Teacher Autonomy in College English Classrooms in China: Teachers' Attitudes and Practices

By

Lina Qian (钱莉娜)

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences,
Macquarie University, Australia

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Declaration

I, Lina Qian, declare that the research presented in this dissertation is my original work and it has not been submitted for a higher degree in any other university or institution. In addition, I certify that all usage of information sources and literatures has been duly referenced in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was conducted with the approval of the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee, granted 7th July 2015 (reference number 5201500496).

Some of the contents in this dissertation have already been submitted for a chapter in a book *The Teacher Motivation, Autonomy, Development in the Far East*.

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I drafted the book chapter and my supervisors assisted with editing.

Signature:

Lina Qian (student ID: 43643264)

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Abstract

Autonomy is widely acknowledged as a necessary capability of the language learner and a prominent goal for successful language teaching (Benson, 2011; Holec, 1981; Lee, 1998; Little, 1999; Smith, 2008). Little (1995) claims explicitly that learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy. Benson and Huang (2008) also observe that research on autonomy is in a transition from a focus on foreign language learning to foreign language teaching. However, most previous studies on teacher autonomy were from a theoretical perspective, so they lacked empirical evidence from practice in language classrooms. In China, College English is a compulsory course in most of the public universities, and its teaching is under strict control of accountability and national policy. This context provides an excellent lens to observe how teacher autonomy functions in such classrooms. Therefore, this study took a Chinese public university as a case to investigate teacher autonomy in College English classrooms. The case study focused on the following four research questions:

1) What are Chinese College English teachers' attitudes toward learner and teacher autonomy in their work?
2) What are CE teachers' practices in their classrooms?
3) Do their teaching practices align with their attitudes toward autonomy?
4) What does teacher autonomy mean in the context of CE teaching in China?

To address these research questions, semi-structured interviews were utilised to understand teachers' attitudes toward autonomy. In addition, classroom observation was conducted to investigate participants' teaching practices, and stimulated recall protocols were adopted to interpret teachers' understanding of their practice. Fourteen College English teachers in the case university participated in this two-month study. Interviews, selected video clips of classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews were transcribed and analysed qualitatively. As a result, three themes emerged: context of teaching, teachers' attitudes toward autonomy, and their classroom practices.

Three main findings were as follows. Firstly, the fourteen participants could be categorized into three groups based on their varied attitudes toward teacher and learner autonomy in their work. They were the less autonomous group, moderately autonomous group, and more autonomous group. Second, the comparisons of classroom observation and semi-structured interviews revealed that participants' teaching practices were consistent with their attitudes

toward autonomy. Thirdly, a learner-centred pedagogy with improvisational teaching practices and rich learner-supportive interactions was the main demonstration of teacher autonomy in language classrooms in which the institutional, instructional, and physical contexts were not so autonomy-friendly.

In conclusion, the findings contribute empirical evidence to supporting the theory of teacher autonomy. In addition, the findings also suggest that the more autonomous teachers should be role models for other teachers to pursue a more flexible and positive attitude toward autonomy, a more improvisational teaching method for learner-supportive purposes, and a more learner-centred pedagogy in EFL education even under contextual constraints. Finally, the study calls for more systematic and individualized professional education or development programs for EFL teachers in China to promote their autonomy.

(Words 475)

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Transcription Conventions

R	Researcher
S/S1.2.3	Individual students
Ss	Collective students
T	Teacher
,	Clause final intonation
.	Sentence final intonation
‘’	Quotation
…	Longer pause
(something)	Researcher explanation
(…)	Researcher omission
[S1.2.3]	Anonymous student’s name used by teachers in interactions
_____	English translated from Chinese in original

List of Abbreviations

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CE	College English
CECR	College English Curriculum Requirements
CET4/6	College English Test band 4/6
CMoE	China Ministry of Education
EEHE	Entrance Examination of Higher Education
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
ET	English Test (class)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MA	Master of Arts
NST	Native Speaker Teacher
NNST	Non-Native Speaker Teacher
RQ	Research Question
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SRI	Stimulated Recall Interview
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Chapter 1

Introduction

China is home to the largest number of English language learners in the world, yet the way China currently undertakes English teaching is long and widely regarded in a negative way both by people in China and abroad (Hu, 2008; Rao, 2013). With the development of higher education in China, College English (CE) is a compulsory course for almost all non-English university students (Du, 2012). In recent years, CE teaching has changed significantly and is achieving progress. However, despite significant reforms, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching outcomes have not progressed satisfactorily, even though teachers work hard to meet all School requirements. It seems that a major problem is poor quality CE teachers (Du, 2012). Little (1995) argues that "genuinely successful teachers have always been autonomous in the sense of responsibility, reflection and control of teaching process, and exploiting the freedom for their teaching" (p. 179).

The description of "genuinely successful teachers" is an idealistic one. The fact remains that today's Chinese CE classroom teachers are far from ideal. In consideration of insufficient teacher training resources, limited investment and attention to teacher development courses, unsystematic school-based teacher education programs, and a significant number of CE teachers (Wang & Wang, 2011), teacher autonomy emerges an ideal goal and concept to improve the quality of Chinese CE teachers. Facing internal and external motivating factors, the concept of teacher autonomy is embraced and heatedly discussed by teachers and researchers as a panacea to the problem.

