strategies that related to more surface-level learning (i.e., teaching viewed as transmitting concepts of a syllabus). Therefore, in their final set of studies both a qualitative (based on students' written descriptions of their beliefs and approaches to learning) and a quantitative (statistical analysis of students' course results) comparison of the teachers' beliefs and the students' learning outcomes was conducted (Trigwell et al., 1999). Prosser and Trigwell found that a consistent relationship between teachers' beliefs and learner outcomes existed, which clearly indicates that individual teachers' perceptions influenced their students' approach to learning and impacted the overall result of the learning process (for an overview see Prosser & Trigwell, 1999).

From this example, we can clearly ascertain that teachers' perceptions is a subject of intense research in other areas, particularly those areas that have already developed a range of teacher conceptions that have been found to directly impact learning outcomes. Thus in the area of language research, a thesis focused on a better
understanding of L2 teachers’ perceptions, with an aim of developing a basis in which these beliefs can start to be framed, is highly warranted.

2.2.5 Framework of Language Teachers’ Perceptions

Currently there exists no developed framework or categorisation of these teachers’ perceptions. Studies often report some connection, or relationship between what a teacher has said or the type of teaching skills that are observed in practice, and general conceptions of “good” language teaching practices (Oxford, 1990). In an attempt to build a framework that would explicate the origin of teachers’ conceptions of teaching and the bearing these conceptions have on actual practice, Zahorik (1986) classified the general conceptions of teaching into three main categories (see Table 2.7):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zahorik’s three categories of teaching conceptions and origin</th>
<th>Richards’ Comparison of methods/approaches in language teaching (theoretical origin)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Science/research conceptions (supported by experimentation and empirical investigation)</td>
<td>Methodologies in language teaching developed as an attempt to apply research: Audiolingualism (behavioural psychology), Task Based Teaching (L2 research on learning through negotiation), and Learner Training (cognitive style and learner strategies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Theory/philosophy conceptions (supported by logical argumentation)</td>
<td>Methodologies in language teaching applying a theoretical approach: Communicative Language Teaching (reaction to critiques of grammar-based approaches), the Silent Way (claims of how adult learners learn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, Art/craft conceptions (each teaching situation is viewed as unique, irreparable and noncomparable)</td>
<td>There is no specific methodology applied but rather a belief that no one method fits all teaching/learning situations and that teachers should develop a unique set of personal skills and make the decision of what to apply as they think best in a specific situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following Zahorik's publication, Richards (1992) used the three conceptual categorisations as a starting point and included descriptions of teaching approaches and methods from the field of language teaching to illustrate how these different conceptional categories lead to differences in our understanding of what were the essential skills of teaching (p. 39; see Table 2.7). Richards also extended Zahorik's theoretical category to include models in language teaching developed to apply value-based approaches to improve the quality of teaching ("reflective teaching," "the teacher as action researcher," "team-teaching") or the quality of the learning experience (generally termed "humanistic," including approaches such as "community language learning" and "learner-centred curriculum"). Richards claimed that these approaches were based on philosophy: "the values one holds about teachers, learner, classroom and the role of education in society," rather than on educational criteria (p. 42).

One problem with using these categories is that they are too general. In fact, when we look at the variety of teaching practices based on the "Functional," "Simulation," and "Problem Posing" approaches previously discussed (see Literature Review Part A, Communicative Teaching Perspective) it could be argued that each of these three approaches can originate from any or all of the three categories given. The value of these categories was also questioned by Freeman and Richards (1993), who argued that while most widely known language teaching practices may originate from these categories; this does not provide us with information about what actually occurs in the classroom. There is a lot of evidence that teachers' decisions tend not to be based on thoughtful application of a body of professional knowledge acquired in teacher preparation courses, in-service training or post-graduate study (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999b; Nespor, 1987).
The shortcoming of this type of categorisation was also noted by Zahorik (1986), who states, "Beyond a few obvious skills ... identifying universal teaching skills is difficult because teaching skills emerge from one's conception of good teaching" (p. 21). Clearly, frameworks of language teachers’ perceptions are needed, particularly as continuing to categorise these perceptions under teaching practices implies that teachers’ perceptions originate from either theory or teacher training, when research on the origin of individuals’ perceptions continue to report that this is not the case (Crawford et al., 1998a; Duke et al., 1998; Norton, 1998). Even though Zahorik’s work has been criticised, it is seminal in that it shows that individual teachers’ conceptions are not specific to whatever theory or method is currently in favour; but that these conceptions vary and are influenced by social factors and individual experiences. Zahorik supported the foundation of the questions and findings presented here almost two decades later, by explicitly arguing that teachers’ conceptions are an important factor in learning and teaching, and that more exploration was needed to elucidate how these conceptions influence teaching practices.

2.2.6 Where Do Teaching Practices Come From?

Research on teacher learning suggests that the foundations of an individual’s ideas about teaching originate from their experience of being a student and teacher (see Lortie, 1975, and Kennedy, 1990, in Freeman & Richards, 1993). Teacher training studies frequently caution against the overgeneralisation of teacher conceptions, and report that individual teachers’ conceptions of teaching and learning a language often differ from those that are collectively held by the profession (Archer, 2000; Wallace, 1991). There is also evidence suggesting that professional teacher training courses exert little influence on teachers’ beliefs and practices (Airasian & Walsh, 1997; A. L.
Brown, 1997; Über Grosse, 1991). According to Archer, this lack of influence teacher training has on teachers’ perceptions might be explained when we consider that “Knowledge is not transmitted and accepted in toto by passive recipients. Rather people construct new knowledge by aligning it with, or fitting it into, their existing beliefs and experiences” (p. 2). Therefore, an investigation that remains open to teachers’ descriptions of where their perceptions originate is particularly important, in that it will assist researchers in building an informed understanding of these perceptions, instead of attempting to frame these beliefs under the multitude of theories and conceptions of practice that currently exist.

2.2.7 L2 Teacher Perceptions and the Value Placed on Interactions

After an extensive review of the literature, I found no studies focusing specifically on teachers’ perceptions of students’ social interactions and language acquisition. Nevertheless, the teachers’ role was emphasised in three studies that clearly supported a focus on out-of-class interactions in language learning. Significantly, 1) the teacher’s perception of these interactions was seen as salient to the learner and learning process and 2) the teacher’s willingness to address these interactions in practice appeared to be instrumental to the success of the learning process. (These studies are discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2, OCI Studies and L2 Teachers’ Roles).

2.2.8 Teachers’ Perceptions of Role

The importance of understanding teachers’ role perceptions has been exemplified in US studies looking at why secondary teachers in all-English classrooms with students of non-English background or limited English proficiency (LEP) have been slow to incorporate language teaching practices in their classrooms (Constantino,
1994; Penfield, 1987). Penfield claims that a major reason for this relates to the secondary teachers' perception that teaching English to LEP students is the responsibility of the ESL teachers. The fact that teachers' perceptions of their role is slow to change is illustrated by Constantino, who points out that despite the fact that US secondary teachers have been aware of the rapidly increasing numbers of LEP students in their classrooms since the mid-eighties, they continue to perceive themselves as "content teachers not as language specialists" (p. 1).

This past research suggests that in addition to understanding teachers' perceptions of in-class and out-of-class interactions in the development process and their origin, we also need to know how teachers perceive their own role in relation to these interactions, particularly if we desire to know why so few studies focusing on out-of-class interactions have been reported in the past. Such knowledge is also required if new teaching methodologies focusing on these out-of-class interactions are to be proposed and accepted by language teachers in the future.

2.3 Conclusion

When we look closely at those aspects of teaching considered influential or significant to overall language acquisition, it becomes apparent that these teaching practices have developed primarily on the basis of theorists' and learners' perceptions of what makes a good learner, teacher and teaching environment (Nunan, 1989; Willing, 1989a; see Figure 2.3). To date language research has been heavily influenced by attempts to explain what makes a good learner. I argue that though this knowledge of the learner has enlightened educators of the language learning process, it does not tell the whole story. As Pica (1987) states, "Even with strong motivation, positive attitudes, or critical needs for learning another language, second language learners have
been known to fall short of their goals in the language classroom” (p. 3). Despite the good intentions of teachers, specialised programming and instructional methods, many will leave the classroom lacking the language skills needed to cope with the communication demands of the world outside (Bunts-Anderson, 2000a). It is apparent that a good understanding of the learner, while beneficial to the learning process, is not enough. The area of language learning is theory-laden with the numerous attempts to explain the process. Yet, we still lack a coherent explanation of how out-of-class interactions relate to the language learning process. It is my belief that to further understand the role of these social interactions in the learning process, we will need to examine the perceptions of the teacher.

Previous second language studies that have focused on out-of-class interactions clearly imply that teachers’ perceptions of role influences learning outcomes (Nunan, 1996; Stoneberg, 1995). Nevertheless, these perceptions have been reported as incidental rather than as a direct factor in the result (see Figure 2.3). Therefore, to understand the impact teachers’ perceptions have on learning outcomes, we have looked at findings from other areas. What these findings suggest is that research on teachers’ perceptions must be seen as an area or focus on its own. Past attempts of researchers to categorise, these perceptions under the headings of prominent L2 teaching practice or theory have not allowed us to progress (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). Research on teacher training clearly indicates that teachers’ perceptions are not heavily influenced by theory, but in fact appear to originate from the teachers’ own experiences as a teacher and learner themselves (Airasian & Walsh, 1997; A. L. Brown, 1994). This sort of information can only be collected in one way—we need to talk to teachers themselves.
Figure 2.3. Aspects of teaching considered influential in L2 learning: What L2 teachers should know about the L2 learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Information required</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learners' life goals</td>
<td>So that teachers have a basis to determine or predict learners' language goals, communicative networks and social roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Language goals,</td>
<td>So learners may be placed in a group based on common social roles, and the teacher may make preliminary decisions about course content appropriate to learners' social roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative networks and social roles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Objective needs, patterns of language use, personal resources</td>
<td>So learners can be grouped according to their needs and/or interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Language proficiency and learning difficulties</td>
<td>So that learners can be grouped according to their language proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Subjective needs, including learning strategy preferences, affective needs, learning activity preferences, pace of learning, attitude toward correction</td>
<td>So that teachers may adapt learning activities to learning strategy preferences, individual needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Information about learners' attainment of objectives</td>
<td>So that the teacher can monitor performance and modify program accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Information about the developmental processes in second language learning, including learners' communicative strategies</td>
<td>So that teacher can gear language content and materials to learners' stage of development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Nunan and Lamb (1996) The Self-Directed Teacher, Table 8, (p. 26).
Chapter 3

Theory and Methodology


Whenever a theory appears to you as the only possible one, take this as a sign that you have neither understood the theory nor the problem, which it was intended to solve.

—Karl Raimund Popper (1902-1994)
Austrian born-British Philosopher

3.1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provides a background for how the research questions and aims of the investigation were crafted. This qualitative inquiry came about through reflecting on the role of out-of-class interactions in second language learning; it addresses questions regarding what, if any, was the influence of L2 teachers' conceptions in that process. In Chapter 2, literature reviews on OCI, ICI, and L2 teachers' conceptions were provided to situate the aims of the thesis presented. In this section (Part A) of Chapter 3, the theoretical and methodological underpinning of the thesis is presented. After deliberation, the researcher chose not to situate the investigation within one theoretical paradigm, but to use what has been discovered from multiple perspectives to inform the current investigation. Similarly, the researcher chose to use more than one qualitative method to explore the original questions posed as well as those that emerged during the investigative process. Reasons for these decisions are presented as follows. First, a
review of theory and findings from different theoretical perspectives that inform the investigation are discussed. Then the theoretical framework for the investigation and the stance of the researcher are described. Next, a review of qualitative research methods is presented and the researcher's decision to use mixed methodologies is explained (for a review of mixed methodologies see R. B. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Finally, a description of studies that informed the chosen investigative approach is given, and a framework situating the investigation is illustrated.

3.1.2 Review of Theory

Research has shown us that teachers' perceptions originate from their own experiences as both a teacher and a learner (Archer, 2000). A review of literature reveals that there has been little work done in the area of language learning that can provide us with information about these teachers' perceptions. Consequently, there is not presently a theoretical framework that accounts for the influence L2 teachers' perceptions of out-of-class interactions may have on the second language learning process. By focusing on L2 teachers' perceptions, this investigation is in many ways covering new ground. Nevertheless, previous research does provide an in-depth understanding of learners' perceptions and the influence these perceptions have on the language learning process. In addition, while the role of out-of-class interactions in the process may not be fully explained, years of research have shown us that these interactions are highly significant to the success of language development (Sullivan, 1996; Swain, 1991; Swan & Smith, 1987). Finally, research into teacher's cognition originating in other educational fields enjoys a long history; thus these previous investigations, using a variety of theoretical perspectives and investigative approaches, are a rich source of information and support for the investigation presented here.
The aims of this investigation are qualitative and are situated strongly within the proviso of what Holloway (1997) terms "Webarian sociology"—that is, to develop an understanding of a group of human beings and their relationship to phenomena (p. 2). This type of investigation is inherently different from research focused on providing an explanation, as in the natural sciences where research aims for numerically measured, hard quantifiable probability. Fundamentally, this thesis incorporates findings that have accumulated from previous research as the initial theoretical framework on which to base this investigation. No one theory is applied directly as a foundation for the research reported however a number of theoretical perspectives inform and support the research questions and approach used in the thesis.

3.1.2.1 Social Interactionists

In the field of second language learning, the view of social interactionists is that from the time we are born we make sense of our world through the interactions we have with others (M. Williams & Burden, 1997). The interactionists' perspective seems to lend its weight to a number of other theories rather than operating as the predictive weight of an individual theory. Vivian Cook's article (1978) shows how this perspective can be applied to three major theories: Krashen's Monitor Theory, Schumann's Acculturation Theory, and Hatch's Conversational Theory (see Cook for details on these theories). Pica (1998) claims that over the years, this perspective seems to have found its strongest identity in a line of research termed "language learning through interaction." Emphasis is placed "on the social aspects of interaction, with the interaction viewed as the context and the process through which language is learned" (p. 9). Criticism against this theory has centred on claims that it is too general and lacks empirical support (Freeman & Richards, 1993). Yet, this generality is precisely what is
needed for the thesis presented, as this learning through interactions applies not only to
the learning of the learner but also that of the teacher.

3.1.2.2 Constructivists

Theoretical descriptions of how learners learn through participating in social
situations, referred to as the sociogenesis of learning, can be traced back to Vygotsky’s
general genetic law of cultural development, or the process of internalisation through
which individuals transform social experiences into individual mental functions
(Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom, 1993). According to this view, an individual gains
understanding by constructing new knowledge or transforming old knowledge into
new, and this process is facilitated through interactions with others. Learning is thought
to occur when differing individual perceptions arise and are reconciled. This view is
particularly pertinent when we are discussing the influence that teachers’ perceptions
have on learners’ approaches to learning. The focus of the thesis on out-of-class
interactions also aligns with this viewpoint, as these specific interactions can be utilised
to construct new knowledge based on the individual interactional difficulties the learner
may have. Von Glasersfeld clarifies the process, (1995) stating:

In general, language is learned in the course of interaction with other speakers,
because speaking is a form of interacting, and we modify our use of words and
utterances when they do not yield the expected results (p. 30).

Both the constructivists’ and interactionists’ views of learning and thinking fit
well with the overall aims of this thesis. However, they tend to gloss over the large
amount of work that has been done on individual learning processes. The role of the
individual in the learning process is particularly evident in the adult language-learning
situation, as Pica (1987) points out:
The amazing success of many adults who have picked up a second or third language through everyday experiences in the neighbourhood or workplace provides impressive testimony to the human capacity of language acquisition (p. 3).

This second language learning occurs with little or no formal training. While the focus of this thesis is rooted in a belief that language learning occurs through interactions with others, and that L2 teachers' perceptions of these interactions may have an influence on progress, an informed explanation of the relationship between out-of-class interactions and L2 teaching and learning, cannot discount the importance the individual learner plays in the process.

3.1.2.3 Cognitivists

It has in fact been from the cognitive perspective that much of our knowledge regarding the impact of individual's previous experiences on new situations, or "transfer," has originated (H. Gardner, 1991; A.L. Brown, 1994; A.L. Brown, 1997; De Corte, 1995; Glaser, 1994; Mayer & Sims, 1994). While it is true that most of this research has been presented from a learners' perspective, it is still valid for the present thesis, as the teachers were once learners as well though not all, of course learners of foreign languages. It is also from this view that most of the research we have today regarding the development of individual's self-regulatory skills has originated; therefore a thesis that focuses on developing a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of out-of-class interactions and language development must consider that language learning occurs individually as well as socially (Lightbown & Spada, 1993).

According to this perspective, "cognitive skills" are those that enable one to know about the world; whereas Kuhn (1999) claims, "Metacognitive skills are second-
order meta-skills that entail knowing about one's own (and others') knowing" (p. 16). The cognitive perspective has often been criticised in that it ignores the relationship between learning in school and work activities and other social participation outside of school (Derry, 1992). Yet, previously we discussed the huge influence this perspective has had in the area of language research (see Literature Review Part A). Therefore, outlining a theoretical orientation without considering this perspective would be incomplete.