1.1 Motivations

There are two main motivations for me to conduct this study. One is personal, the other is external. Firstly, my motivation for this research comes partly from my personal experience. From my middle-school years up until now, English has been with me as an inseparable part of my life education because it was a critical part in all the entrance exams I sat as a student. I was not a talented and motivated English learner, but I fortunately had several nice and inspiring English teachers. Whenever I reflect upon my English learning experience (from a reactive English learner to a proactive one), my teachers' words, acts, encouragements, tolerance and responsible attitude, etc., come to mind. These teachers not only taught me ABC and linguistic knowledge, they also instilled in me a positive attitude towards independent and life-long learning. Little (1991) notes that autonomy is "likely to be hard-won and its permanence cannot be guaranteed" (p. 4). Regarding this observation, I am a successful 'product' of learner autonomy development as evidenced in my decision to pursue further study through my PhD research. Therefore, I think it is my responsibility to go on to learn the English language, culture in English speaking countries, and English language teaching methods.

My story as an English learner is not a happy one. I started EFL learning during middle school and suffered a lot with the subject. Reading (loudly and repeatedly) and recitation were the main themes in our English class at that time. Twenty-six alphabetical symbols, 48 phonetic symbols, grammar and greetings were learnt by rote, and listening to English recordings was rare. At that time, I did not understand the reason for learning English except for examination purposes, so with such internal resistance I was a bad English language learner beginner.

When I came to understand the significance of the subject for exams and for my own future, I was forced to spend a lot of time remembering new words and doing extra English exercises. Three years later, I became a top student in English (judged from exam marks) and after another

three years, I passed the national Entrance Examination to Higher Education (EEHE) smoothly in 1999. This was a high-stakes standardised and destination-decisive test in my life.

Though it was not my first choice to be an English major student, I studied hard to get good results in my exams. Unfortunately, those four years of English language learning as a scientific English major student did not guarantee me excellent communicative competence. It perhaps is not a big problem when there is no need to use English daily or the possibility to use it in the future.

English is also a tool to support my life, and a label for me in society, because I use it in daily work as a CE teacher. In later life, through 10 years of work experience as a CE teacher, my curiosity about autonomy has intensified. I would like my students to be successful English learners and I would also like myself to be a successful English teacher. I want to develop my job into a career, transforming myself from an enthusiastic teacher into a reflective and professional one. Because I know learner autonomy helps students to be successful learners, I assume teacher autonomy helps teachers—such as myself—to be successful teachers. I began to research teacher autonomy, and to explore its dimensions and constraints to liberate greater potential for its development in my teaching practices.

After graduating with honours, I stayed at the university to teach non-English major students. Many things contributed to the next ten years or so of personal experience working as a CE teacher, during which time I completed a Master's degree in Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. However, to be an EFL teacher is quite different from being an EFL learner. Though I had a passion to be a teacher, I still self-reproached for my non-proficient oral expression and lack of methods to motivate my students learning English. I felt deficient in my teaching methods, but nevertheless, I remained positive and still felt lucky for two reasons.

Firstly, I found it was advantageous to be a female teacher. My communication skills with students and colleagues, and my friendly attitude toward students, won me respect among students. I always encouraged students by drawing on my own English learning experience and this enabled us to develop a close teacher-student relationship. What is more, one student once told me that they loved my class because I was the only teacher who smiled at them. Secondly, I should give thanks for the many modern technologies which have changed the way learning English is undertaken in modern societies in general and the English classroom more specifically. Audio, visual, internet resources, and PowerPoint presentations are now frequently used in and outside of English classrooms in great amount, saving a great deal of class time that was once spent on writing every word on the blackboard. Such technologies have also made English classes some of the most interesting and colourful lessons to attend. In recent years, a self-access learning centre has been built in our School, though it is not completely self-access or as free as one might wish, and not yet developed enough in terms of management and connection with classroom activities. There are suddenly so many new things and technologies that we should learn to use as CE teachers to keep up with the times. At the right time, learner autonomy and teacher autonomy entered our research, career and way of living. All these intrinsic and extrinsic influences motivated me to research learner autonomy and teacher autonomy.

The new understanding of EFL teaching in China in recent years is the other motivation for me to conduct a study of learner autonomy and teacher autonomy in this field. In the summer of July 2014, a set of EEHE policy changes were released. These policy changes stated that from 2015, English would account for a lower percentage of the overall exam score, whereas the weighting and marks on Chinese would increase. The frequency of the English test would also increase to twice a year. These policy changes led to many fundamental changes in the context of EFL teaching. A sense of crisis came over CE teachers, and most were encouraged to

develop and promote their professional qualification. To answer the call, I made it my goal to conduct a PhD project on teacher autonomy.