3.1.2.4 Using Opposing Perspectives as Support

The interactionists' and constructivists' perspectives in many ways complement one another; however, they are often presented in opposition to cognitivist findings. The cause of this dissension stems from their different views on learning. Cognitive perspectives attribute learning processes to individuals, whereas the interactionists and constructivists attribute these learning processes to social systems that include individuals (Greeno, 1998). However, it is my belief that in the present state of our theoretical understanding in language development, both perspectives are needed. That is, while proponents of both approaches propose alternative explanations for phenomena, this competitiveness allows researchers the opportunity to compare, contest, and sometimes merge these alternatives towards a more coherent account of learning. Instead of disclaiming findings from other areas, researchers should view these competitive processes as work towards a united goal. Greeno supports this view, defining this goal as:

a more inclusive, unified view of human activity in which dichotomies such as individual versus social, thinking versus acting, and cognitive versus situative will cease to be terms of contention, and, instead, figure in coherent explanatory
accounts of behaviour and in useful design principles for resources and activities of productive learning (p. 13).

3.1.2.5 Constitutionists

The perspective came about in the early 1970s when researchers at Göteborg University in Sweden began to shift focus away from the quantity of learning to a focus on the quality of learning (for a historical overview see Chapter 2 of Marton & Booth, 1997). Previously the common measurement of learning was often a quantifiable increase in correct answers or overall performance, usually assessed by a third party (for a review of cognitive theory and research on learning at this time, see Castellan & Restle, 1978). In looking at the question, “Why is it that some learners learn better than others?” constitutionists began looking at learning experiences through the learners’ perspective (Marton & Booth, 1997, pp. 14-15). Formerly, quantitative and qualitative research had explored external or outer-world influences and innate or inner-world influences on learning; both approaches provided explanations as to how learning outcomes might be increased (usually by making changes in how materials were presented or attempting to enhance the external learning environment). Suggestions as to why increased learning outcomes might not have been achieved (e.g., some people are smarter, more motivated, or work harder than others. In an educational sense, these types of explanations and suggestions provided educators with advice on factors that appeared to encourage or inhibit learning. Educators were also left to sort through a multitude of teaching models, originating from a diverse array of educational contexts, which reported successful increases in outcomes in some contexts but not in others. Much of this information was either limited to very specific teaching situations or was too general for practical application. This continued focus on promoting predetermined
increases in learning outcomes didn’t reveal much about how the actual learning of academic concepts or subjects took place, and continued to propagate the idea that the organisation or learning environment and the learner’s abilities were most responsible for the success or non-success of learning and teaching situations (Entwistle, 1984, p. 12).

Constitutionist researchers began looking at questions of learning in a different way: How did a group of learners experience learning a specific phenomenon? How did these learners’ experiences vary? What was the relation between these experiences and how a particular phenomenon (academic or non-academic) was viewed and understood? In exploring these “lived” experiences from the learners’, and later, teachers’ perspectives (as described in the person’s words or acts) constitutionist researchers made a “key discovery” later summarised by Hasselgren and Beach (1996) as:

Understandings of whatever phenomenon or situation that we take will, in a sufficiently large population or a sample of people, vary in a limited number of qualitatively different ways which are crucial for the quality of subsequent learning and also its outcomes (p. 2).

This finding became the basis of a large body of constitutionist-based research that began in the mid-1970s and continued through to today, carried out primarily in Sweden, the UK and Australia. Researchers from various backgrounds have (1) looked at the different ways that people both in educational and non-educational sectors experience a phenomenon of the world, (2) explored the variations in the ways a particular phenomenon is experienced, and (3) attempted to describe the phenomenon as others see it (Hasselgren & Beach, 1996).
In this way, constitutionist perspectives transcend the divide of outer and inner worlds and diverging perspectives on learning (individual vs. social) as well as investigative conflicts over how the learning processes should be explored. As Marton argues, in one school of thought the individual’s outer acts and behaviours need explanation and the inner processes (mental acts) are explanatory, whereas in another school the reverse is true (Marton & Booth, 1997). From a constitutionist perspective there are not multiple worlds constructed individually. There is only one world, and we experience the world differently because we experience different aspects of it. From this one world perspective the forementioned theories actually could be described as 'different aspects' of the same world and therefore it could be argued that these differences actually are complimentary in that they together help to inform our understanding of the whole. This is a very important concept for this investigation because the questions it poses seek to explore how a group of teachers understand and experience interactions in one world, rather than describing multiple individuals’ perceptions of multiple worlds.

3.1.2.6 Theoretical perspective of the researcher

Although informed through findings from cognitivist and constructivist perspectives; the theoretical orientation chosen as a starting point for the research is best described as a constitutionist stance, which could be viewed as operating within an interactionist perspective. The perspective is non-dualistic and is particularly suited for explorations into how a group of teachers experience particular phenomena situated in an educational context. On the other hand, the educational context of this investigation is the learning and teaching of a second language; accordingly, the interactionist perspective is appropriate for an exploration into the relations between the teaching and
learning and the interactions that occur both inside and outside the classroom. In other words, learners and teachers make sense of the world, but they do so within a social context and through social interactions. This theoretical orientation, 1) supports the importance of out-of-class interaction in language learning, 2) allows for the influence of teachers’ perspectives through the social interactions that occur between teacher and learner, and 3) acknowledges that teachers’ perceptions form through their experiences interacting as both learners and as teachers.

Every researcher comes into the process with a certain bias; in this case, I consider that when spoken second language is the subject, it is best learned within a social context and through social interactions. I also believe that what we understand about the world comes from how we interact with it through our own experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argue that researchers are people who come from specific communities and incorporate their own historical research into a distinct point of view. I live in a community of second language researchers, teachers and learners; my interest in the phenomena studied and the questions posed are ideologically driven, and derived both from personal experience and from reviewing historical research traditions in the field of second language teaching and learning.

It is my understanding that the overall aim of all second language research is to develop an understanding of language development and those who participate in the process. With this aim in mind, I deliberately decided to use aspects from multiple perspectives as supportive tools to inform the enquiry; I chose not to situate the investigation firmly within one theoretical paradigm that would dictate the sorts of questions asked, or how those questions that emerged during the investigation should be approached or described.
Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play.
—Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
German Philosopher

3.1.3 Methodology

When deciding on research methods, structure and flexibility are required to answer the specific research questions posed within the broad aims of the thesis. After a review of educational research methods in general (see Table 3.1) and investigations of conceptions of phenomenon in educational settings in particular (see Table 3.2), phenomenographic and ethnographic methods were chosen as most suited for data collection\(^1\). Ethnography emerged in the 1920s and 30s as a tool to study cultures, societies and groups, and has strong roots in both anthropology and sociology. Conventional or “descriptive ethnography” focuses on describing patterns, typologies and categories of a particular group (Holloway, 1997, pp. 61-62). Phenomenography is theoretically grounded in the constitutionist theory. It is a research specialisation that came out of observations dating back to the mid-1970s which suggested that people encountered or experienced a phenomenon in a limited number of qualitatively different ways that are interconnected (Marton & Booth, 1997).

\(^{1}\) A presentation I co-presented on the use of mixed qualitative approaches assisted in grounding the decision to use this type of approach in the Teachers’ Belief Study when that approach emerged as most suited for seeking answers to the questions posed (Bunts-Anderson & Yew, 2002).
### Table 3.1. Research Methods in Educational Research

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<tr>
<th>Research Methods</th>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conducting and analyzing interviews</td>
<td>Wragg</td>
<td>1978</td>
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<td>Research methods in education</td>
<td>Cohen</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys in social research</td>
<td>de Vaus</td>
<td>1985</td>
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<td>Action-research and the nature of social inquiry: Professional innovation and educational work</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>Interviewing in educational research</td>
<td>Powney</td>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>Second Language Research methods</td>
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<td>1989</td>
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<td>In-depth interviewing</td>
<td>Minichiello</td>
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<td>Kincheloe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participatory action research</td>
<td>Whyte</td>
<td>1991</td>
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<td>Research methods in language learning</td>
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<td>1992</td>
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<td>Nunan</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<td>Willis</td>
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<td>Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice</td>
<td>Silverman</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<td>Participatory action research and social change</td>
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<td>Denzsbom</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action research for language teachers</td>
<td>Wallace</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<td>Fundamental statistics for the behavioral sciences</td>
<td>Howell</td>
<td>1999</td>
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<td>Phenomenography</td>
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### Table 3.2. Investigations in to conceptions and phenomenon: Educational settings

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<tbody>
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<td>Beyond the culture wars: How teaching can revitalize American education</td>
<td>Graff</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<td>Promoting helping behaviour in middle school mathematics</td>
<td>Webb</td>
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<td>Interpersonal strategies: investigating interlanguage corpora</td>
<td>Flowerdew</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<td>University faculty members’ context beliefs about Technology utilization in teaching</td>
<td>Abdelraheem</td>
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<td>Beyond &quot;lesson study&quot;: Comparing two ways of facilitating the grasp of some economic concepts</td>
<td>Pang</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<td>A longitudinal study of learning for a group of indigenous Australian university students: Dissonant conceptions and strategies</td>
<td>Boulton-Lewis</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>A Functional-design approach to motivation and self-regulation</td>
<td>Kuhl</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<td>Learning and awareness</td>
<td>Marton</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<td>Evaluating the quality of learning: The SOLO Taxonomy (Structure of the observed learning outcome)</td>
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<td>1982</td>
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<td>Understanding learning and teaching: The experience in higher education</td>
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<td>1999</td>
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<td>Cope</td>
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<td>Teachers’ mathematical beliefs and practices in teaching and learning thematically</td>
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<td>Changes approaches to teaching: a relational perspective</td>
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<td>Congruence between intention and strategy in university science teachers’ approaches to teaching</td>
<td>Trigwell</td>
<td>1996</td>
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</table>

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Phenomenographic researchers Marton and Booth (1997) suggest that if we want to learn about the world we have to learn how the world appears to all these different people and how they’ve come to experience it. To uncover second language teachers’ conceptions of out-of-class interactions, it is necessary to look closely at the internal relationship between the teacher and in-class and out-of-class interactions, and learn how these interactions are experienced by a group of teachers in a situated experience, specifically looking at variations in the way these interactions are experienced. It is expected that in-class interactions spoken in the second language would naturally be a part of classroom discourse and discussions of classroom discourse. However, out-of-class interactions are not specifically considered to be the subject taught in L2 classrooms—or in teacher training, for that matter—so at the start of the investigation it was unknown whether these out-of-class interactions would come up naturally in discussions of classroom teaching or not.

From a phenomenographic perspective teacher’s experiences are taken very seriously, particularly when attempting to develop an understanding of the teaching and learning processes that occur in a situated context (Marton & Booth, 1997). At the start of the investigation, it was unknown whether out-of-class interactions were conceived by the teachers to be part of the classroom context or not. Therefore it was decided that ethnographic methods and appropriate qualitative tools would be used to explore unexpected factors that might emerge that would inform general understanding of the phenomenon outlined in the thesis aims, but were not part of the phenomenographic categories of description. Ethnography is well suited for describing detailed pictures or descriptions of “events” that emerge naturally in an investigation (Denscombe, 1998). As it turned out, during the process of investigation, applying ethnographic techniques and qualitative tools was particularly helpful in uncovering the role that teachers and
learners had in utilising these interactions during specific situations, and in exploring experiences or factors described by the teachers regarding how individuals as well as the group came to their current understanding.

3.1.3.1 Ethnography

All the theoretical perspectives discussed in the theoretical section above form a basis of support for the thesis proposed. This thesis answers descriptive questions about the beliefs and practices of a particular group (Australian second language teachers of students with intermediate to upper-level English ability) and falls within the qualitative paradigm of ethnographic research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). One of the major characteristics of ethnography is that it provides a "thick description"—that is, a detailed description—of social relationships, and puts them in context (Holloway, 1997). Traditionally this framework often incorporates some form of participant observation and textual analysis, along with interviews (Silverman, 1997). However, previous observation-based studies of language learning have not been able to provide us with an in-depth understanding of teachers' beliefs, precisely because they have relied on categorising the behaviour or comments of teachers under existing conceptions of teaching practice or theory (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Oxford & Green, 1996).

This propensity of language researchers and teachers to discuss and explain beliefs through the use of predominant practice or theory is evidenced in all of the studies on teachers' perceptions previously discussed (Archer, 2000; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Pennington et al., 1997). Archer specifically states that theory has little to do with actual teaching practice, yet she falls into the categorization trap later in the same paper, claiming that the actions of the teachers in her study lent support to
Krashen's "Input Hypothesis" (i+1). Perhaps this categorisation occurs because researchers, even during explorations into complex phenomena such as human concepts, are taught to look for lucidity and logic instead of ambiguous representations. Perhaps in our attempts to classify we overlook that learning is a continual process; or as Clendinnen (1991) claims:

We are also trained to assume an unnatural clarity and tight coherence in what and how people "believe," and so tend to excise contradictions and conceptual blurriness as indicative of inadequacies in informants or "the record," instead of being how people (including ourselves) think (p. 11).

Despite the success of participant observation in other ethnographic research (McLaughlin, 1984; Stoneberg, 1995), a review of studies in language development clearly indicates the use of in-depth interviews as the most appropriate means, at present, of categorising teachers' perceptions16.

3.1.3.2 Phenomenography

One of the criticisms against ethnographic and qualitative research in general is that it frequently does not provide generalisability to other contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Holloway, 1997; Silverman, 1997). Ethnographic approaches are particularly appropriate for describing the perceptions of individuals in a particular context. However, in the first aim I was interested in developing perceptual categories of a specific phenomenon that is generalisable to a wider group (ESL teachers teaching

16 Very early on in the investigation I had the privilege of attending a symposium attended by Ference Marton and some leading phenomenographers in Australia. The discussions were centred on current approaches for applying phenomenographic findings for practical educational purposes. The experience was a huge learning curve for me and I hope have future opportunities to meet with phenomenographic researchers and discuss the finding from the Teachers' Beliefs Study in more depth (Bunts-Anderson, 2002).
immediate to advanced-level English speakers). Therefore, I chose to collect and analyse the data from another qualitative approach as well. The phenomenographic approach has been designed specifically to categorise perceptions in a manner that can be generalisable to similar contexts. This approach has been particularly successful in categorising a group of teachers' perceptions and uncovering the patterns or interconnections between the different ways in which participants experience aspects of the same phenomena, as described earlier in the studies by Prosser and Trigwell (1999) and other researchers (Crawford et al., 1998a; Martin, 1997).

Criticism against a phenomenographic approach stems from the view that the underlying theoretical suppositions of these approaches are in contradiction to the cognitive perspective (see Ausubel, 1978, as cited in Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). From a phenomenographic standpoint, teachers' perceptions are believed to relate to a particular context and are therefore not significantly impacted by previous experiences. Phenomenographic techniques are suited to uncovering factors related to the phenomenon that are described by participants to be at the forefront of their understanding during a specific situation. Another criticism of phenomenographic research is that the focus on situation and connectedness across a particular group and context provides descriptions that are dry and lack the richness of more descriptive qualitative techniques. I do not view these characteristics as weaknesses for the thesis presented, since the richness of particular situations can be illustrated with excerpts of transcripts or through employing ethnographic methodologies.

To meet the aims of the thesis the investigation incorporated features of the ethnographic and the phenomenographic perspectives, as well as techniques generally used in qualitative research, as the need arose. The need to remain open to unexpected
factors or influences is a hallmark of qualitative research, and is one of the distinguishing factors that separates qualitative from quantitative approaches, where the phenomenon is deduced and the data collection approaches frequently follow strict procedures.

The research presented employs ethnographic components such as sampling, interviewing, and comparative techniques, but cannot be termed purely as "ethnographic." This adoption of certain ethnographic features to fit within a specific research situation has a long history in various fields of research (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994).

Similarly, the research presented employs phenomenographic components, particularly in the investigative approach used to collect data and to analyse the data needed, in order to explore the primary questions of the thesis presented. As the research is a qualitative investigation using phenomenographic tools, it cannot be termed a "pure" phenomenography; the project does not investigate phenomena that subjects encounter in everyday life, nor does it intend to identify change or bring about change in how these in-class and out-of-class interactions are experienced, conceived or understood by teachers or learners. The use of phenomenographic methods in combination with other methods is not new and has appeared in the foreground of a number of studies that have used phenomenographic approaches for a variety of investigative purposes (for an illustration of the variety of phenomenographic uses, see the investigative topics outlined in Table 3.2).