Before I took the first step on my journey to pursue my PhD education in Australia, a small scenario impressed me deeply. It was a dialogue between two of my colleagues:

> Teacher A: I heard that our School will conduct another round of College English reform. Do you know anything about it?
>
> Teacher B: Who cares, they reform their system, and I teach my classes in my way. Anyway, they have never counted me in or reformed my way of teaching in the former reforms.

The teachers' dialogue aroused my curiosity. I could not help thinking about why my colleagues' attitudes toward CE reform differed from each other, why so many top-down reforms could not translate into reforms in CE classrooms, and whether it was reasonable to expect course teachers to be successful reform agents just by declaring the superior's reform decisions at a staff meeting through an official file. With all these questions, I started my PhD journey.

1.2 Background

In China, CE is a compulsory course for almost all first- and second-year college students who are non-English majors. Since China opened its doors to the world in 1978, English has become a must for all college students for political and economic reasons, and CE Test Band 4 and 6 (CET4&6) became the nation-wide standard test (Sun & Henrichsen, 2011). Since the implementation of China's reform policies in 1978, both political and practical factors have boosted CE education in China. As Adamson (2004) observes, "English is desirable because it is the language of trade partners, investors, advisers, tourists and technical experts, and these

economic imperatives have been enhanced by China's enter into the World Trade Organization and the awarding of the Olympic Games to Beijing in 2008" (Adamson, 2004, p. 3). In other words, the country needed English—as an international language—to communicate with the world, so every student was required to learn it to meet the course requirements, regardless of individual preferences. Since that time, passing the exam has become a necessity in order to get an undergraduate degree at most universities. This course and its tests are so influential that its every aspect is the subject of heated discussion.

CE is so important to China that the China Ministry of Education (CMoE) directly and frequently issues guidelines on how to implement the course, College English Curriculum Requirements (CECR). In this guideline document, a systematic and detailed structure for an official way to teach the course is scaffolded. As part of the nation's political and economic agendas described above, the CMoE issued the CE Syllabus for arts and science college students, respectively in 1985, and soon after that (around 1987), the national CET4&6 became a reality for all non-English major college students (Chen & Zhang, 1998; Liao, 1996).

According to the latest version of this guideline document, CECR (2007):

> The objective of College English is to develop students' ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of China's social development and international exchanges. (CMoE, 2007, p. 1)

This means CE is different from other English courses in its objectives, knowledge base, teaching contents, and test requirements. The knowledge in CE is for basic and social use in an all-round way, not for specific purposes. This objective decides that a CE teacher has to teach

and improve students' ability in five aspects: listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. In this regard, it seems that CE for non-English majors has a lower profile than English for English major students.

However, CE has a higher profile, regarding its huge number of learners and the profound impact of its test results on the students' first degree, future education and employment opportunities. Generally, the test for CE allows all non-English-major university students to attend, twice every year (Zheng & Cheng, 2008). CET4 requires test-takers to master a vocabulary of about 4500 words, while CET6 requires 6500 words and comparatively higher proficiency in all relevant skills. Sun and Henrichsen (2011) describe the high intake of CET4&6 examinations in school completion certificate and report an increasing number of test participants in the 15 years since 1987.

Throughout the last three decades, CE teaching outcomes have made rapid progress. However, there are still huge challenges and new demands for English language education in China (Du, 2012). As a consequence, Wang (2007) asserted that EFL education in China has entered into an Innovation Phase (2000-today) after the Restoration, the Rapid Development and the Reform phases.

> The innovation phase beginning from 2000 is characterized by a firm and urgent call from the government for a quality-oriented education. It was generally felt by the government, the national educational authorities, as well as teachers and parents that there was something wrong with the current educational practices. (Wang, 2007, p. 94)

Regarding innovation in CE teaching, the above assertion by Wang (2007) reveals two critical pieces of information: there is *"a firm and urgent call"* for an official standard of CE education quality, and there was "*something wrong with the current educational practices*".

Notwithstanding the seventeen years of innovations in course teaching since the turn of the new millennium, there is still a long way to go regarding the problems and tensions between CECR's goal and CE teaching realities.

The problematic and negative aspects of CE teaching have long been mentioned by researchers in China and abroad. Because of sociocultural and political-economic factors, and the history and traditions of teaching pedagogy in China, EFL teaching—especially at the tertiary level—has long been confronted with many challenges. For example, at the early stages of CE teaching, Chinese universities were widely regarded as poor in every aspect of the program implementation. As early as 1979, American experts Cowan, Light, Mathews, and Tucker (1979) wrote a detailed report on all levels of EFL teaching conditions in China. As regards CE, the authors portrayed a picture that included: no standard English curriculum, insufficient study hours, limited EFL materials, lack of adequate hardware of audio visual aids, unnatural and artificial passage contents, lack of meaningful communication activities in textbook design, and immense need for pre-service and in-service training (Cowan, Light, Mathews, & Tucker, 1979).