In a review of studies that have successfully applied phenomenographic principles in combination with other methods, Dall'Allba points out that a practical educational benefit of these investigations is that the resulting knowledge can provide a starting point for future development (Dall'Allba, 2000). In this investigation, the
context is situated in an educational setting, but the focus is to understand how these interactions are conceived; to explore any patterns as to how these conceptions might relate to practice, and to report on any factors that might have influenced how these conceptions came to be. The use of a mixed-method approach utilising phenomenographic, ethnographic and other qualitative tools provides a focused way of addressing the specific questions posed but also provides the flexibility needed to meet the investigative purposes of the thesis presented (for a critique of the methodological implications of research using phenomenographic approaches, see Bowden, 2000). The goal of mixed-method research is not arbitrarily to select tools on a “needs to” basis without concern for the underlying differences in paradigms, but rather to draw from the complimentary strengths that different approaches can provide. It may be safer to situate oneself in a well-respected theoretical paradigm that provides a substantial argument for preselecting one approach over another, but it is the inquiry that should determine the choice of approach, not the other way around; as R. B. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) state, “What is fundamental is the research question—research methods should follow research questions in a way that offers the best chance to obtain useful answers” (p. 14) For a graphic description of how interactions are portrayed within the contest of prior interactions studies (see Appendix A.1. and A.2.).
3.2 Part B: The Investigation: Context, Participants, Data Collection and Analysis

If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?

—Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

3.2.1 Introduction

In Einstein’s humorous quote above he describes an obstacle facing most qualitative researchers—that is, when exploring the unknown, it is logical to use informed approaches and methods of inquiry that have a history of application; but often what has been done previously does not fit current circumstances nor the unexpected findings that may emerge during any enquiry. Section B of Chapter 3 explains the investigative processes used for collecting data, the decisions to do so in certain ways, and the modification and adoption of new approaches as data emerged and was analysed. The section also outlines the investigative procedures used to collect and analyse the data needed to explore the primary research questions and aims of the thesis. In addition, it presents the general steps undertaken to illustrate patterns in the data presented through the remaining chapters of the thesis.

3.2.2 Investigative Approach

3.2.2.1 Sampling

The sampling procedure chosen to select participants deliberately fits within the frameworks of both methodological approaches. A well-known ethnographic sampling method termed “Intensity sampling” (for an overview, see Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) was initially considered to seek appropriate participants for the investigation. This
sampling procedure selects participants that are authorities on a particular experience. Based on the review of literature, three segments of the population emerged as important to include if the group studied was to be representative of the Australian New South Wales (NSW) L2 teaching population: 1) general ESL teachers 2) English Academic Preparation teachers and 3) overseas-trained teachers.

1) General ESL teachers

This particular segment represents a large portion of the ESL teaching population in NSW. If we consider the large number of adult overseas students that come to Australia for English training and have enrolled in ELICOS courses (see Figure 3.3) a unique factor of this segment is the self-study or self-access time provided at the ELICOS institutions where general ESL teachers work. This factor is significant in understanding teachers' perceptions of role. If, for example, some of the teachers believe that it is the learners' responsibility to focus on their out-of-class interactions, than this belief could be reflected in the use of self-access (Miller & Rogerson-Revell, 1993).

2) English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Teachers

This particular segment of teachers teaches the largest and fastest-growing proportion of the Australian ESL student population. According to the 2004 statistics, 151,798 overseas students with student visas enrolled in institutes of higher education and 57,348 enrolled in vocational training (see Figure 3.3). NSW EAP teachers' perceptions are particularly important to include in the investigation, as the perceptions they have regarding out-of-class interactions in relation to teaching for academic purposes (considering the skills students need to attend courses taught in the target
language at a university level) may differ from those perceptions held by the general NSW ESL teachers.

![Figure 3.3](http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/MIP/Statistics/StudentEnrolmentAndVisaStatistics/Recent_TableG_pdf.pdf) Accessed April 22, 2005

**Year 2004 Market Indicator Data**

Table G: Overseas Student Enrolments in Australia by State/Territory and Major Sector, 2003 to 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
<th>Vocational Education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>43,285</td>
<td>47,904</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>25,324</td>
<td>22,280</td>
<td>-9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>13,114</td>
<td>13,966</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>7,691</td>
<td>7,894</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>3,816</td>
<td>3,967</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1,387</td>
<td>1,514</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>-25.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 136,125 151,798 11.5% 55,579 57,348 3.2%

These numbers only include students with student visas and not students that may be attending institutions on other visas, according to Australian Education International, a department of the Australian government. These numbers may only illustrate approximately half of those students actually attending schools in NSW. “As a general ‘rule of thumb,’ for each ELICOS student on a student visa there is another on a non-student visa” (see AEI, 2005c).

3) Overseas Trained Teachers (OTT)

The statistics for this segment are not currently available; however, when you take into account 1) the current shortage of teachers in Australia, 2) the number of teachers with overseas qualifications that can be observed on staff at many NSW...
educational institutions, and 3) the fact that at least some of the large numbers of students attending higher education institutions may decide to apply to immigrate to Australia after completing their qualifications, these teachers also appear to be an important segment to include in the sample (Inglis & Philps, 1995; New South Wales Department of Education and Training [NSWDET], 1998b).

This segment of ESL teachers is unique in that these teachers have learned English as a second language themselves, either overseas or in Australia; therefore their perceptions regarding the importance of out-of-class interactions, as well as their experiences as a learner and teacher, could offer a unique perspective. In addition, many of these teachers have taught languages other than English; the ability to communicate in the native language with ESL students has been shown to positively impact language progress (C. E. Snow, 1990; Supik, 1999).

3.2.2.2 Purposeful sampling

The initial identification of these three segments from which to select a sample was based on trying to develop an understanding of individual teachers' perceptions, as well as a range of perceptions of the teachers as a group that is representative of the context under investigation. Nevertheless, once I began reviewing the contexts available in NSW in which to situate the investigation, it appeared that there would be some methodological problems with identifying and seeking samples of these segments from different contexts. For example, the most efficient way of targeting these segments would be to seek participants from three contexts: private English colleges, NSW universities offering EAP courses, and university and community programs specialising in the training and certification of OTT.
Although strategically sampling in this manner could possibly provide the rich source for comparative data sought in ethnographic studies, there were two problems with this approach. The first was that all participation in the investigation would be voluntary, and the average teaching population of the private colleges, university EAP programs and community OTT contacted was rather small, with less than 10 teachers on staff. Therefore, it was likely that a number of institutions for each segment would need to be approached to ensure that a viable number of participants volunteered for the study, resulting in a greater variation in the contexts in which the participants worked.

This variation in teaching contexts, even if it were possible to find sufficient numbers of teachers to represent each segment, could also endanger the validity of the phenomenographic categorisation used to answer the primary research questions on which the thesis was based. Phenomenography is a non-dualistic investigative approach that is built on the internal relationship that exists between the individual and the world. As Prosser and Trigwell claim, this approach is “informed by the belief that the context forms an integral part of the investigation of any phenomenon or relationship” (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999, p. 14). At this juncture, it was decided that situating the context of the study was more important that attempting a “holistic” sampling procedure. A “purposeful sampling”\(^{17}\) approach where the teaching contexts were as similar as possible would provide more reliable phenomenographic data.

In addition, the probability that all three teaching segments identified previously would be represented in the group of participants studied would increase with the number of teachers that agreed to participate. Therefore the sample was narrowed to the teaching segment currently teaching the largest number of overseas students in NSW—

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\(^{17}\) In qualitative research, generalisability is less important than developing an understanding of the ideas of the people that make up the sample. In purposeful sampling it is important to investigate a phenomenon through those people who are most likely to have knowledge or experience of that phenomenon (Holloway, 1997).
EAP teachers preparing students to attend higher education institutions—and to those institutions with large numbers of teaching staff.

Thus, through reviewing the literature, I had identified and developed an understanding of what segments of the NSW ESL teaching population were most likely to randomly volunteer in relation to their proportion of the population (Denscombe, 1998). However as context was paramount to the investigation, boundaries regarding sample size, teaching subject, and students’ level of language proficiency were set in accordance with the type of information sought.

3.2.3 Context

3.2.3.1 Sample size

One NSW institution that had a comparatively large number of ESL-qualified teachers on staff was the National Centre of English Language Teaching and Research (NCELTR). This institution was also well suited for the investigation since it offered a large number of EAP courses. When I started the process of seeking permission to situate the study there and gain ethics approval, I was informed that there were approximately 70 teachers on staff. When I began soliciting volunteers to participate in the study, this number had increased to over 100 teachers employed, either on a permanent, part-time, or casual basis. In many qualitative studies, the study population is quite small; for example, 19 of the 38 previously outlined studies on L2 teacher’s conceptions (see Section 2.2.2 in Literature Review Part B) had 9 or fewer participants, with the focus being on a thick and accurate description. Phenomenographic investigations, however, are typically larger, with between 15 and 20 usable cases (Denscombe, 1998). Ordinarily, qualitative research using larger population samples tends to use tools such as surveys and questionnaires rather than in-depth interviewing.
In this regard phenomenographic research can be very time-consuming, as data is typically collected through interviews. However, as the purpose of such investigations is to develop an understanding of the qualitatively different ways a group rather than an individual conceives and experiences a particular phenomenon, a sample large enough to represent the group is desired. From the teaching population at NCELTR I was lucky enough to receive 28 volunteers and 28 usable cases for the investigation presented. This number aligns well with previous phenomenographic research conducted in Australia (see Table 3.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.3. Australian studies reviewed Bowden’s Phenomenography (2000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Bowden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Trigwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Dall’Albas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Dall’Albas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Patrick</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Situating the investigation at NCELTR also provided the benefit of convenience. As a Macquarie University student, I was afforded easy access to the Centre, which is located on and near the main Macquarie University campus. This

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18 One interview was unexpectedly interrupted a couple of times and finally cut short. The participant had completed describing the lesson and there were a number of spontaneous experiences reporting the teachers’ perception of the teaching and learning that took place. The original data supplied was sufficient to be used in answering the primary research questions posed in the thesis. The participant, however, had spontaneously mentioned some experiences as a teacher and as a second language learner, which needed more clarification. The participant during the initial interview agreed to meet again if necessary. After transcribing the interview, it became apparent that some of these personal teaching and learning experiences briefly mentioned in the interview were important, particularly in developing an understanding of participants’ descriptions of how conceptions had come to be. Therefore, this teacher was interviewed again only about those “personal experiences” that spontaneously emerged in the initial interview but had not been clarified. Thus this respondent’s transcripts consisted of two parts: part one contained a full description of an actual teaching situation, and part two contained further descriptions.
location was very beneficial, as I was able to schedule interview times that were convenient for the participants over a 3-month period, and because of the close proximity, I was able to flexibly reschedule interviews at the participant's request. NCELTR provided not only an opportunity for a larger number of participants, but as the Centre and the investigation were both affiliated with the same university, the atmosphere of the context was quite supportive. The number of volunteers I received who generously gave up time in their busy schedules to participate in the initial interviews and clarify or confirm information during the investigation was probably higher than if the investigation had been situated elsewhere within a stricter time-frame.

3.2.3.2 Students' L2 proficiency

Only teachers who were currently employed or had very recent experience teaching students at an intermediate to advanced level of English were asked to volunteer. The level of the students is pertinent to the phenomenographic approach, as previous studies indicate that teachers' practices altered with the perceived variation in the ability of the students at a course level (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). Thus, it is important to sample teachers of students with similar levels of ability. One of the benefits of situating the study at one institution was that it eliminated the variance in how language proficiency was rated (ESL institutions often recognise similar ratings on international or national exams but have a unique rating system for proficiency within their own system). At NCELTR the same tools and measurements—written exams, oral interviews and International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores—were used to evaluate the proficiency of all students accepted to attend at the centre.
These students were chosen primarily because a number of studies have shown that learners at lower levels of proficiency may have enough to do just to maintain communication and lack the ability to focus on their own language forms and structures in their out-of-class interactions (VanPatten, 1996). Language researchers suggest that for learners to perceive, identify, and develop strategies to affect change in their interactions, they must be at a higher level of proficiency (Boulouffee, 1986; N. Ellis, 1993; Schmidt, 1990). The focus of the investigation on out-of-class interactions is particularly relevant as learners are more apt to be aware of their interactional problems through the course of communicating meaning (Long & Robinson, 1998; Pica et al., 1996). In a well-known study of learners at different levels of proficiency, J. Williams (1999) found that only the students at intermediate to advanced levels of ability were able to self-initiate learning repairs in their interactions, and thus were more likely to discuss their communication difficulties with their teachers.

3.2.3.3 L2 teaching experience (expertise).

Another factor considered was teaching experience, and whether the study should be limited to participants with expertise in the area. One of the tenets of qualitative research seeking an understanding of an individual's perceptions of a phenomenon is that the individual must have either opportunities to experience the phenomenon or expertise in the area (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In the studies reviewed on L2 teachers' conceptions (see Table 2.5, Chapter 2) many of the studies used either teachers in training or teachers labelled as "experienced." When considering the expertise of teachers, researchers usually set as a criterion the specific number of years the teachers have taught the subject. In a reviewing criterion for selecting "expert teachers" Tsui (2003) claimed that the number of years of experience required in most
studies was usually set at more than five years (p. 4). One problem with using the number of years of teaching experience as the only criterion for measuring expertise is, as Tusi so aptly argues, "experience and expertise are not synonymous" (p. 5).

Another problem with setting expertise as a criterion for the thesis presented is that the focus of research is on out-of-class interaction, which is not considered a distinct subject in the field of second language teaching. Without previous research, supporting the contention that conceptual development regarding these interactions is influenced by specific teaching contexts—arguing that a larger number of years in one teaching context somehow relates to expertise in the area—is not sustainable. Thus when seeking out volunteers, years of teaching experience was not listed as a boundary for participation.

The decision not to include expertise as a requirement of participation was made initially because I wanted to leave the sampling procedures open enough to encourage participation of teachers from the three different distinct segments of the NSW ESL teaching population previously outlined. That is, if the criterion were set as "all teachers with 5 or more years of EAP experience teaching," it was possible that this requirement would eliminate those teachers who had considerable teaching experience in other segments of ESL teaching but were new to EAP teaching.

This decision was quickly reinforced when some of the teachers interested in volunteering for the study specifically asked if such things as being new to EAP teaching, having learned English as a second language themselves, or being new to ESL teaching in general would eliminate them from the research. I assured the participants that this would not be the case. Individually, prior to or at the start of specific interviews, some of the participants also asked if having a number of years experience teaching overseas but only recent teacher training for certification in
Australia, or a limited knowledge of specific L2 theory or methodologies, would be problematic. Again, I assured these teachers that I was primarily interested in their own beliefs and experiences and wanted to talk to them about a recent teaching experience they had had, and that they were considered the expert when describing their own experiences.

In qualitative research, sampling is usually purposeful when the researcher develops a criterion that assists in collecting information from the people chosen from the sample (Holloway, 1997). In setting the sampling criteria outlined, I wished to achieve as complete or “holistic” a picture as possible of the phenomenon investigated; this openness and flexibility is required of an ethnographic approach (Silverman, 1997). From a phenomenographic perspective, investigating participants in similar contexts is very important. By setting firm boundaries as to the type of course taught (EAP), the proficiency of students taught (intermediate to advanced level of proficiency) and time frame (current or very recent experiences teaching a lesson in one of these courses), I attempted to limit the sample to those teachers who taught in as similar a context as possible.

3.2.3.4 Resulting sample

The context of the investigation was determined to be the primary consideration; however, by situating the investigation in a predominantly EAP institution, the inclusion of the quickest growing segment of the NSW population (English for Academic Purposes) in the sample was predetermined. As the NCELTR also had a comparatively large number of teachers it was expected that at least some of the participants who would volunteer for the study would come from the other two prominent segments of the NSW teaching population previously discussed, general
ESL teachers and overseas-trained teachers. None of the teachers were specifically asked about their previous teaching experience at the start of the study; therefore, exact figures for number of years of teaching experience or types of teaching are not included. Later an attempt was made to ascertain general information regarding teaching experiences across the group in order to discover if “expertise” might have an influence on the results of the study (see section entitled, “Factors Analysed for Influence on Findings,” Chapter 7).

The transcripts were again read through individually, and all mention of teaching experiences for each individual was noted. In addition, a questionnaire regarding teaching experiences was sent out to all participants (see Appendix A.2). There was a lapse of time of approximately 1-1½ years between the original participation in interviews and receiving the questionnaire; therefore, it was expected that not all the participants would be contactable or that all would have the time, with very hectic teaching schedules, to respond to an additional voluntary request for information. Luckily, 8 out of 28 respondents did reply to the questionnaire; therefore, although there is not enough quantifiable information on all the participants to provide exact numbers, the questionnaire responses and data from transcripts illustrates (see Figure 3.4) that this segment of the population was represented in the sample.