Progress in the field has been achieved in alignment with China's economic growth. However, new problems and demands continue to emerge over time. With the enrichment of EFL teaching materials and resources, and increasing government investment in time, capital and teaching talents, the language competence of middle-school students has greatly improved. Yet, students' CE learning needs are diverse and may not align with the nation's needs. Additionally, traditional CE teaching as a teacher-centred convey of knowledge often fails to motivate students in the learning environment (Wang & Wang, 2011). Communicative competence to properly engage in future business exchanges, joint venture careers, study abroad, or scientific research have become the goals of modern college students in China, and current CE teaching practices often fail to respond to these needs. For example, research undertaken at Portsmouth

concluded that “students are generally ill-prepared linguistically for study in the UK higher education system by their experience of language learning in China” (Rastall, 2006, p. 3).

Furthermore, Jin and Jin (2008) report four factors impeding the development of China’s CE teaching program: 1) an imperfect education management system, 2) unscientific systems of assessment of students’ English outcomes resulting in “deaf and dumb English”, 3) unscientific teaching objectives, and 4) insufficient attention and input to English teaching, which is embodied in inadequate language laboratories and multimedia classrooms for students as well as a severe shortage of quality teaching faculties. Furthermore, Liu (2013) identifies three problems in EFL teaching: a large number of students and the unbalanced education level, extra-large English classes with inadequately qualified English teachers, and outdated language teacher development programs that favour exam-oriented teaching.

Therefore, CE reform has become an emergent theme in the field. According to Jin (2011), there have been four main waves of teaching reform in China from 1980 to 2007, guided by four versions of the CECR. The first CECR wave of reform emerged during the 1970s and 1980s, and emphasised students’ reading ability only; the second wave occurred during the 1980s to 1990s whereby teachers began to pay attention to developing students’ language knowledge and skills simultaneously. The third wave of reform represented a fast-developing phase in the CECR history during the late 1990s which placed emphasis on students’ application capabilities. From the turn of the century to present day, the fourth CECR wave of reform has sought to address a new challenge, namely how best to support learner autonomy. These reforms have all been led by the CMoE and thus reflect a top-down reform process. Of course, the top-level reform designs have met many challenges and problems with adaption at the classroom level. As a result, localised or institutionalised innovation and reform practices reflect various styles, results and problems.

Problems experienced by CE teachers appear to be some of the sharpest among many obvious problems to emerge in the reform process, but there is no third-party assessment of the effects of the reforms on the teachers involved. Following interviews with language faculty deans at three national universities to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of CE course reforms, Du (2012) describes four problem areas related to CE teachers at these universities: young and inexperienced teachers, lower-level academic qualifications, low academic ranks, and heavy work load. Evidence showing unqualified CE teachers in universities as a problem is also provided by Li, Liu, and Zhang (2007) in their survey of 1200 CE teachers across 100 Chinese universities. A KASIB model (knowledge, abilities, skills, intervening variables and behaviours) and statistically significant differences were found in the five variables listed above among CE teachers at top universities and at common universities (Li et al., 2007). They found that the values of CE teachers' knowledge, abilities and skills at common universities were evidently lower than those of teachers in top universities. They also found that many CE teachers were under great pressure because of weak research ability.

It is evident from the above problems and reforms observed that the quality of CE teachers and their teaching practices are an important focal point in Chinese CE development, though not to the exclusion of other problems. This implies that teacher qualification has been problematized, and teacher training on CE course implementation, whether it is in relation to goals, models or processes, needs to be promoted.

Set against this background and context, the concept of 'autonomy' emerged as a potential solution to the problems experienced by CE teachers and policy-makers who have been under great pressure to deliver high-quality EFL programs in tertiary institutions. At the Chinese policy-maker level, CECR (2007) proposed a new teaching model to develop learner autonomy. This new teaching mode was included in one of the two appendixes of CECR (2007): computer and classroom-based CE teaching models, and a self-assessment/peer assessment form for

students' English competence instructions. This CE teaching model shows that reforming the course into a computer-assisted and modernised mode, and developing pedagogy that supports learner autonomy are at the core of the requirements. According to CECR (2007) this goal is realised through two methods, technology and teacher autonomy. On the technological side:

> the new (teaching) model should be built on modern information technology, particularly network technology, so that English language teaching and learning will be, to a certain extent, free from the constraints of time or place and geared towards students' individualized and autonomous learning. (CMoE, 2007, p. 7)

On the teacher autonomy side, CECR (2007) called for "changes in teaching philosophy and practice…, to a student-centred pattern" (CMoE, 2007, p. 7). This call implies that CECR (2007) promotes teacher autonomy because the development of learner autonomy depends largely on teacher autonomy (Little, 1995). Policy-makers seem to take it for granted that course teachers can automatically adapt to the top-level designed teaching model. However, such 'changes' are not automatic in CE teachers. They are learned, trained, and accepted by teachers autonomously, but no relevant teacher education or professional development programs are mentioned in the structure.

Therefore, in the new context of CE teaching, both learner and CMoE require CE teachers to be more autonomous in their capacity to create new knowledge and utilise technology, thus enabling high quality teaching services to be kept up to date. However, it is problematic to take teacher professional development for granted because a teacher's main job is teaching and teacher professional development is not compulsory. Something should be done in this regard and teacher autonomy seems to be a solution to the problem because autonomous teachers are always believed to be independent and reflective (Little, 1995). That is to say, CE teachers are

expected to grow effectively and quickly in their profession through the development of their autonomy.

In relation to the administration of CE teachers, the CECR (CMoE, 2007, p. 9) also notes that "the quality of teachers is the key to the improvement of the teaching quality, and to the development of the CE program" and requires explicitly "a system of faculty development should be established" (p. 9). However, how and to what degree the 'system' is established will vary, implying that an autonomy-supportive environment should be created from a teaching administration perspective at the institutional level.

Secondly, facilitating learning autonomy is also one of the most effective ways to support teachers in teacher education programs, as well as to improve and develop their professional preparation and practices (Smith & Erdoğan, 2008). That is, teacher autonomy is a process of continuous learning (Freeman & Cornwell, 1993; Smith, 2000). If teachers want to improve their teaching practices and to achieve at a higher level, they need to have more autonomy to enrich and empower themselves. In the short term, teacher education programs can resolve some of the technical problems experienced by teachers and are a necessity; in the long term, teachers who develop teacher autonomy can teach in a reflective way and continuously develop their learner-centred teaching practices.

In sum, when considering the problems discussed above, and the issues associated with CECR goals and teacher professional development, teacher autonomy should be set and promoted as an ideal goal in the field of CE teaching.

1.3 Significance

The significance of the present research lies in four aspects: the topic, the methodology, the conceptual exploration, and the potential implications of the findings for CE teachers and administrators in China. First and foremost, autonomy is never free from context and constraints (Benson, 2010, 2013; Lamb & Simpson, 2003; Wu, 2004). Indeed, context is an important and unavoidable part in autonomy research. Moreover, research into the contexts of teacher autonomy can help us to better develop teacher autonomy in their pedagogical practices. In detail, if certain contexts are necessary to develop teacher autonomy, research investigations of contextual issues can better legitimise their existence and, where they exert negative effects on teacher autonomy, hint at reasonable solutions. In other words, fostering teacher autonomy cannot be discussed without investigating its contexts. Teachers will also have the opportunity to better understand the legitimation of certain contexts for autonomous practices and what negative contextual factors to avoid. Teacher autonomy in the CE context is experienced and discussed by Chinese CE teachers and researchers, but is rarely systematically researched. The empirical evidence to be gained from this study embodies the novelty of research in what teacher autonomy means in the Chinese CE context.

Secondly, there is an acute need for the type of relevant support data that will be collected in this study because most of the discussion on this topic focusses on theoretical analyses or the empirical experience level. This case study researched fourteen CE teachers to pin down their teaching contexts and their attitudes toward autonomy as teachers in the case university, and went on to pinpoint their autonomous teaching practices. From another perspective, it is the insiders' voice that should be listened to, recorded and given weight when seeking resolutions to the current problems (Ostovar-Namaghi, 2012).

Next, a better understanding of teacher autonomy in the case context can facilitate a broader and more in-depth exploration of the concept of teacher autonomy. With its unique sociocultural, national, and institutional EFL education background, research into the contexts and attitudes of CE teacher can help uncover the multidimensional attributes of teacher autonomy. Moreover, since it is a top-down education system in China, interviews that aim to probe teacher administrators' understanding of teacher autonomy will shed light on CE teacher autonomy in institutional settings and the mechanisms that work to support autonomous teaching practices.

Lastly, the potential implications of the findings from this research will make a difference for CE teachers and administrators in the Chinese context. Particularly, CE teachers and institutional administrators will be informed by this research. China is developing at a rapid pace as is the Chinese higher education sector. The number of college teachers amounted to more than one million in 2006, and 64.3% of them were below the age of 40 (Pan & Luo, 2007). A similar demographic profile is apparent among the population of CE teachers in Mainland China, specifically. The more attention is paid to the teaching contexts and the attitudes of CE teachers, the more corresponding strategies and solutions will be put forward. As a result, more autonomous teachers can serve as role models for other teachers to manage autonomy constraints and to create more opportunities for autonomous teaching practices. In addition, it is also critical to keep teacher administrators aware of the important role of teacher autonomy development playing in improving CE teaching and learning outcomes so that they may reflect on their teacher management styles and strategies.

In short, the findings in this study may contribute to our understanding of the dynamic essence of, and potential challenges surrounding, teacher autonomy. Furthermore, this study may also shed light on the systematic reform of Chinese CE teaching in school-based supervision and teacher assessment systems from multi-dimensional perspectives.

1.4 Thesis outline

This thesis comprises 10 chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the general motivations of this researcher for conducting a study of teacher autonomy. A narration of my personal motivation from my middle-school years to the present was provided. Key details pertaining to the need to address institutional requirements for higher level CE professionals were also identified as a secondary motivation. The background of CE teaching in China and the significance of this study were then discussed.