All participants interviewed had current or very recent experience teaching EAP at NCELTR; 9 of these teachers mentioned teaching EAP in other contexts. Across the group, all but two of the teachers mentioned previous ESL experiences apart from their current situation, and 14 teachers described situations where they had taught overseas. While this data does not provide qualitative information on specific types and length of ESL teaching experiences, it does indicate that many of the teachers had some general ESL background in addition to their current employment as EAP teachers.
In contrast, although the EAP teachers who participated in the study were not explicitly asked, either in documentation or during the interviews, about their OTT experiences prior to the interviews, this information emerged naturally in a number of ways for all the participants, either through introducing themselves or through the spontaneous telling of these experiences during the interview. Figure 3.5 illustrates that of the group of 28 teachers that volunteered for the study, 13 described having overseas language backgrounds; and of these, 7 teachers explicitly stated that they had overseas teacher training, which indicates that at least one quarter of the teachers in this group fit within this segment of the NSW teaching population.

Figure 3.5 Overseas Teacher Training
English Language Backgrounds
EAP Teachers (28 Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers that had immigrated to or were working in Australia from overseas countries (13)</th>
<th>Teachers from Australia working in Australia (15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers born overseas and educated in non-English language school systems: (2)</td>
<td>Teachers born in Australia educated in Australian school systems: Australian English L1 background (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers born overseas and educated in English and other language school systems: (5)</td>
<td>Teachers born overseas and educated in English L1 school systems: overseas (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers born overseas and educated in English L1 school systems: overseas (3)</td>
<td>Teachers born overseas and educated in Australian school systems: Australian English L1 background (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptions of English as L2 (4)
Descriptions of English as L1 (7)
Descriptions of Bilingual L1 background English/other language (2)
Descriptions of Bilingual L1 background English/other language (2)
Overseas university training TT unclear (1)
Overseas TT explicitly described (6)
Overseas TT explicitly described (1)
Overseas TT explicitly described (1)
Overseas university training TT unclear (1)

Total EAP teachers described formal study overseas 16/28
Total EAP teachers described teaching other languages or subjects overseas 5/28
Total OTT explicitly stated 7/28

Teachers' Beliefs Study
The information provided by the teachers also shows that the OTT situation is complex and is not just a matter of teachers who were trained overseas coming to Australia to work for short periods because of teaching shortages. Out of the group of 28 teachers, 16 mentioned having some sort of formal study overseas. While some of these experiences include general education studies the teachers had as children, they also include formal studies in second languages and at tertiary institutions that may or may not have been credited to either Australian or overseas teaching qualifications.

In looking at this segment of the population, it is important to note the possibility that these teachers themselves have had experiences learning English as a second language. As indicated in the second row of Figure 3.5, two teachers explicitly stated that they learned English as a second language themselves and that had been schooled in a non-English-background country. Three other teachers described immigrating from non-English speaking countries and entering the Australian school system as children. Although it is not illustrated in Figure 3.5, two of the five teachers that described themselves as educated in English and other language school systems (row 2, column 2) also reported childhood experiences of immigrating from non-English speaking countries to English-speaking countries other than Australia. This suggests that at some point at least seven teachers out of the group of 28 had, had experiences learning English as a second language, although as adults only four of 28 continue to perceive English as a second language.

3.2.4 Interviews

All the participants (28 in total) were interviewed for approximately 45 minutes to 1½ hours. The purpose of the interviews was to find out specific information regarding EAP teachers' conceptions of in-class and out-of-class interactions. The
interviews were semi-structured and could be categorised, according to Baker (1997), as an asymmetrical organization of talk—where the interviewer asks specific questions either pertaining to the topic or for clarification but the respondent does most of the talking. The data collected was in large part based on descriptions that were provided by the interviewee. Both the phenomenographic and ethnographic approaches were considered in this process, as both investigative approaches view interviews to be semi-structured when they are broadly based on the topics in question.

The type of interview conducted could also be termed an “in-depth interview”; that is, the information provided by the participants was not pre-determined. I did not have expectations regarding these teachers' beliefs or personal knowledge of the experiences, conceptions or understandings of in-class or out-of-class interaction. Nor did I have knowledge of the lesson they would describe prior to the interview. On the other hand, the interviews were designed toward developing an understanding of a particular phenomenon, the teachers' perceptions of in and out-of-class interactions—particularly regarding the value and role, they ascribe to these interactions and to themselves in the second language learning situation. Prior to the interviews, it was expected that the interviewees would describe their situation in their own way and in their own words; yet all interviews were audio taped so they contained an element of formality (Holloway, 1997). Previous studies have shown that the placement of topics within an interview is crucial to the accuracy of data obtained (Mishler, 1986). Thus when questioning the role that teachers perceive for themselves in the learning process, it is logical to introduce this topic after eliciting descriptions of the teaching and learning that occurred in a specific situation (Archer, 2000).
3.2.4.1 Interview format

The interviews followed a format of specific questions regarding the context of the class, consisting of general open-ended questions regarding the actual lesson experienced, followed by questions seeking clarification of or more detail regarding the specific teaching and learning experiences. This interview format was developed in an attempt to counter a general criticism of qualitative research into teachers' beliefs, which claims that what teachers say they do is not always evident in actual classroom practice. In this thesis, the process was reversed. The teachers described their experience of a specific lesson and were encouraged not only to report but also to reflect on how they perceived learning and teaching in that situation.

3.2.4.2 Interview questions

Prior to starting the interview, teachers were asked to confirm that the level of proficiency of students in the courses they were currently teaching or had recently taught was in the range of intermediate to advanced (see Appendix A.3). The first few minutes of the interviews all began with a casual discussion of the types of courses the teacher was currently teaching or had just finished teaching. If the teacher was teaching more than one course, the interviewer asked the participant to describe the lesson they had most recently taught. The interviewer then asked specific demographic questions regarding class size, gender, and language background and ability of the students (see Table 3.4). During the interview, the teachers were explicitly asked to describe the proficiency level of the students who attended the lesson they described. In Table 3.4, under the column titled "Ability Level," the actual words the teachers used to describe proficiency are listed. The interviewer specially requested the specific demographics of students that attended the lesson described. Overall, there were many demographic
similarities in these students; for example, the student populations in a majority of classes were described to have equal or close to equal gender distribution; the terms used to describe this most frequently were "mixed" and "50/50." The average class size across the group was 12.89. The majority of students at the time the teachers were interviewed were described as coming from a Chinese L1 background; the most common length of a course reported was 10 weeks; and the length of time the teachers were presently in or had just finished teaching was included in the column titled "Length (weeks)." Some of the courses had student movement usually at the midterm point so some students were new to a particular course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.4 Student Demographics &amp; Ability</th>
<th>Student Number</th>
<th>Class Size</th>
<th>Length (weeks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>L1 Background</td>
<td>Ability Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half &amp; half</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Thai, Japanese, Chinese, Korean</td>
<td>High Intermediate</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Thai, Spanish, Korean, Indonesian, Chinese</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost half &amp; half</td>
<td>Chinese (Mainland &amp; Taiwanese), Indonesian, Thai</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mandarin, Japanese, Korean</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Upper Intermediate</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Boys</td>
<td>Chinese, Korean, Indonesian</td>
<td>Low Intermediate</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Master Level</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Korean, Thai</td>
<td>Upper Intermediate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Taiwanese, Spanish (Columbia &amp; Spain)</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Chinese (Hong Kong), Spanish, Korean</td>
<td>Upper Intermediate</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Boys/6 Girls</td>
<td>Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian</td>
<td>Low Intermediate</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Girls/4 Guys</td>
<td>Chinese, Korean</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50</td>
<td>Chinese, Japanese, Thai</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% Female</td>
<td>Chinese, Korean, Japanese</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Chinese, Korean</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50</td>
<td>Chinese, Indonesian, Malay</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Thai, Bangladeshi</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Japanese, Chinese</td>
<td>Upper Intermediate</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Male</td>
<td>Chinese, Korean, Russian, Japanese</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Chinese, Bangladeshi, Indonesian</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50</td>
<td>Chinese, Thai</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Female</td>
<td>Chinese, Korean</td>
<td>Upper Intermediate</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Female</td>
<td>Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50</td>
<td>Chinese (Mandarin &amp; Cantonese)</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50</td>
<td>Taiwanese, Thai, Korean</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early on in the interviews, teachers were asked to describe the general aims of the course, and the motivation or goals of the students who attended. Except for two “study tour classes,” all the courses were described as “academic preparation.” The study courses were specialised courses held for groups of overseas teachers, and the courses were organized around the specific group’s needs and scheduling requirements. Both participants that described a study tour lesson also described an academic preparation lesson and contrasted the differences between the overall focuses of the two. As these contrasts helped to elucidate the teachers’ conceptions of learning and teaching in those situations, these were included in the data analysed for the group. Other participants, in clarifying particular points, also provided contrasts between various EAP courses or particular lessons within a specified course. When discussing interactions, particularly interactions outside of the classroom, some of the teachers contrasted experiences they had had elsewhere with the lesson described. Out of the 28 interviews analysed, 13 different types of courses were described (see Table 3.5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASSES</th>
<th>MIXED PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC 1</td>
<td>PREAPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC 2</td>
<td>S E P (SSEPP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC 3</td>
<td>SIBT (CEBIT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APP</td>
<td>STUDY TOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5 Type or EAP courses described during interviews

Overall, motivation for students attending the NCELTR was described as an intention to increase or learn academic skill that would be needed as students enrolled
in an Australian University. Students came from a variety of educational backgrounds ranging from first-time university students to graduate degree students. The students were at various stages in the process; some were attending courses prior to applying for entrance into a university, or taking an exam to qualify for university, while others had already been accepted into university and were attempting to brush up on their skills prior to taking up their offers. Some students were finishing courses that would allow automatic enrolment into Macquarie University, while others had been tentatively accepted by a university with the prerequisite that specific courses would be taken and passed before acceptance was confirmed. There were also students that were already attending university or attending a specialised course such as CEBIT, which included courses for credit at university but also required students to take specific L2 courses that focused on skills the students were weak in. The majority of students attending NCELTR were reported to be planning on a degree in business; thus, there were a number of courses designed to fit this need, such as BPP, APP and PREAPP (business preparation, academic, and pre-academic courses).

After describing the course and students, the teachers were then asked to talk about a lesson they had recently experienced. From this point, there was very little direct questioning from the interviewer except to ask for clarification of a situation or description reported, or to encourage the teacher to reflect on how they saw learning, teaching, or the role of spoken interaction in the specific situation they had just described. During descriptions of the course in general, and of the specific lesson described, teachers often supported a particular action or observation with an experience they had had as a teacher or learner. They were encouraged to describe these experiences. Then the topic of the specific lesson was again brought up, leading
to a complete description of the lesson, including the focus of the class, the participation of the students and teacher, the materials used, and so on.

After describing the lesson, teachers were asked to further clarify beliefs or perceptions that had emerged during the interview and to further recount their own L2 learning and teaching experiences.

During the interviews, a quantifiable difference between instances of in and out-of-class interactions was apparent. Multiple instances of interaction inside the classroom naturally emerged in the teachers' descriptions of lessons; and in some cases, experiences of out-of-class interactions did as well. However, in many cases out-of-class interactions were not evident in the lessons described, which necessitated that the topic be brought up initially by the interviewer (the question types used to elicit information for ICI are provided in Chapter 4, and for OCI, in Chapter 5). There were also differences in the ways that these interactions were reported. In-class interactions were usually described in experiential terms as part of the process and experience of the lesson. Often teaching and learning terminology was used to explicate the purpose or role of interactions in a certain instance. In contrast, instances of out-of-class interactions—those that either emerged naturally or were elicited separately later by the interviewer—were often recounted in a narrative fashion (detail provided in Chapter 7) and contrasted or supported by teachers' previous experiences (detail provided in Chapter 6).

3.2.5 Analysis

Thus far, the phenomenographic and ethnographic approaches used to collect the initial data do not appear that different. However, in the analysis stage they differ in the extreme. The ethnographic approach aims for a rich description of an individual's
beliefs. The phenomenographic approach views the data as a whole, without individual variation; it aims for generalisability across broadly similar contexts. To explicate these differences I will discuss both perspectives individually and describe how these investigative approaches were used in the research presented.

3.2.5.1 Phenomenographic categories of description

Research Questions One and Three

What are the L2 teachers' conceptions of out-of-class interactions?
What are the L2 teachers' conceptions of in-class interactions?

The data for the first and third questions was collected using a phenomenographic approach; therefore analysis occurred only after the interviews were completed. Prosser’s earlier study was used as a model (see Figure 4, Section 2.2.5); therefore the same research approach will be taken—namely, a second-order, phenomenographic perspective approach (Prosser et al., 1994). From this perspective, conceptions are considered as relations between individuals and a particular task and context. These conceptions are viewed as dynamic and dependent on the particular context and task in which they are being studied. At the same time, though, proponents of this view consider the number of conceptions and approaches about particular phenomena to exist in relatively small numbers, which can be identified and described (Marton, 1986; Prosser et al., 1994; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999).

3.2.5.2 Stages of Analysis

1. The first stage of the analysis was to develop an initial set of categories from the conceptualisation of teaching and learning that is understood in a sample set
of the data. In developing the categories, the transcripts were treated as a whole, without regard to individual variation, and the participants’ descriptions were de-contextualised without reference to the context.

The purpose of this type of analysis is not to describe the beliefs of an individual or small group of teachers, but to better understand the conceptions of all the teachers in relation to this particular context. As Prosser et al. (1994) claim, “They are not meant to describe the variations between individuals, but the range of categories represented within a set of transcripts as a whole” (p. 220). After discussion and debate with supervisors, the categories were then analysed in terms of their referential and structural components.

2. The second stage of the analysis involved the construction of a set of categories to accurately represent the transcripts as a whole. At this point in accordance with phenomenographic methods all the transcripts (approximately 28) were read and reread and the conceptual categories presented individually within each transcript were listed. This list of descriptions was compared with the list of categories representing the whole (only those descriptions that were evident in 4 or more were retained, and the categories describing the whole were revised). Revisions to these categories, along with their ordering characteristics, were then discussed with the supervisor. In his earlier study, Prosser et al. (1994) reports that there was heavy debate among the researchers as to how the set of categories would be constructed either in a hierarchical or logically related format.
In developing the ICI set, there appeared to be hierarchical patterns between the five categories that emerged, in relation to the role that ICI was perceived to play in the actual learning and teaching described, and also in relation to how these interactions were approached within different situations within the actual lesson. Later the researcher discovered that these patterns closely aligned with Marton’s work on science learners’ conceptions (Marton, Beaty, & Dall’Allba, 1993), as well as with Prosser’s work on teachers’ conceptions in science and higher education (Prosser et al., 1994) (see Table 4.5.1, Chapter 4). Thus, these previous frameworks published in other areas acted as support for the hierarchical format chosen independently in the area of L2 research.

The construction of a related format for the OCI set was a bit more problematic, as the relation between categories was less apparent. Out of the four categories that emerged, OCI were treated as completely separate from classroom teaching in two of the categories; they were actively elicited in one and were the basis for discussion in another. However, some patterns emerged in how particular aspects of OCI were approached in classroom teaching. These patterns were apparent in all four categories, particularly in relation to teachers’ perceptions of rapport and the use of learners in the classroom. The most telling factor that emerged across the group was the use and non-use of students’ outside experiences in classroom discussions. Therefore the transcripts were again explored individually for instances where these factors were apparent, in order to confirm that these OCI factors were representative of the group as a whole.

3. Once the construction of the set of categories was decided, the transcripts were re-read and the categories revised and reordered. Categories were then checked
to see if they were represented in the transcripts. The process continued until a stable set of categories was developed.

In the third stage of the analysis, the focus returned to the transcripts in order to classify the perceptions as they were represented in individual transcripts. The transcripts were read over in relation to the given questions:

- Who initiated the interaction?
- What was the teacher's perception of the role of interaction in that instance?
- How did the interaction occur (teacher, teacher + student, student + student, as a group)?
- How was the teaching and learning perceived as a whole?
- What was the role of the teacher and learner(s) in instances where in-class and out-of-class interactions were described?

Previous research indicates that students' learning approaches vary in relation to their perceptions of the task's learning goal (J. Williams, 1999); so it is reasonable to suggest that adoption of more than one concept within a course (the teaching of EAP or the availability of self-access) might also apply to the teachers' perceptions of the roles of teaching and learning in a single context. This approach is supported by Prosser et al.'s earlier study (1994), which found that in some cases a number of perceptions were represented within each transcript. In this study it was the case that a number of perceptions were described within each of some of the transcripts, and in those situations perceptions were classified in terms of the highest category for which there was substantial evidence within the transcript.

From this process a list of ESL teachers' conceptions was developed, as had been done in earlier studies of student perceptions of learning mathematics (Crawford et al., 1998b) and nursing (Duke et al., 1998), and of teachers' perceptions in Teachers' Beliefs Study
mathematics and sciences (Prosser et al., 1994). After the individual transcripts were allocated to the highest possible level, they were coded with individual numbers and explored to see if relationships between perceptions of teaching and approaches to teaching, or perceptions of learning and approaches to learning, emerged across the group. This process was done separately for each set of categories, first for ICI and then for OCI.

### 3.2.6 Combination of Phenomenographic and Ethnographic Investigative Tools

**Research Questions Two and Four**

What, if any, is the relationship between L2 teachers' conceptions of out-of-class interactions and their descriptions of actual teaching practices?

What, if any, is the relationship between L2 teachers' conceptions of in-class interactions and their descriptions of actual teaching practices?

The data needed to explore research questions two and four came out initially from the multiple phenomenographic sorts of descriptions of instances of in-class and out-of-class interactions within individual transcripts and across the transcripts as a whole. Once the ICI and OCI descriptions had been categorised across the group, the researcher went back and looked at particular instances within each transcript where specific interactions took place during the lesson. Then the teacher's description of the role that interactions played in that instance was contrasted with the teacher's responses to phenomenographic questions about how the teacher perceived learning and teaching in the situation described. See a sample of excerpts of interactional instances within a lesson reported in a single transcript (Table 3.6).
### Table 3.6 Some Excerpts of a Lesson in One Transcript
ICI and OCI Instances | Teaching and Learning
---|---
1. ICI – “Initial discussion of ideas in groups builds confidence.” | 1. Teaching – “Ideally, I say we’re going to cover these topics, I group them (put students in groups) and then I go around and answer any questions.”
2. ICI – “I saw their talking (in groups) only as practice.” | 2. Lesson Focus – “I helped them with their summary writing for a test they were having.”
3. ICI – “When we discuss principals in English they slip into Chinese (L1) despite the importance of sticking to English. I constantly say, “Please speak in English.” | 3. Activity – “We listened to a taped lecture and then took notes; I did it with them. Then I grouped them in pairs.”
4. IC/OCI – “If it’s relevant I try to get them to talk about their own experiences.” | 4. Activity – “They had to (task) look at what I had done and what they had done and try to identify the differences themselves.”
5. L1 Use – “I think it (L1 use in class) is their disadvantage definitely because soon they are going to be studying their masters and they might not have a lot of Chinese people around them and they are going to need the language skills to be able to discuss things in English.” | 5. Teaching – “Some academic classes prefer conversation like general English classes but I prefer academic—you design your own lesson, own focus.”
6. ICI – “A couple of the students were speaking in Chinese. I knew that they were speaking about the topic but they know they should be speaking in English. ‘They know they shouldn’t use their L1; they can do it (speak in English) but sometimes I think it’s easier for them.” | 6. Learning – “I could see that they were much more confident, they were more enthusiastic, more energy. Their mood is one thing I look for.”
7. OCI – “I’m quite often surprised because they do quite well on their tests but when I have a conversation with them I find that … they do okay in the classroom but if I have a private conversation with them outside the class I’m surprised at what they don’t understand or can’t say.” | 7. Teaching/ learning – “I must have done something right because I got a note that they did well on the exam.”
8. OCI – “Especially on Mondays I try to find out about their weekend. I don’t find them very cooperative. I really try to get them to talk to me “Did you speak English over the weekend? Who with?” I try to do that but they don’t seem interested.” | 8. Teacher as Learner – “I learnt communicative teaching approach through teacher training, and I’m very conscious of applying it to the classroom.”
9. OCI – “I want to point them in the right direction but not hold their hand and take them places.” | 9. **Teaching** – “I want to point them to the right direction but not hold their hand and take them places.”

Descriptions of specific teaching and learning situations and interactions in the lessons described didn’t always happen in chronological order. As in most real life conversations, the teachers’ descriptions of a lesson (or a series of tasks in one lesson) did not follow a linear process. In Table 3.6, I have attempted to group similar interactional instances together along with the descriptions of teaching and learning that were provided and appeared to relate to these instances. The numbered excerpts in...
the table are not a sequential illustration of the conversation that actually occurred in
the interview.

3.2.6.1 Example of initial data for research questions 2 and 4

In this case, the teacher began by talking about the primary event in the lesson, which was the task the students were given—to mark their summary of a lecture they had listened to in class. At this time, the students were grouped together in small groups that the teacher had arranged (with weaker and stronger students included in each group). The teacher described the benefits of grouping in relation to teacher training (excerpt 8, right column in Table 3.6). Then the role of interaction amongst groups was described as a sort of practice the students get in language skills (excerpt 2, left column); at the same time the teacher emphasised that the main purpose of the task was for students to independently mark their own summaries using the teachers’ summary as a guide (excerpts 3 and 4, right column). The teacher’s role experienced during the grouping interaction was expressed as providing direction to the students (excerpt 9, right column).

During the task described (excerpts 3 and 5, left column) the teacher depicted an instance of L1 use that occurred during the activity (excerpt 6, left column). The teacher believed that the students were discussing the assigned topic and maintained that this should be done in English (excerpt 5, left column). The teacher reported a perception that students’ outside experiences should be a part of classroom discussion if it relates to the topic at hand (excerpt 4, left column); however, this situation did not occur in the lesson described in the interview. After describing the task, the teacher backtracked chronologically to report on the context of the task (an upcoming exam) and then described an event regarding OCI that occurred in the same lesson prior to the
task (excerpt 8, left column). This event was portrayed by the teacher as separate from the primary teaching and learning situation and was reported by the teacher to be viewed as separate by the students as well.

The teaching and learning experienced by the teacher in specific instances emerged throughout the interview. In Table 3.6, the researcher has aligned those perceptions of teaching and learning as closely as possible to correspond with the interactional instances reported. Examined apart from the ICI and OCI, these teaching-learning descriptions provide a snapshot of an ideal lesson (excerpt 1, right column), of how the lesson was organized (excerpts 3, 4 and 5, right column), and of how the in-class and out-of-class interactions were managed (excerpts 3, 4, 5 and 8, left column). The teacher’s assessment of learning in this situation was provided just after the task and again later when the outcome of the test was known (excerpts 6 and 7, left column).

3.2.6.2 Expanding and condensing data

Using the excerpts of data where instances of interaction were spontaneously brought up through descriptions of activities in lessons was a good initial starting point and provided a sort of synopsis of the areas of interest to the thesis. Even so, to get a holistic picture of whether the teachers’ conceptions of ICI and OCI related to the actual teaching practices reported, it was necessary to expand the data set and include all the factors that appeared to be connected to the learning and teaching described in the lesson. These additional factors included things like information on how the lesson topic was initiated, what the focus of learning or teaching was for various activities, the teachers’ plans prior to the lesson, who participated in the interaction, how the interactions were managed, who participated, and so on. The use of materials in
lessons, types of activities, use of language by the teachers when describing specific
types of interactions, and most particularly, the learning and teaching that occurred in
various situations reported, were closely scrutinised.

Once the researcher and supervisors were satisfied that all the factors
pertaining to OCI and the actual teaching and learning experienced by the teachers
were located, the data was coded and taken out of the context of the individual
transcripts and explored as whole across the group of teachers. The same procedure
was repeated with ICI. Both sets of data where treated as completely new and separate
data sets. In instances where multiple activities or situations were present within a
single transcript, each situation was represented separately as part of the whole group.
In situations where ICI and OCI where discussed simultaneously, or shared related
factors that could assist in categorising an actual teaching or learning situation, these
factors were duplicated across sets.

In phenomenographic research, all factors related to the phenomenon, whether
or not they appear to be connected, are important to consider when describing the
phenomenon from the teachers' perspective. Therefore, at this juncture more of an
ethnographic research approach was used to condense the data and focus on the
materials directly pertaining to the aims of the thesis and the questions posed. In both
data sets repetitions where eliminated and superfluous material was removed (e.g.,
descriptions of past teaching experiences, general comments regarding ICI and OCI
that were not part of the actual teaching and learning experienced, and incidental
comments teachers made. In addition, any responses to interview questions that did not
emerge naturally from the teachers' own descriptions of their experiences were
removed in an attempt to exclude the researcher's interpretation of the event. As much
as possible, the non-essential was separated from the essential material that described the actual experiences of the teachers.

### 3.2.6.3 Illustrations of teaching and learning approaches

Once both data sets had been reduced in this way, the teaching and learning events were grouped in similar sets (that is, where the ICI and OCI and learning and teaching were described in very much the same way or followed a similar pattern). Across the group as a whole, the minimum number of teaching and learning situations reported was 3 and the maximum was 18, within a single transcript; so the sets were quite large initially. There were 8 sets for ICI and 3 sets for OCI. Individual teaching and learning situations were then analysed to assure that each set was representative of the group as a whole. Those teaching or learning situations that were not representative of at least four of the teachers were removed. The resulting sets were then discussed in detail with supervisors. After much deliberation, those that illustrated very similar teaching approaches and learning approaches—and more importantly, those that shared very similar perspectives on how interactions were conceived—were grouped together, while those that differed significantly were grouped separately.

In this way, the number of ICI sets was reduced to 6 and the set of OCI was increased from 3 to 4. The researcher then went back and confirmed that a minimum of two teaching and learning situations were present for each participant, in the group as a whole. Once this was done the sets of lesson descriptions where compared with the ICI and OCI categorical descriptions previously developed phenomenographically. Those lessons that best depicted a particular categorical description were regrouped in corresponding sets. There was some discussion about whether one category should be represented by a two-lesson description, but it was agreed that essentially, although the
focus of the lessons differed slightly, the overall patterns of that set were well represented within the second and third ICI categorical descriptions. One benefit of this comparison was that although only 3 participants had been allocated to the highest OCI category, the number of instances of teaching and learning representing this category was 13, which acted as additional support for the stability of that category.

Finally, once all the sets had been situated in a category, the overall teaching and learning situation highlighting the role of spoken interaction within each set was depicted in an illustrative form. Although these illustrations lack the complexity and richness of the lessons described, they accurately and simply illustrated the patterns of teaching and learning that were reported in the lessons across the groups. For the illustrations describing the teaching and learning situations corresponding to the ICI categorical descriptions, see Chapter 4; and for the illustrations depicting the teaching and learning situations corresponding to the OCI categorical descriptions, see Chapter 5.

3.2.6.4 Quantitative analysis of ICI and OCI descriptions

When the illustrations of the actual teaching and learning situations had been developed, an unexpected result emerged: interconnected patterns between both phenomena. Similar patterns across the range of both sets of phenomenographic categories of EAP teachers’ ICI and OCI conceptions had been initially indicated, when comparisons of both categorical sets showed that in situations where a deeper-level conception of one phenomenon occurred, teachers would frequently mention the other phenomenon as well. The illustrations of the role of both types of interaction in the teaching situations reported seemed to reinforce this finding.
The investigation had been set up to explore OCI, and a comparison of the ICI data appeared to be a natural methodological step in the process, since data for both phenomena would be collected simultaneously. Originally, it was hoped that information on teachers' conceptions of ICI would assist in informing an understanding of teachers' conceptions of OCI. The phenomena were treated as two distinct investigations; however, in both the categories of description and in the illustrations the phenomena appeared to be at some level interconnected. To develop a better understanding of this result the researcher again reviewed all the original data pertaining to both phenomena that had emerged in the teachers’ own words during the process of describing these interactions in the teaching and learning that occurred during a lesson.

Qualitative differences in the way the teachers answered the same question (for example, “Do you think your students have the ability to interact inside the classroom/outside the classroom?”) were explored, and these could be illustrated in numerical ways (i.e., the number of words in both answers were counted); see Chapter 7. Further qualitative differences between the levels of certainty expressed in response to the same question were also evident, so a quantitative comparison was made between responses to both that and a subsequent question (“Do your students interact in the classroom/outside the classroom?”). Overall, when comparing both phenomenomata, patterns of differences and similarities emerged between the types of words teachers used to describe the actual teaching and learning that was reported.

To better understand these factors and whether in-class and out-of-class interactions were conceived as separate or related phenomenon by the group as a whole, particular instances of types of words used to describe both were first identified and then checked to see if they were evident across the group; if this was the case they
were sorted and counted. These numerical comparisons and contrasts of the words used by the teachers to describe both phenomena are illustrated in Chapter 7.

3.2.6.5 Ethnographic analysis (experiences)

In the previous stages of analysis most of the data was analysed as a whole, with individual transcripts checked afterwards to confirm if the patterns that emerged were consistent across the group. Still, within each interview there were very specific experiences spontaneously reported by the teachers, most often relating to personal situations of teaching and learning previously experienced by that teacher. From the participants' perspective these experiences were either influential in developing their current understanding or were illustrative of the perspective the teacher was describing. Therefore, those experiences not specifically situated in the context of the lesson described, but which had emerged in the teachers' own words, were considered by the teachers to be important and from a research perspective were taken seriously.

To explore these experiences, an ethnographic approach outlined by Kvale (1996) was adopted as a general framework for the procedure. Typically, in ethnographic research data from various sources (i.e., written texts, multiple interviews, observation, teaching journals, and so on) is collected across the course of an investigation. In this investigation, the primary data was collected in a single interview. In some cases during the transcribing process when specific situations described by a teacher were unclear (such as terms used), these terms were discussed with the interviewee for clarification; however, additional information was not sought, as the investigative purpose of the thesis was to explore whether conceptions of ICI and OCI were evident across a group of teachers within a situated experience, rather than the general beliefs that one teacher might describe concerning a specific experience.
The teachers interviewed provided information in three steps:

Step 1. In the first step, the teachers described their relation to the phenomenon by spontaneously speaking about their beliefs and experiences in relation to the topic; these interviews were later transcribed and studied.

Step 2. In the second step the EAP teachers revealed new connections between their experiences and beliefs as expressed their spontaneous explanations, without interpretation from interviewer.

Step 3. In this step, from an ethnographic perspective the interviewer condenses and interprets what was said and sent it back to the interviewee to allow the interviewee to confirm or disconfirm the interpretations. This step is contrary to the phenomenographic perspective, which endeavours to describe the experience from the participant’s perspective and not the researcher’s interpretation. So, in this investigation, excerpts of the exact words were used as much as possible to illustrate the individual’s perspective; in this way the teachers’ perspective and the researcher’s interpretation were kept as separate as possible. Condensed versions of the researcher’s interpretations of personal experiences described from a teachers’ perspective were not developed and sent back to the participants. For the data utilised in Teachers’ beliefs investigation participants were contacted only to clarify something that was said in the original interview and not as a means of collecting additional data. After the interviews, the teachers that participated in the investigation were informed of progress in the research, and the ICI and OCI categories of conceptions that emerged across the group were shared. Participants were also provided with information and electronic links to ensuing publications. On two occasions,
various participants attended conference presentations where the categories of description were presented.

At this juncture, the next step in an ethnographic research approach would be to confirm that the researchers' interpretation was correct. This is often done when possible through participant observations. This step, however, falls outside the investigative purpose of the thesis—which is primarily to identify and describe the conceptions of phenomenon evident across a group of teachers, and to explore the relations between their conceptions and their experience from their own perspective.