In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework is reviewed and scaffolded. Firstly, a critical review and synthesis of the literature on three dimensions of teacher autonomy sketches the researcher's understanding of the development of teacher autonomy. Then the relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy is revisited. Next, literature on CE teaching and teacher autonomy is reviewed, and subsequently narrowed down to research on CE teacher autonomy in China. Based on the literature review, the research questions underpinning the present study are proposed.

Chapter 3 firstly justifies the application of case study methodology in this research. This is followed by a detailed description of the specific case context and the researcher's position in it. Details of the participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis processes are provided, and the validity and reliability issues, and ethical considerations relevant to the study are explored.

Chapters 4 to 8 report findings from the data provided by fourteen participants in the specific case institutional context. Chapter 4 examines the CE teaching context including systematic elements, national and professional expectations, and the physical factors of influence. Chapter 5 documents participants' attitudes toward their professional identity, learner autonomy, their professional development, and teacher autonomy. Then, according to their varied attitudes,

participants are categorised into three groups: less autonomous, moderately autonomous, and more autonomous. The characteristics and classroom practices of teachers in each group are depicted in Chapter 6 to 8.

Chapter 9 explicitly addresses the research questions. Moreover, a comparative analysis is conducted across groups. The major findings are then discussed in relation to the literature.

Chapter 10 concludes this thesis by drawing on the main findings and discussions in the previous chapters to explore the implications for practice and to make recommendations for further research. The limitations of the study are also briefly outlined in the chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature review and research questions

This chapter defines the key concept in the study, namely teacher autonomy (2.1). Because learner autonomy appears in the research literature earlier than teacher autonomy, and they are closely related to each other, their relation is revisited in the second section (2.2). This is followed by a review of the key works of language classroom research regarded as a crucial context that manifests teacher autonomy (2.3). Then, in Section 2.4, I will narrow down the scope of the review to the context of CE teacher autonomy in China, which is characterised by its unique sociocultural context. Finally, based on the review of the literature, I will propose my research questions (2.5).

2.1 Defining teacher autonomy

Teacher autonomy is a key construct in this study. By reviewing literature, I note its complexity and multi-dimensional characteristics. I review the literature on teacher autonomy The following section and attempts to pinpoint some of the key dimensions that are typically included in definitions of teacher autonomy.

As a starting point, three dimensions are elicited from Smith's (2003) framework of teacher autonomy: capability (2.3.1), professional development (2.3.2), and freedom (2.3.3). In these three dimensions, capability represents the internal elements of teacher autonomy, and professional development and freedom represent the external elements. Though the internal and external elements overlap to a certain degree, a review of these three dimensions provides a balanced view when defining teacher autonomy.

2.1.1 Capability dimension

In line with McGrath (2000), Smith (2003) observed three dimensions of teacher autonomy:

> (1) (Capacity for) self-directed professional *action*.
> (2) (Capacity for) self-directed professional *development*.
> (3) *Freedom from control by others* over professional action or development.
>
> (Smith, 2003, p. 3, emphasis original)

According to Smith's (2003) framework, teacher autonomy is primarily a capacity or capability which occupies the first two dimensions. Many other researchers also tend to define teacher autonomy as a capability (Little, 1995; Thavenius, 1999; Tort-Moloney, 1997). For example, Little (1995) noted:

> Genuinely successful teachers have always been autonomous in the sense of having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection and analysis the highest possible degree of affective and cognitive control of teaching process, and exploiting the freedom that this confers. (Little, 1995, p. 179)

Little (1995) described what successful teachers do and according to his description, autonomy is presumed as an attribute of genuinely successful teachers. "A strong sense of responsibility", "reflection" and "cognitive control of teaching", etc. are involved as key factors in this conceptualisation of autonomy. It depicts the ideal of the successful teacher and equates these teachers to the notion of autonomous practice in some aspects. To be specific, the above description of autonomy in "genuinely successful teachers" is explicitly demonstrated via the "teaching process". However, this description does not define cognitive control over the teaching process in an explicit way. It also gives no consideration to ordinary teachers who are not so successful, but have the potential to be. I think the presumption and value of discussing

teacher autonomy in this study is that every ordinary teacher has his or her own degree of autonomy, and this degree can be improved via certain processes or training programs.

In another example, Tort-Moloney (1997) stated what the autonomous teachers do as well as what they are:

> … the autonomous teacher is one who is aware of why, when, where and how pedagogical skills can be acquired and used in the self-conscious awareness of teaching practice itself. (Tort-Moloney, 1997, p. 51)

Unlike Little's (1995) description of successful teachers, Tort-Moloney (1997) reveals "why, when, where and how" autonomous teachers acquire and use pedagogical skills consciously. Teachers' awareness of learning and using pedagogical skills is stressed in this definition; however, the feasibility of this conscious behaviour is ignored. What autonomous teachers are aware or not aware of and what they do or do not do, may represent an idealistic view of these teachers' acts, but may not necessarily reflect teacher autonomy.