Step 4. At this stage, there was again a rather large amount of data and a noticeable difference between the descriptions used by the teachers to talk about types of experiences related to the phenomenon. That is, when describing personal experiences related to a particular action or event that occurred during the EAP lesson, these descriptions were often short and frequently used terminology specific to the field of second language teaching. The headings for this data set are listed in Table 3.7.
Table 3.7 Teaching Lesson (Actions and Events)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heading</th>
<th>Experiences Teaching Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Actions and Events)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Numerical Data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>Communicative Language Teacher/Learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>Explicitly Implicitly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>Work Individually • Work w/Class • Work w/Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work w/Teacher • Work w/Group Planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion • Unplanned Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>Inside Classroom Interaction—Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>Teaching • learning • subject • new knowledge • pre-existing knowledge •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>Learning Skills and Structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>Academic • writing • reading • listening • speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• social language • subject specific • culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Excerpt Data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>Inside Classroom Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>Explicitly Implicitly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>Task Based Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>Pre-Planned Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>Professional Teaching Terms (excerpt list)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>Teachers Role (Outside Classroom Interaction) Excerpts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>Learning (Outside Classroom Interaction) Excerpts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>Teaching (Outside Classroom Interaction) Excerpts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td>Teachers Role (Inside Classroom Interaction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>Inside Classroom Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>Student Learning • Object of Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast, when discussing ICI and OCI in relation to actual teaching and learning situations experienced by the teachers, participants often described these experiences in lengthy narrative fashion. Table 3.8 demonstrates how these narratives where grouped and counted under general topics (headings and subheadings) that emerged across the group of transcripts.
### Table 3.8 EAP Teachers’ Experiences Teaching (Headings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Assigned Number</th>
<th>EAP teaching</th>
<th>Does respondent relate L2 learning experience to present teaching methods?</th>
<th>Situated experience text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning/ Teaching Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L/T Types counts</td>
<td>General Teaching Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If learning led to teaching, do they do what they learned, or the opposite of what they learned?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived or Worked Overseas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All instances of teacher training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience teaching ESL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data for both types of experiences described (experiences that occurred in the lesson described and outside experiences spontaneously reported by the participants) were analysed through both numerical counts of types of experiences told across the group (when sufficient numerical data emerged across the group as a whole) and through qualitative categorisation of excerpts. All data were organized using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, with the “narrative” data sets spread out over multiple spreadsheets covering over 140 pages (see Tables 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10). In contrast, the data for “action or event” experiences typically fit on one to three pages, which could be easily transferred into tables that could illustrate the data in its entirety.
Table 3.9. Teacher as L2 Language Learner (Formal Training)  
ICI and OCI (Data Set B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Assigned Number</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>L2 Total</th>
<th>Reason for learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal – Classroom Training</td>
<td>Classroom Training Percentage Count</td>
<td>CT Total</td>
<td>Subcategories 1. Immersion 2. L2 through Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Directed Study (SDS) (Types)</td>
<td>SDS Classroom Count Classroom in TLC / N/A / unknown</td>
<td>SDS Total</td>
<td>Subcategories 3. Assigned 4. Self-initiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal context (types)</td>
<td>Negative (-) or Positive (+) toward Teaching Methodology</td>
<td>TM/Class Totals</td>
<td>Negative (-) or (+) Positive Toward Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text comments</td>
<td>Negative or positive.</td>
<td>Time frame amount(s)</td>
<td>Time frames (Text)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICI Yes</td>
<td>ICI limited</td>
<td>Percentage count</td>
<td>Presence of ICI negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of or limited ICI positive (+) / negative (-)</td>
<td>Response to ICI (or lack) Unclear or N/A</td>
<td>Proficiency Reached for this instance of Formal Training</td>
<td>Response to ICI Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCI Yes</td>
<td>OCI Limited Opportunity</td>
<td>OCI Limited by own Student</td>
<td>OCI No or Not much N/A / Unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCI</td>
<td>OCI in / not in / unclear / N/A Target Language Country</td>
<td>OCI percentage count</td>
<td>OCI Text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference in the quantity of data sets is illustrated by the number of headings used to organise and sort the data: 12 headings and 29 subheadings in the Actions and Events data table (Table 3.7) and 82 headings plus multiple subheadings and unlisted subcategories in Tables 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10. Essentially the data for both the ICI and the OCI studies emerged through the EAP teachers’ descriptions of the same situated lesson; however, the types of data that become apparent were quite different. The teachers themselves during the process of describing the lesson frequently illustrated ICI perceptions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Assigned Number</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>L2 Total</th>
<th>Reason for learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal No or Not much</td>
<td>OCI Yes OCI No or Not much</td>
<td>OCI percentage count</td>
<td>OCI Limited Opportunity OCI Limited by own Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCI N/A/Unclear</td>
<td>OCI in/not in Target Language Country</td>
<td>Unclear as to Location of OCI</td>
<td>OCI Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCI positive/ negative</td>
<td>OCI positive or negative text</td>
<td>OCI length of instance.</td>
<td>Lack of or limitations on OCI Negative (-) or (+) Pos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text comments</td>
<td>OCI initiated by/context</td>
<td>Time frame amount(s)</td>
<td>Time frames (Text)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCI/ Types Subcategory purpose</td>
<td>OCI Experience Relate to current teaching/ learning (Text comments)</td>
<td>Proficiency Reached for this instance of Informal Learning</td>
<td>Text: Proficiency Reached for this instance of Informal Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast, OCI perceptions were illustrated by the teachers through spontaneous experiences that were often told in a narrative form. In both situations, the researcher attempted to look for the conceptual patterns that existed across the group, rather than focusing on the individual. In situations where there were multiple instances of a certain type of experience described, these experiences were closely examined. In circumstances where a particular belief or methodology or even a term was used multiple times across the group, these instances were counted and presented in tables to illustrate and quantify the similarities and differences that emerged across the group in relation to both types of interaction. Finally, through the process of investigation, factors and questions that the researcher or researcher’s supervisors thought might have influenced the results or might better inform an understanding of the phenomena were further explored. Decisions for additional analyses were made as dictated by the data during the process of the investigation and are outlined in the following chapters.
Chapter 4

Teachers’ Conceptions of In-Class Interactions

4.1 Introduction

Previously language teachers’ beliefs regarding the learning and teaching that occurs in actual classroom practice has been frequently described as unique and context-specific; this study looks at the phenomenon from a different perspective, presenting: (1) background information on research into in-class interactions (2) a categorical framework for understanding second language teachers’ conceptions of in-class interactions (ICI) and (3) the relations between these and the learning and teaching that occurs in actual classroom practice.

Spurring this current interest in L2 teachers’ beliefs is a growing trend in L2 studies which views language learning as a social group experience rather than as an individual process. Central to this perspective is the importance placed on interactions with others in the language learning process. Because so much learning occurs in the classroom, through activities created by classroom discourse—the spoken interaction between the teacher and the students and between the students themselves—the role of ICI is considered to be particularly important to the formation of learning environments and ultimate shaping of the individual learners’ development (Boulima, 1999; Marshall & Torpay, 1996).

Clearly L2 teachers as well as students are active participants in classroom discussions. Yet in the past 20 years of L2 research, little effort has gone into understanding these teachers’ conceptions of ICI, how these conceptions may influence

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19 A manuscript discussing the development of categories during the process of the investigations was accepted for publication (see Bunts-Anderson, 2004).
their teaching practices, or the impact these conceptions may have on the language learners themselves (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). The urgency for this type of information is apparent when we consider the ever-increasing numbers of overseas students worldwide that are choosing to study in countries where their language is spoken. In Australia the percentage of overseas students has increased at a rate of over 10% per year to 303,324 overseas students enrolled in Australian educational institutions in 2003 (see Tables 4.1.1 and 4.1.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1.1 Annual Statistics Australian Education International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source: AEI (2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International Student Enrolments in Australia 1994-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
<th>ELICOS</th>
<th>Vocational Education</th>
<th>School Education</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>50000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>60000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>70000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>80000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>90000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>100000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>110000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>120000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>130000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>140000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1.2  Times Series: International Student Enrolment 1994-2003

Source: Market Indicator Data AEI (2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>School Education</th>
<th>Vocational Education</th>
<th>ELICOS</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>20,342</td>
<td>12,780</td>
<td>19,479</td>
<td>25,173</td>
<td>35,240</td>
<td>93,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>22,517</td>
<td>14,351</td>
<td>24,036</td>
<td>34,209</td>
<td>36,625</td>
<td>111,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>24,035</td>
<td>18,653</td>
<td>28,463</td>
<td>43,309</td>
<td>40,773</td>
<td>135,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>26,937</td>
<td>21,177</td>
<td>31,177</td>
<td>47,348</td>
<td>45,717</td>
<td>148,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>29,937</td>
<td>29,937</td>
<td>31,177</td>
<td>51,677</td>
<td>50,810</td>
<td>160,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>32,899</td>
<td>32,899</td>
<td>31,177</td>
<td>56,610</td>
<td>56,610</td>
<td>178,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>36,810</td>
<td>36,810</td>
<td>31,177</td>
<td>61,610</td>
<td>61,610</td>
<td>200,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>40,717</td>
<td>40,717</td>
<td>31,177</td>
<td>66,610</td>
<td>66,610</td>
<td>223,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>44,610</td>
<td>44,610</td>
<td>31,177</td>
<td>71,610</td>
<td>71,610</td>
<td>246,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>48,511</td>
<td>48,511</td>
<td>31,177</td>
<td>76,610</td>
<td>76,610</td>
<td>269,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>136,252</td>
<td>136,252</td>
<td>136,252</td>
<td>136,252</td>
<td>136,252</td>
<td>548,511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics in the tables above include only overseas students enrolled full-time; 60,930 of these students were enrolled in ELICOS institutions and 136,252 in tertiary degree programs (AEI, 2005d). For many of these students English was not their first language; in fact only 15,584 of the students counted were reported to be from English-speaking countries (AEI, 2005e).

4.2 Background on ICI Research

Discussions about the process of second language learning in the classroom have always been coloured by nature vs. nurture debates—how much is the L2 learners’ learning predetermined by some innate form of genetic predisposition and how much is derived from the learners’ social and cultural experiences (Mitchell & Myles, 1998)? Consequently interaction in the second language classroom has been researched in almost an autonomous fashion from a variety of perspectives and theoretical paradigms. For the purposes of this chapter it is enough to note that today most second language researchers generally accept that humans are endowed with an innate ability for language learning, but that this predisposition does not account for all...
aspects of language development, and that other factors, including active involvement in language use, are equally important to success in second language learning.

A review of current research on classroom discourse provides an impression of great diversity, with different groups of researchers pursuing different theoretical agendas that focus on very different parts of the in-class interaction. For example, learners' interactions have been researched to develop an understanding of the learners' ability to learn through debate and controversy (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 1985), acquire and produce grammatical forms (Doughty & Williams, 1998), negotiate meaning (Damon & Phelps, 1989), perform specific tasks, construct new knowledge (Davy & McBride, 1986), self-manage their own individual learning processes (Ohta, 2000), acquire new cultural understandings (Sullivan, 1996), and so on. Most often the spoken interactions of teachers in the classroom have been investigated to better understand the ways that teachers can support the learning processes of the individual language learner. Such studies have reported findings on the types of questions the teachers ask, the feedback they provide, how topics are introduced, how grammatical forms are presented, how interaction between the learners and their peers are managed, and how teachers' talk impacts learners' motivation and identity (Salili, 1995; M. L. Simpson et al., 1977; Spratt & Leung, 2000; Vauras et al., 1999).

The sheer wealth of studies on in-class interactions even within the past decade would be impossible to discuss in detail within the confines of a single thesis. However there are some developments and findings that should be mentioned, coming out of a variety of research approaches and theoretical paradigms that have strongly informed our current understanding of the relationship between in-class interactions and second language learning.
4.2.1 Nature vs. Nurture

If we go back to the nature vs. nurture debates, those that have concentrated on understanding and mapping the innate abilities of the language learner have researched interactions; and the use of tools such as Chomsky’s “Universal Grammar” (Chomsky, 1981; Chomsky, 1986a; Chomsky, 1986b) have enabled researchers to descriptively map in great detail the route the learner takes to acquire the second language. From a cognitivist perspective and through the application of processing models such as Anderson’s ACT (Adaptive Control of Thought) model (Anderson, 1983; 1985), we now know more about how language is processed, and how L2 learners develop learning strategies and fluency in the second language. Research from functionalist perspectives have underlined the need to consider function as well as form, and through looking at interactions in naturalistic contexts such as the European Science Foundation Project (1982-1988), have shown us that the pragmatic need to communicate more complex meaning drives the language learners’ development (Klein & Perdue, 1992).

More recently the “nurture” aspect of L2 learning has received much attention, particularly in regard to the contexts in which L2 learning takes place and the types of interactions and learning opportunities in which learners become engaged. Descriptive accounts coming from sociocultural, sociolinguistic, and interactionist perspectives have all addressed these issues in different ways, but together they have shown how learners’ engagement in L2 interaction is influenced by cultural factors such as gender, power relations, and sense of community. One of the most important findings from interactionist and sociocultural research is that both approaches have demonstrated that the character of L2 interaction both in and outside of the classroom affects the learning opportunities made available to the learner (Mitchell & Myles, 1998).
One of the most exciting developments in SLA research today is that there appears to be more linking and cross-referencing between the different strands of L2 research on classroom discourse (Mitchell & Myles, 1998; Roberts, 2001). One reason for this may be that a grand overarching theory comprehensively explaining all the complex features of second language learning has not yet been generally accepted. In the near future at least, it is unlikely that there will be a mass meshing of different research methodologies or theoretical traditions. In the past decade, however, a number of publications (see next section) have included studies that report findings on specific factors but also include the importance of factors usually reported in other areas (Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Thanasoulas, 2002). This cross-referencing between research paradigms has started to provide second language researchers and educators with a more holistic view of the L2 teaching and learning processes that occur through in-class interactions, and the need to know about more about the L2 teachers is expressed with increasing frequency (Breen, 1991; Dufeu, 2001; Faerch, 1985).

4.2.2 Recent ICI Studies

A good example of this cross-referencing between theoretical perspectives comes from a group of 12 studies published in a book that focuses on understanding language learning through the study of second and foreign classroom interaction (J. K. Hall & Verplaetse, 2000). The studies reported in the volume generally draw from findings across disciplinary borders and theoretical boundaries with a focus on 1) reporting teaching behaviours that support in-class interaction, and 2) the relationship between learner interaction and the development of a single aspect of language development. The aspects of in-class interaction investigated (ranging from teachers’ questions to developing learning strategies), the contexts in which the language was
studied (ranging from elementary classrooms to adult intensive language courses) and
the languages studied (English, Japanese, Dutch, Hebrew, French and German) differed
dramatically. However, taken as a whole, the findings reported some compelling
evidence on particular classroom practices and significantly emphasised the important
role that teachers play in these interactions, as well as a need to better understand the
teachers' impact on the process. Four key findings reported in all the studies were
described in detail (J. K. Hall & Verplaetse, 2000).

Several of the studies demonstrated that repetition, rephrasing, echoes, and
paraphrasing part or all of their own and others' utterances, by both teacher and
student, provided not only positive cognitive benefits but positive social consequences
as well. In fact, three of the studies reported that it was the teacher who was primarily
responsible for helping the learners make connections between utterances in the in-
class discourse and new ideas or words. Also it was the teacher who most frequently
affirmed learners' contributions and made them available for consideration to the whole
class.

The social context—or more specifically, the interpersonal relationships formed
through in-class interactions—appeared to be fundamental to constructing shared social
knowledge, and it influenced the process of additional language learning. In six of the
studies it was explicitly reported that the interpersonal relationships formed through in-
class interactions nurtured student engagement and provided multiple opportunities for
the students to use and extend their own knowledge of the language. It was through the
active participation in meaningful discussions that the students saw themselves as valid
participants in the classroom community and a need to interact with others was
fostered. The interpersonal relationships that evolved from the in-class interaction were
also credited with promoting positive emotional energy and an active interest in learning.

The third finding across this group of studies had to do with the significance of the teachers' role in fostering additional language learning opportunities. Across the learning contexts it was reported that the teachers at all levels who helped to foster a dynamic learning environment were those who "acted inquisitively; asked intellectually weighty and socially relevant questions; provided multiple opportunities for students to be full participants in the conversation; and in other ways displayed a genuine interest in learning, in the topic, in the student’s expressed thoughts, and in the students themselves" (J. K. Hall & Verplaetse, 2000).

The fourth finding focused on the active use of private speech by individual learners in the classroom context. In several of the studies, points made in the previous findings were also directly implicated in peer-to-peer interaction. Peer solidarity was formed; one student, to help another, used learning strategies appropriated from the teacher, and through actively engaging with peers, students sustained a motivating learning environment. Interaction with the teacher also seemed to impact indirectly; for example, in one study it was reported that the learners not directly addressed by the teacher were, through observing and reflecting on teacher-talk, as actively involved in making use of the teacher's assistance as those learners who were the direct focus of the teacher's attention (Ohta, 2000); in another study the resourcefulness of young learners in appropriating and making use of the teacher's strategies to monitor their own learning was reported (Takahashi, Austin, & Morimoto, 2000). The authors of this study argued that in addition to learning the target language, the learners were learning how to learn.
In my view the second finding reported above is not new but began to be reported frequently in the 1960s and continues to be commonly reported in L2 studies today (Allwright, 1979; Hymes, 1970; M. L. Simpson et al., 1977). In relation to the questions posed and the study reported in this chapter, an unintentional but consistently apparent finding across this group of studies (and explicitly stated in the first, third and fourth key findings) was the important role that teachers played in the learning that occurred through classroom interactions. Interestingly, one of the suggestions that came out of this group of studies was a suggestion to improve teacher training: “Teacher candidates also need to learn about the role of classroom discourse in learning, and in particular, of specific practices such as those we have learned about here that lead to additional language learning” (J. K. Hall & Verplaetse, 2000).

I agree that there is a need to better inform teacher candidates about the relationships between in-class interactions and second language learning. However, I would argue that the way to do this is not through simply modelling teaching practices that are perceived to support in-class interaction, but through understanding the thinking that lies behind the teaching practices believed to successfully promote learning through in-class interactions. Many of the practices reported in these studies viewed to promote additional language learning are already covered in detail in most teacher training programs.

Practices such as the type of teacher questions reported to promote motivation, and the communication of meaning, are elements of communicative methodologies coming from CLT (the communicative language teaching approach) that has dominated the area of L2 teaching and learning since the 1980s. Similarly, the in-class interactions reported in the studies to support learners’ critical thinking and development of learning strategies have also been well documented, mainly from a cognitive
perspective, since the 1970s, 1980s, and more actively in the 1990s, and have already been incorporated into most teacher training programs—particularly with the strong trend in L2 teaching to promote “autonomous language learning.” To understand the thinking that lies behind these practices we need to ask the teachers themselves.

4.3 The ICI Study

4.3.1 The Study Investigates Two Questions:

What are the L2 teachers’ conceptions of ICI?

What, if any, is the relationship between L2 teachers’ conceptions of ICI and their descriptions of actual teaching practices?

4.3.2 Context

The Teacher Beliefs Study investigated these questions through exploring the ICI conceptions experienced in actual lessons and described by a group of 28 Australian English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers. The EAP classroom is well suited for this type of investigation, as the overseas students attending these courses share the same motivation: that is, to increase their language proficiency and learn the academic skills required for admittance into an Australian tertiary institution. In the EAP classroom, the learners’ second language is not only the subject of study but is also the means by which the teacher and students communicate both socially and culturally with one another.

The categorical framework presented was developed from interviews with 28 second language teachers teaching in similar situations in terms of subject content and student ability. All the participants had current or very recent experience in teaching students at an upper intermediate to advanced level of English proficiency. Previous
language research into different levels of proficiency indicates that it is only students with intermediate or advanced levels of language proficiency that are able to perceive and self-initiate repairs in their L2. Thus, teachers of students at these levels were chosen, as it is more likely that these L2 learners will discuss their communication difficulties with their teachers (Williams, 1999; R. Ellis, 1997).

4.3.3 Interviews

4.3.3.1 Format

The interviews followed a format of specific questions regarding the context of the class, general open-ended questions regarding the actual lesson experienced, followed by questions seeking clarification of or more detail regarding the specific instances where the participants described the teaching and learning experiences in the situation. This interview format was developed in an attempt to counter a general criticism of qualitative research into teachers’ beliefs that claims what teachers say they do is not always evident in actual classroom practice. In this study the process was reversed. The teachers described their experience of a specific lesson and were encouraged not only to report but also to reflect on how they perceived learning and teaching in that situation.

4.3.3.2 ICI Interview Questions

The first few minutes of the interviews all began with a casual discussion of the types of classes the teacher was currently teaching or had just finished teaching. If the teacher was teaching more than one course, the interviewer asked the participant to describe the students they had most recently taught. The interviewer then asked specific demographic questions regarding class size, gender, and language background and
ability of the students. When teachers’ initially described situations where ICI and OCI emerged the teachers were asked to describe their own perceptions of students’ ability to communicate effectively in classroom and outside classroom discourse (see Appendix B.1 for examples of excerpts).

The teachers were then asked to describe the goals or aims of the course and motivation or goals of the students who attended. Once a general context of the lesson had been elucidated, the teachers were next asked to talk about the lesson they had recently experienced. From this point, there was very little direct questioning from the interviewer except to ask for clarification or to encourage the teacher to reflect on how they saw learning or teaching in a specific situation, they had just described. As the teachers were describing their own experiences, there were differences in how these experiences were expressed. Some teachers spontaneously included their reflections regarding the teaching and learning they perceived in conjunction with the tasks, exercises and in-class interaction they described (see Appendix B.2), while others listed the tasks and exercises of a specific lesson in point form and then followed these points with their own reflections regarding the learning and teaching experienced in that situation (see Appendix B.3).

4.3.4 Methodology: Data

Data were collected and analysed using a research approach, “phenomenography,” that is particularly useful in describing the range of conceptions that exist in a specific situation, across a group of people. Phenomenography (widely used in Europe and Australia) is specifically concerned with describing phenomena as others see them and describing the variation in ways of experiencing something within an educational context.
Interviews were transcribed and analysed as a whole, with the intention of identifying the conceptions that existed across the group and the variances in the ways the situation was experienced. Once a set of stable categories was identified, the transcripts were analysed individually and the prominence of each conception within a transcript described. The stability of the categories of description was tested using a rigorous analytical procedure to establish categories and the relationship between categories. A range of five distinct categories of description was delineated, and a pattern of conceptual development that appears to exist in a hierarchical form across the categories emerged.

Once the conceptual categories were formed, the transcripts were then analysed as a whole to identify the types of practices that were described in conjunction with the ICI conception reported. The transcripts were then analysed individually to identify specific situations where teaching, learning, the teachers' role, and objectives of the lesson were described.

4.4 Results: Conceptual Categories

4.4.1 Caveats

In reviewing or using the ICI categories some important caveats must be attended:

- These categories are like broad labels and do not describe the complex ways that individual teachers teach.
- These categories are used to describe the prominence of each conception within a transcript and do not describe individual complexities of the process or propose to put one teacher in a category.
These categories can only be used to describe the relative status of each approach to teaching in any transcript. It is wrong to put any one teacher in any single category (similar caveats reported by Entwistle, 2000).

Five distinct categories of conceptions emerged that described differences in the ways these in-class interactions were perceived and experienced in actual lessons. When surface level conceptions were reported, ICI were described as a “method” by which new information was transferred. In the more developed conceptions, these interactions were described as a “forum” where students could change and build their own conceptions of the subject matter and of individual second language learning. A brief list of the ICI categorical descriptions, starting from less developed to more complex, follows:

- **ICI Teachers’ Method**: In-class interactions are conceived as a method used by the teacher to teach second language learners.
- **ICI Teachers’ and Students’ Method**: In-class interactions are conceived as a method used by the teacher to teach second language and to provide opportunities for the learner to receive feedback from teacher and peers.
- **ICI Teaching Method Provides Opportunities for Group Problem Solving**: In-class interactions are conceived as a means by which students learn experientially by interacting with others.
- **ICI are the Context for Individual Development**: In-class interactions are conceived as a means by which links between what is taught and the students’ outside world are forged.
- **ICI are a Forum**: In-class interactions are conceived as a situation in which learners’ individual conceptions are built upon and changed.

When you examine the developmental sequence of the categories of description above, a pattern of relations between this group of EAP teachers’ conceptions of ICI and teaching practices emerges. In the less developed conception, ICI are viewed only...
as a method; however, the importance of this teaching method increases from being a method used solely by the teacher, to one that is used by both students and teachers, and finally to a method that provides opportunities for the learners themselves to solve problems. In the more highly developed conceptions, ICI cease to be conceived as a method but are described as the context in which individual learning takes place, and finally as a forum where individual conceptions are developed and change. The easiest way of demonstrating the impact that teachers’ conceptions of ICI have on actual teaching practice is to compare how teachers approach ICI in two lessons.

4.4.2 Surface-Level Conception of ICI

Participant: We also did some skimming and scanning work, focusing mainly on scanning. So that was, you know, quite a good activity, they had: questions, to look for answers and scan to find them.

Interviewer: Were they working alone, together?

P: What we did is, I divided them into groups of four. They were scanning for certain information; they were looking for certain words, certain phrases and [would] give certain answers. (Pause) So I put them in groups of four and I said to them, you start scanning and as soon as you've found the first answer, the group runs up to the board and writes down the answer on the board.

I: So each group was doing the same task?

P: They were all doing the same text and they were reading on their own, but it was a race to see who the winning group would be.

The in-class interactions reported in this excerpt are clearly described as a method. In this case students are grouped together for the purpose of motivating the students to competitively race other groups of their peers to see which group finds the answers to predetermined questions the fastest. No explanation of the actual interactions that took place was provided; and in fact later, when the teacher was asked, he/she described the task as an individual learning task. The worksheets used to scan
for information were given to each student, so it was actually the fastest student within each group that raced to the board rather than a group endeavour. The only discourse evident in this specific task was that of the teacher presenting the task to the students. Although it is possible that some sort of solidarity or interpersonal relations between group members were fostered during this task, these factors were not reported.

4.4.3 Deeper-Level Conception of ICI

Participant: Dictograph—it just means having a passage, reading it once at normal speed, they write out key words and then work in groups to reconstruct the meaning—the text, not identical but the same meaning. It’s good because you use a lot of skills so you’ve got listening not to dictation (which is a fairly false situation) but to a person speaking at a normal speed (pause). A bit of note taking, and then they are working in groups. That’s good because they are constructing working together plus they are thinking about sentence structure for one thing, “There’s that word, how do you put it in a sentence—oh that’s not a good word in that sentence,” and all that.

In this excerpt the initial task is an individual listening exercise; however, in-class interactions are viewed not only as a method in which opportunities for group problem solving are provided (“they are working in groups”). Also the relationship between the interactions within the group and the learning processes that took place is described (“they are constructing … thinking about sentence structure”). At the end an example of the actual type of in-class interaction that took place within the situation is also reported.

4.5 Relations Between Teacher’s Beliefs And Practices

In developing these categories, terms describing Surface or Deep approaches to teaching and learning were adopted from two well-known categorical frameworks
"Learners of Social Science" (Marton et al., 1993) and "Academics' Conceptions of Science Learning and Teaching" (Prosser et al., 1994; see Table 4.5.1 for a summary of both). The results from the ICI study show patterns similar to the conceptual ranges reported in Marton’s and Prosser’s phenomenographic studies in the maths and sciences. The conceptions identified on the ICI study range from limited to more complete conceptual understandings of the relations between ICI and L2 teaching and learning.

Table 4.5.1  Surface and Deep Approaches to Learning and Teaching: Two Phenomenographic Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learners of Social Science, Open University</th>
<th>Academics' Conceptions of Science Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners' Conceptions of Learning</td>
<td>Teachers' Conceptions of Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning as increasing one's knowledge</td>
<td>1. Teacher-focused, teaching activity with the intention of transferring information to student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Learning as memorizing, reproducing</td>
<td>2. Teacher-focused, student activity with the intention of transferring information to student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Learning as applying</td>
<td>3. Teacher-focused, student activity with the intention of students acquiring concepts of discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Learning as understanding</td>
<td>4. Student-focused, student activity with the intention of developing their own conceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Learning as seeing something in a different way</td>
<td>5. Student-focused, student activity with the intention of changing their conceptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Marton, Dall'Alba & Beaty (1993) and Prosser, Trigwell & Taylor (1994)

Similar to the findings of learning and teaching described in the preceding tables and in previous phenomenographic studies in other areas, the types of teaching practices reported by the L2 teachers correspond with conceptual development of ICI described. Descriptions of more highly developed conceptions of ICI also report teaching practices generally believed to support learners’ deeper approaches to
learning. The following graphic illustrations (4.5 A–E) portray how these EAP teachers' conceptions of ICI were described across the group in specific classroom situations. The illustrations depict experiences reported by teachers; these are categorically grouped by the ICI conception most prominent within individual transcripts, with the movement of the in-class interactions demonstrated.

Illustration 4.5 A. Teachers' method.
Illustration 4.5 B. Teachers and students.
Illustration 4.5 C. Teaching method provides opportunities for group problem solving.

In the first three conceptual categories the primary focus of the lesson is to teach "Academic skills." In all three categories ICI are conceived as a teaching method; nevertheless, there are slight differences in how these teaching methods are applied. In the Teachers' Method category the method is used by the teacher, in the Teachers' and Students' Method category the method is used by the teacher and students, and in the
Problem Solving category the method is used by the teacher and students to provide opportunities for problem solving. In all three illustrations ICI are initiated and managed by the teacher; however, in the first two the movement of the interactions are one-directional, with the majority of interactions initiated in question form by the teacher and the learning assessed by the form of responses received from the students. In contrast, in 4.5 C more opportunities for interactions amongst the students are available and the separate circular interactions among students and between students and teacher are described as “necessary for the students to learn experientially.” There are also explicit descriptions of a separate type of interaction, with the teacher and students providing feedback on individual language errors apart from the academic skill presented during this circular interactional process.

In 4.5 A, 4.5 B & 4.5 C the primary purpose of ICI is to provide new information on academic skills. In all three categorical descriptions ICI are reported as providing a secondary benefit of practice in the target language, as “talk” is viewed as one of four skill areas of language learning. In 4.5 C the ICI are viewed as closely related to the learning of academic skills, as students are reported to learn experientially together through interacting with each other. Learning is reported as occurring when students interact and solve problems together, and the quality of learning is assessed when students either in pairs, as a group, or individually are able to reproduce the academic skills presented in a specific structure (that is, the written structure of an argumentative essay or literature review, an oral presentation, and so on).

Illustration 4.5 D. Context for individual contextual development.
Illustration 4.5 E. Forum where individual conceptions are built upon and changed.

Illustration 4.5 D. Category: Context for Individual Conceptual Development

Illustration 4.5 E. Forum Where Individual Conceptions are built upon and changed

Illustrations 4.5 D (Context category) and 4.5 E (Forum category) differ from the previous illustrations in that ICI are not conceived as a teaching method; rather, the primary focus of the lesson is on teaching "concepts" of academic structures, not academic skills; and interaction is initiated more frequently by students Notably the "forum" category differs from the other four categories as the majority of learning is reported by the teachers to occur through students' interactions outside the classroom.
In Illustration 4.5 D, ICI are described as the context of learning (with learning described as, “individuals develop their own concepts”). Through discussions as a class or group (with teachers and peers) the students clarify links between what is learned and the students’ outside world. In Illustration 4.5 E, ICI are described as a “forum” for classroom discourse, where individual students and teachers build and change their own conceptions, and learning is described as the ability of individuals to communicate meaning and apply their concepts in their own world. One noteworthy difference between the final two categories is that although learning in both is described in terms of conceptions, in 4.5 D the secondary benefit of ICI is described as “conceptions of language skills.” Viewing talk, as a skill is similar to the “talk as practice” reported in previous categories, whereas in 4.5 E, development of academic and non-academic language structures is reported to occur simultaneously.

There are differences in how ICI flows within a lesson; in both ICI conceptual categories described in Illustration 4.5 D and 4.5 E, classroom discourse is initiated by teachers and students, and the majority of interaction takes place in group discussions; therefore the interactions flow in a circular fashion. In Illustration 4.5 C, however, assessment of learning is not based on a direct response to an inquiry posed by the teacher, as it was in the first three categories. There is also a difference in the type of interactions on which classroom discourse is based. For example, in the first three categories ICI is based on academic skills presented by the teacher; but in the “Context” category, information on academic structures is supplemented by individual students’ outside experiences; and in the “Forum” category, discussion is centred as much as possible on students’ outside experiences, with the focus of discussion being on how to apply these new structures in the students’ own situation.
Across the group of five ICI conceptual categories depicted in the illustrations there are clear differences in how teachers described conceptions of ICI, conceptions of learning and teaching, the role of teacher and students in classroom practices, and how ICI are reported to be managed in the classroom context. J. K. Hall and Verpletse (2000) support these descriptions of classroom experiences: "They [the teachers] mediate both the quantity and quality of opportunities that the students will have to participate in and learn from these activities. In doing so they make visible their own attitudes towards the activities and the students' involvement in them. This in turn, shapes the degree of individual learning that will occur" (p. 10).

4.6 Relational Links, Conceptions, and Roles in ICI

Relational links between conceptual development and differences in the ways EAP teachers perceive ICI apply to the following:

- Their experience of learning in a specific situation.
- Their experience of teaching in a specific situation.
- How they experience their role as teacher in a specific situation.
- What the teacher was trying to teach (the "object of study") in a specific situation.

Through analysing the group as a whole, the differences in the basic elements of a typical lesson (what was learned, taught, what was the teacher's role and what was the subject of the lesson) appeared very much to correlate with the conception of ICI reported within that specific situation. The data collected in this study was in a naturalistic form, so the elements mentioned above were sometimes discussed in a single excerpt, or more frequently within distant parts of the whole description.
provided. To look at these elements specifically it is necessary to study them in the situations experienced.

### 4.6.1 Surface-Level Conception of ICI: Teaching/Learning Role

[What] I did recently was to help them with their summary writing test they were having last week. We [listened to] a tape of a lecture on corporate culture; I was taking notes and then while they wrote their summary, I wrote a summary. And instead of actually marking their summary I actually gave them a copy of my summary as a guideline for them to look at theirs, and for them to get an idea of what we do and don't put in a summary.

In this excerpt the teacher has planned a lesson with the objective of assisting the students to prepare for a writing task. The lesson begins with a listening exercise and the students are asked to summarise a taped lecture. Learning in this situation is viewed by the teacher as increasing the learners’ knowledge of “what we do and don’t put in a summary,” and the goal of the exercise is to assist the students to reproduce this knowledge in their own written summaries on a future exam. These conceptions of learning are described as surface approaches to learning both in the field of L2 learning and in other areas (Table 4.5.1). After describing the lesson the teacher was encouraged to reflect on the actual learning that occurred during the lesson.

Okay. I thought that was a really good class; I was really happy with that. (Pause) Why? Because I felt like I was actually showing the students and they were learning. I mean I’ve been told that getting them involved and active learning (pause) and in groups is the way it’s done. So that’s what I try and encourage in my class.

Here teaching is described as “showing the students” what the students were perceived to be learning through: completing the tasks initiated by the teacher. The type of task described here is what Prosser describes “as a teacher focused student activity” and is generally considered to be a teaching approach that supports surface-level learning (Prosser et al., 1994). The role of the teacher is implicitly that of an informer.
This lesson doesn’t include much oral discourse other than instructions given to the students from the teacher. In this situation the students were initially seated individually and then grouped together to compare their individual work with the model provided by the teacher. The reasons behind the grouping are not given, and descriptions of the interactions that took place within the groups were not reported as factors in the learning process. However, the teacher refers to a personal experience of being told that active learning in groups is beneficial to learning, which suggests that the interactions that occur in these groups are considered to be part of a frequently employed method believed to be beneficial to learning. Overall the elements of the lesson described mirror those depicted in Illustration 4.5 C.