Similarly, Thavenius (1999) defined teacher autonomy explicitly as "the teacher's ability and willingness to help learners take responsibility for their own learning" (p.160). Evidently, this definition is a reference to learner autonomy. In other words, the definition can be understood to suggest: if learner autonomy is the learner's ability to take responsibility for their his or her learning (Holec, 1981), then teacher autonomy is the teacher's ability to help learners to develop their autonomy. This definition confines teacher autonomy to the notions of 'ability' and 'willingness', while the aim of the 'ability' and 'willingness' is to help learners to be autonomous. Hence, teacher autonomy is embedded in pedagogy that supports learner autonomy and as such this definition ignores teachers' own professional learning and development and their interactions with other key agents like colleagues and school administrators in their specific educational context.

Researchers have also broadened their views of the relationship between teachers' sense of autonomy and their 'work environment' when defining teacher autonomy. For instance, Benson (2010) stated that "teacher autonomy can be understood both as a working condition that allows room for teachers' professional discretion and as the teacher's capacity to create this working condition within prevailing constraints" (p. 263). In this definition, the "working condition" is a major factor. It is also clear that there is an interrelationship between the teacher's capability and his or her working conditions. In other words, whether the external working conditions constrain or facilitate teaching depends on the teacher's capability. If the teacher is autonomous or competent, s/he may be strong enough to resist 'constraints' and create space of manoeuvre. Alternatively, it may be difficult for the teacher to create beneficial working conditions within the constraints. In sum, the capability dimension in teacher autonomy implies an interplay between teachers' capabilities and their working conditions.

Teacher autonomy is often characterised as interchangeable with teacher agency because both concepts reflect the teacher's professional acts. However, teacher agency "is something that people *do*", but teacher autonomy is a capability that "people can *have*" (Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015, p. 626) (emphasis in original). Therefore, teacher agency is usually discussed as a response to some external change such as a change in educational policy, a curriculum innovation, or the context of educational reform (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2015; Coffman, 2015; Hamid & Nguyen, 2016; Molina, 2017; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Ollerhead, 2010; Priestley, Edwards, Priestley, & Miller, 2015; Vähäsantanen, 2015). I adopt the word 'autonomy' rather than 'agency' as the key construct for investigation in this thesis, because teacher autonomy is a personal attribute that can be applied, developed or fostered in professional trajectory, whereas teacher agency is "significantly constructed in the middle of professional pedagogical activities" (Toom, Pyhältö, & Rust, 2015, p. 616).

2.1.2 Professional development dimension

Huang and Benson (2013) highlighted the point that "identity formation provides a direction for the development of autonomy" (p. 21). In other words, the motivation of a teacher in language teaching to be an autonomous teacher may be rooted in how the teacher identifies the profession. This means that teacher (professional) identity plays an essential role in the teachers' attitudes toward their professional development.

Teacher (professional) identity has been widely discussed in recent decades in research on education, (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; Day, 2012; Day & Kington, 2008; D. Hall & McGinity, 2015). It is generally accepted that teacher identity is a situated and multidimensional concept, involving negotiation between the individual and sociocultural contexts (Beijaard et al., 2004). This concept is also believed to be important to our understanding of what it means to be a teacher in changing contexts (Day, 2012). In addition, the critical role of the emotion dimension in teacher identity is examined in the works of Day and Kington (2008), and Zembylas (2005, 2010).

Teachers' attitudes toward their social label are usually taken as a starting point in teacher identity research. Because "identity is not something one has, but something that develops during one's whole life" (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 108), it has not always been regarded as stable or positive (Day, 2012). Teachers' identification with their subjects (e.g., identifying themselves as 'CE teachers') may be one indication of a positive teacher identity, though Day and Kington (2008) warned against mixing professional identity with professional role. Beijaard et al. (2004) also found that in some studies, professional identity was related to teachers' concepts or images of self.

Research in teacher identity has been followed by global interest in language teacher identity in applied linguistics (Block, 2015; Hao, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 2016; Song, 2016;

Tsui, 2007; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005; Werbińska, 2015). The literature review shows that there are two main perspectives in discussions of language teacher identity. Firstly, research from the perspective of non-native-speaker (NNS) language teacher identity occupies a unique portion (Park, 2012; Zacharias, 2010). It seems that no other identity research pays more attention to the ownership of working language than NNS language teacher identity. These studies usually stress the feelings of inferiority and frustration NNS teachers suffer, the legitimate status of their professionalism, and the necessity of language enhancement programs because of the dichotomy between native-speakers (NS) and NNS language teachers.

Secondly, there is research from a sociocultural context perspective; educational policy changes in particular (Song, 2016; Tsui, 2007; Varghese et al., 2005). These studies emphasise how negotiations between individual teachers and sociocultural contexts situate and mediate language teacher identities in the formation or construction process. This perspective represents a holistic, macro, and dynamic view on language teacher identity. Narrative inquiry is often found in this line of research (Liu & Xu, 2011, 2013; Tsui, 2007). For example, Xu (2014) narrated four university EFL teachers' research practices and their identity construction as researchers in China.