4.6.2 Deep-Level Conception of ICI: Teaching/Learning Roles

I tend to do a lot of work even on pronunciation at this level. Just talking about contractions and things that happen in language so they are aware of what’s actually being said. ... So occasionally, I might put up a phrase and just say you’ve got to work harder at this one. But often they are really trying desperately saying, “Remember when (name of student) said this or when we were talking about that and we used this phrase?” We talked about Thailand so they were recalling the whole situation. They might be talking about the coup so they'll be trying to build the situation up. That's kind of wonderful if you can actually hear that, that's actually happening because (pause) I mean it's so much more meaningful for them if they are trying to recall the situation where they used that word.

In contrast to the previous excerpts, this lesson appears to be based on language that emerges during in-class discourse. The teacher describes specific language elements, and skills that were highlighted during the lesson—pronunciation, contractions, phrases, vocabulary—but the focus on language elements appears to be a secondary aim. The primary teaching focus described was one of developing the learners' understandings “so they are aware of what is actually being said.” The type of
learning described here is what Marton terms “Learning as understanding” (Marton et al., 1993) and is considered a deeper approach to learning (see Table 4.5.1). Interestingly, the teacher also describes in-class interactions as being more beneficial to learners when they are able to recall past experiences and build on their individual conceptions of language.

The goal I guess always for me is to try to see that my students are able to go away and know something and be able to say and talk about something. That I hope is relevant to them and their being in the world. Therefore, I was focusing a little bit on their countries and about them being able to say, you can apply what we've talked about. [The teacher described a specific interaction where a student discussed politics in his country with the class and links the usefulness of what was said to the other students). You can talk about your country in those terms in similar words. You can talk about the economic situation in your country, what it is like or whatever. I want to be able to give them some ability to talk about their world, their place, and to be able to say something that makes some kind of sense or has relevance.

In this excerpt the teacher talks about initiating the topic of countries with the goal that that they will be able to apply the concepts learned in class to their own outside world. The role of the teacher is clearly implied as the links between ICI and the students’ outside world are clarified and explicitly stated (“You can talk about your country in those terms in similar words. You can talk about the economic situation in your country.”). After describing the lesson the teacher was encouraged to reflect on the actual learning that occurred during the lesson.

Just say that I can show them elements of text and writing or ways of saying things. So you've got options, choices like, “This works as a relative clause here,” or, rather than, “the Prime Minister who was supported by an army,” just say, “the Prime Minister supported by the army.” So we're getting the story out but also probably helping them with the text analysis as well. I find that a lot of teaching happens that way. That when it comes up ... actually trying to put it up and then guiding, helping them, to decide maybe what is the best way of saying something.
In this last excerpt the teacher describes teaching as a process of noticing and clarifying concepts that occur naturally in classroom discourse, but it also means supporting students to reflect and analyse texts themselves when developing their own conceptions of the topics and language. The activities of teaching and learning described in this situation closely align with those depicted in Illustration 4.5 D.

4.6.3 The Relations Between ICI and the Subject Focus of Lessons (Object of Study), Across the Range of Categorical Descriptions

One of the clearest examples illustrating teachers’ conceptions of ICI concerned the teachers’ awareness of how classroom discourse related to what it was they wanted to teach in that specific lesson, the subject. Here I’ve used the phenomenographic term object of study, as the idea that something is learned through how it is perceived in a specific instance fits in well with the supposition that teachers’ beliefs affect not only how they approach teaching but also impact the opportunities for learning made available to the student, at least within a classroom setting. In this segment the objects of study described in lessons across the group of 28 teachers as a whole are summarised and then illustrated with excerpts.

1. In both categories ICI Teachers’ Method and ICI Teachers’ and Students’ Method, in-class interactions, in those specific lessons, were perceived as peripherally related to the object of study in that they were considered as the means by which the information was transferred. ICI themselves were considered to be separate from the subject taught/learned in the lesson.

Excerpt 1: I broke them up in groups each to summarise a different part of the text. The reason I did it this way this time is I wanted them to look at the
differences between what they had done and what I had done and try and find the differences themselves.

2. As in the less developed first and second categories above, in the third category *ICI Teaching Method Provides Opportunities for Group Problem Solving*, in-class interactions in those specific lessons were perceived as separate from the object of study (academic structures). However, these interactions were viewed as a teaching method that supported learning processes in general. In practice the teacher presented information and provided materials for the students to work through together as tasks done in pairs or groups. Grouping and pairing were seen to be particularly beneficial, as through this process a group-centred concept would be clarified and then individually applied.

*Excerpt 2:* Well, I think it's because the students are given sort of a framework for them to be talking. In this case they were given a list of pointers and I got them to go into groups together and choose the best arguments. ... So that they are sort of forced to interact with other class members and that's good generally.

3. In the category *ICI are the Context for Individual Development*, ICI, in those specific lessons, were conceived as directly related to the object of study (students develop their own concepts of language skill development and academic structure). ICI could be described as the context in which in-class learning is perceived to occur.

*Excerpt 3:* (Reflection on learning through ICI in a group activity) It's a problem solving exercise. We've been discussing a certain text. ... I'll give another text of the same type ... ask people to evaluate it in terms of the criteria, which we've just been discussing on the previous text. ... They are working in groups ... and what they are doing is they are practicing the kind of seminar discussion skills that they'll have to be using. I think learning by ... doing something yourself, interacting personally with a text and discussing with other people, sort of with students that might have a very different point of view to you ... I think that's really when accelerated learning takes place. I think it's
faster and more direct than the kind of standard teaching droning away at the
front of the classroom.

4. In the category *ICI are a Forum*, in-class interactions, in those specific lessons, were
conceived to be the object of study. In-class discussion was perceived as a forum
where individual conceptions are built upon and changed. Students' outside
experiences were used as a basis for in-class discussion, and the lesson focus was
on improving and communicating meaning within academic and non-academic
structures.

*Excerpt 4:* I don't think it's always enough that communication is taking place.
But I think it's wonderful when communication is taking place when people are
also searching and hunting for words, which they then use with each other. ... I
see teaching a lot as happening in that way, sort of guiding or helping them to
see ... express meaning here and out there with others.

[Re. ICI and learning] It's the excitement of actually learning and finding out
things. English is the means ... but it's not just for English, it's for yourself as
well. You've got to know who you are where you come from and what you are
doing.

4.7 Hierarchical Patterning

The L2 classroom is frequently described as highly individual and unique
because the external and internal factors that influence the learning environment are
often in a state of flux. Thus, it would be accurate to assume that the teachers’
conceptions of the learning and teaching that occurs in their individual classrooms
would be numerous and somewhat context-specific. This investigation, however, has
sought to develop an understanding of the variances in ways that a particular factor in
L2 language teaching and learning is perceived and practiced. The ways of
experiencing these ICI in this situation are limited in number and are not ontogenetic or
disconnected from the rest of the group but in fact related in a hierarchical form. A
patterned relationship across the range as a whole was evident in a number of ways three such patterns are iterated in this section—in terms of L1 use, rapport and learners’ outside experiences.

4.7.1 L1 Use

One pattern elucidated in the transcripts deals with students’ use of their first language (L1) in these ICI; all teachers reported a belief that L1 use in class should be limited. In the less developed conceptions L1 use was viewed as negative and generally discouraged in class, whereas those teachers who reported more highly developed conceptions described L1 use as supportive of the learning process when used to explain ideas, concepts or clarify meaning to peers, and were more inclined to allow and encourage L1 use in those instances.

4.7.2 Building Rapport

A similar hierarchical pattern was revealed when all the teachers described the social nature of ICI as “building rapport.” In the less developed conceptions this was limited to the rapport between the teachers and students in the classroom, whereas in the more highly developed conceptions rapport was associated with the teaching-learning environment and extended to include social relationships. A comparison of the learning that is seen to occur through interaction in actual lessons evidences that although rapport is a focus of both situations, the ICI are viewed very differently.

4.7.2.1 Surface-level conception of ICI in a lesson: rapport.

We had done some discussion on Monday about umm multinational companies and globalisation, so on Tuesday ... we started a further thing of
discussion, just a mini-discussion for the students to get to know each other a bit more, especially with the newer students.

4.7.2.2 Deeper-level conception of ICI in a lesson: rapport.

I don't think it's always enough that communication is taking place. But I think it's wonderful when communication is taking place when people are also searching and hunting for words, which then they use with each other. Like when I'm saying, well sometimes we're on the edge of something and a student comes up and says, "On the brink?" I think wow where did you get that from and he says, "I don't know it just happened." Then I say well here's another one—you could say it's "on the verge of something" and someone says, "Yah, on the side of the road"—they knew the word verge as well; so when I feel as if my students are talking with me, I feel their learning is actually taking place.

The idea of rapport building is evidenced in both excerpts above, but in the less developed conceptions rapport is seen as a quick exercise to boost rapport. In the more developed level conception learning is viewed as directly related to the actual interaction that takes place; however, the interaction between the teacher and the student and the involvement of another student in the discourse clearly indicates that a level of rapport has been established.

4.7.3 Learners' Outside Experiences

Another pattern that emerged was in a general conception held by the group that when learners were able to associate past experiences with a topic discussed in class, or to relate something learned in the classroom to a real need, this increased motivation and was generally considered beneficial to the overall language learning process. With the more surface-level conceptions of in-class interactions, this was not planned and
generally considered a bonus, whereas in the more developed conceptions these types of links were often expected and encouraged.

4.7.3.1 Surface-level conception of ICI: learners' outside experiences.

Participant: The text [the teacher describes choice of topic selected in a lesson] ... I think it's important that it's just something that is good for the students to know about. I mean if they don't have any personal experience of the topic than that's good.

Here the teacher describes the importance of providing new information to the students as a focus of the lesson. However, in this situation a student unexpectedly associated a personal outside experience. The teacher, at first surprised, later found the inclusion of the learner's outside experience beneficial to the classroom learning.

P: There was one girl who had personal experience of a multinational and so then that was different you know because ...

Interviewer: She had strong feelings?

P: Yah and some people have strong feelings about it but others don't so I think that creates a bit of a forum for them to talk.

4.7.3.2 More developed conception of ICI: learners' outside experiences.

Participant: I asked them what they thought "takeovers" and "mergers" were and we discussed the disadvantages of both.

Interviewer: Was this sort of a presentation of what vocabulary to expect?

P: Exactly! But then you have to prepare them for an argumentative essay and it's rather topical and they have to write about it. So they have to discuss if the culture of the company is affected by the acquisition and all so they need the vocabulary.

I: So they pretty much got the concept and this is the first time you've introduced it? P: Yes, but these students have for a time, have worked in jobs related to or had a relationship to or were related to finance. So they know.

I: So the business concepts are not new to them?

P: No, exactly! They can associate their own experiences.
In the situation described in the preceding excerpt the teacher is focusing on building learners’ conceptions of specific academic structures, but the background of the students is considered during the lesson planning process, and it is expected that the students will have some shared experience with the topic that will benefit the learning process. This differs from the deep-level conception described in the following excerpt, as in this situation the teacher not only expects the students to share outside experiences, but designs tasks that encourage the students to share these experiences with the rest of the class.

### 4.7.3.3 Deep-level conception of ICI: learners’ outside experiences.

P. This morning I was doing an education thing and gave them a grid. They come from 5 different countries, which is nice and [I] just gave them clues across two words on the side. First they had to write down questions, so we had to have some accurate questions, then they had to interview the other students and ask the follow-up questions in each one. So there was a focus, a theme; we’re using vocabulary we’ve practiced the last few days. So I suppose that’s what I set up structured to free ... but hopefully if we suddenly talk about what countries they are from and [are] looking at the map, talking about history, revolutions, economy—you grab anything they come up with, listening to their input.

1. Why do you think that is better ... unstructured?

P. Because it gives them what they need for their life, it’s what they need for out of class and it gives them a safe situation, environment to practice it, and there is a chance for students’ to help each other. They correct each other and the teacher can go around whatever. I think particularly with this group most of them have studied a lot so it gives them a chance to use the language they’ve got.

In the situation outlined in this final excerpt the teacher describes the link between the topic of countries and the practical situations where the students can apply knowledge assessed in class (academic skill-interviewing) to their outside world. The
teacher also talks about the benefit of students building their own conceptions of language in the safe environment of the classroom. The teacher describes these outside experiences as necessary.

4.7 Summary

At the beginning of the study reported in this chapter, two specific questions were posed: 1) What are L2 teachers’ conceptions of ICI, and 2) what, if any, is the relationship between their conceptions of ICI and their descriptions of actual teaching practices? The results of the study show that across the group of 28 EAP teachers investigated, five very distinct conceptions of ICI were evidenced. Classroom experiences reported by participants, across the range of ICI identified, strongly indicate patterns, which suggest that relations between teaching practices and teachers’ conceptions of ICI exist. In addition, the hierarchical format of these patterns suggests that teaching practices described may actually be altered or impacted by the level of ICI conceptual development reported within a specific situation. Following is a summary of the categorical descriptions and practices, which emerged across the group as a whole and were illustrated through individual excerpts within the chapter.

ICI Teachers’ Method. In-class interactions are perceived as a teaching method utilised by the teacher. ICI are used to transfer information. Learning is viewed as increasing one’s knowledge. The teachers’ role is that of an informer. Understanding is answering specific questions (either individually, in pairs, groups or as a class as a whole) provided by the teacher based on text material or course goals.

ICI Teachers’ and Students’ Method. In-class interactions are perceived as a teaching method utilised by the teacher and the students themselves. ICI are used to transfer information. The teachers’ role is that of an informer. Learning is memorising and
reproducing structures provided by teacher. ICI in groups or pairs provide opportunities for feedback from teacher and peers on individual errors and support the learning process.

ICI Teaching Method Provides Opportunities for Group Problem Solving. In-class interactions are perceived as a teaching method that provides opportunities for group problem solving. The teachers' role is viewed as that of a provider of information and an expert in a joint learning process. Students through working together will develop and clarify a group concept. Teachers provide materials and students are believed to learn experientially through interacting with others. Learning is acquiring the academic concept presented.

ICI are the Context for Individual Development. In-class interactions with others are perceived as the context in which students develop their own concepts of language skill development and academic structures. The teachers' role is to clarify the links between what is learned and the students' real life situation. Learning is viewed as "understanding" and is believed to occur through social interaction with others. Understanding or learning is reported to have occurred when individuals begin to put the pieces together and develop their own conceptions. Both teachers and students initiate topics for in-class discussions.

ICI are a Forum. In-class interactions with others are perceived as a forum where individual conceptions are built upon and changed. The majority of learning is seen to occur outside of class. The teachers' role is to assist students in communicating meaning by looking at ways these conceptions can be applied in academic and non-academic structures. In-class discussion focuses on learning processes. It is believed that by building life skills academic skills will follow.

The social and communicative nature of language distinguishes it in many ways from the teaching and learning of other subjects. The teaching and learning of a second language in particular involves developing cultural knowledge and understanding of the target language community. The diversity of students' backgrounds, along with variations in L1 and academic content within an EAP context, add to the complexity of
these experiences. The framework of categorical descriptions presented in this paper does not describe these complexities. It describes the variations in ways that these L2 teachers perceive the relationship of ICI to the teaching and learning of EAP, and their own role in the process, in a way that is easily accessible to both educators and researchers.

The categories of description add to the existent body of L2 research on teachers' conceptions in that they illustrate consistent reports between what teachers believe and do that parallel previous reports of Surface and Deep approaches to teaching reported in other areas. Consistencies between conceptual development and practice are indicated in how the social natures of the ICI were experienced in actual lessons and reported on by the teachers. Cohesion within categories is evidenced by the fact that teachers reporting similar levels of ICI conceptual development also report similar teaching practices. These consistencies of description in the categories are important findings, as they infer a relationship between the teachers' conceptual development of ICI and the specific teaching practices reported. Two of the teaching practices described are particularly noteworthy, as they are considered very important factors in second language learning. These are 1) the use of learners' first language in the classroom and 2) the development of learners' self-regulation skills through in-class discussion of learners' outside experiences.

Significantly, the stability of the categorical framework is supported through the clear variances that exist between categories as well as the consistencies within categories mentioned above. An example of one such variance between categories is apparent when we examine the different ways in which the teachers reported how they experienced the object of the study or the subject of the lesson discussed. The experiences reported not only differed, they also appear to follow a hierarchical pattern,
with ICI reported as being peripheral to, related to, and finally the object of study itself. Similar variances between categories of description can be evidenced in the ways the teachers describe how they experienced 1) the processes of teaching, 2) the process of learning and 3) their own roles within those processes in specific lessons.

The findings from the study presented show some interesting patterns between this group of EAP teachers' conceptions of ICI, how they conceive of learning and teaching, and the actual classroom practices they adopt. Research into teachers' conceptions of in-class interactions can assist teachers and educators in discovering ways to enhance the teaching-learning environment in the classroom; it can also assist in the development of teacher training programs. Future research should look into expanding and refining this conceptual framework across larger groups of teachers and developing similar conceptual frameworks in related areas. Developing an understanding of how teachers' collective conceptions may relate to actual teaching-learning practices is an important area of discovery for all educators.