Apart from the two perspectives reviewed above, there are two relevant issues that remain unresolved. On the one hand, the interrelationship among the multi-dimensions of language teacher identity as an umbrella term remains unclear. The major concern is how the 'sub-identities' (Mishler, 1999) interact, compete, or balance each other. Current studies of the theoretical frameworks of 'sub-identities' in language teaching are far from coherent (Day & Kington, 2008). This perspective represents an analysis of language teacher identity at a fragmented (Day & Kington, 2008) and micro level. For example, Song (2016) examined how language teachers' experiences of emotional vulnerability affected the construction of their identity.

On the other hand, the relationship between language teacher autonomy and identity is waiting to be examined. Although there is comparatively richer research on learner autonomy and learner identity (e.g., Chik (2007), works focusing especially on the relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher identity are scarce. In language education, Huang (2010) examined the complex relationships among teacher autonomy, teacher identity, and teacher agency from insights into his own 20 years' experience of EFL teaching and professional development. Huang and Benson (2013) further explained the interrelationship as: "while the development of teacher autonomy relies on teacher identity construction and the exercise of teacher agency, the development of teacher autonomy can in turn enhance teacher identity and teacher agency" (p. 21). This interrelationship between teacher identity and the development of teacher autonomy suggests that an investigation of teachers' attitudes toward their identity helps to understand teacher autonomy. Long's (2014) thesis examined the development of teacher autonomy through the process of teacher identity formation across time. Based on the stories of four English major teachers, Long (2014) also argued for a broad view on teacher autonomy other than mere language teaching and learning to teach. Evidently, the theoretical assumptions on teacher autonomy still need supporting evidence from further empirical research. Therefore, this gap leads to the investigation of this study the on the link between CE teachers' attitudes and their autonomous practice in classroom.

Based on a proper attitude toward professional identity, the professional development dimension in teacher autonomy is crucial for language teachers (Benson & Huang, 2008; McGrath, 2000; Smith, 2003). Smith (2000) proposed that teachers should start with ourselves to learn about autonomy and to be autonomous learner ourselves first, if they want to develop autonomy in their students. From this observation, he proposed the concept of 'teacher-learner autonomy' when considering that teacher's autonomous professional development is also a lifelong learning process (Smith, 2000). Accordingly, Smith (2003) defined teacher autonomy

as “the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher, in co-operation with others” (p. 1). In other words, Smith (2003) stressed that a teacher is also a learner, which is particularly true for non-English speakers as teachers of English in a non-English speaking country.

The professional development dimension is also emphasised in McGrath’s (2000) definition of teacher autonomy:

> One way of defining autonomy is in terms of control over one’s own life; in relation to teachers this might be glossed as ‘control over one’s own professional development’. … A second and equally common sense of autonomy is ‘freedom from control by others’ (McGrath, 2000, pp.100-101).

In this definition, ‘control’ is the operative word and a clear distinction is made between self-control and other forms of control in autonomy. However, it may be problematic to generalise teachers’ control in their personal life to “professional development” outcomes. This implies that preservice teachers without professional development experience do not have the potential for autonomy. Unlike McGrath (2000), Smith (2003) proposed to separate language teacher professional acts from their professional development and stressed the importance of teacher education for language teacher autonomy as a learner.

To a certain degree, teacher professional development can be equated to a continuous contribution to the dimension of teacher autonomy from a teacher professional trajectory. Accordingly, Ratnam (2007) defined teacher autonomy as “the development of teachers’ agentive power to move in trajectories that would stretch their potentialities for change” (p. 1). Similarly, Ding (2009) referred teacher autonomy specifically to “the professional development of teachers in formal educational contexts” (p. 66). These two definitions have one common point; they both emphasise teacher professional development in their definition

of teacher autonomy. They differ however in that Ratnam (2007) refers to the content of teachers' professional development, whereas Ding (2009) explains the contexts of their development. Ding's (2009) definition is preferred for two reasons. On the one hand, "teachers' agentive power" is crucial in their professional development given there are so many changes and reforms both in classroom teaching and institution. Teachers need such agentive power, and professional training and development to foster this power. On the other hand, teacher autonomy is not necessarily happening "in formal education contexts". In any context, teachers' self-directed or self-regulated professional development should be accepted and encouraged.

Moreover, suitable approaches to professional development have also been discussed in relation to the development of teacher autonomy. Bentham, Sinnes, and Gjotterud (2015) found that "a Continuing Professional Development support sub-system would help to build autonomy and agency as teacher educators of various degrees of experience pool their resources in order to improve teaching and learning" (p. 174). Ushioda, Smith, Mann, and Brown (2011) conducted research into pre-experience Master of Arts (MA) students in ELT/TESOL programs and found that "an online community can help support their AUTONOMY as learners of teaching through and beyond their MA studies" (p. 121, upper case in original). More recently and specifically, Dikilitas and Griffiths (2017) proposed developing teacher autonomy through action research, which has long been considered as a critical approach for language teacher professional development (Banegas, Pavese, Velázquez, & Vélez, 2013; Burns, 1999, 2010; Bustingorry, 2008; Castro Garcés & Martínez Granada, 2016). In other words, continuing teacher professional development, especially via approaches such as action research or participation in online communities, may help to build teacher autonomy. That is, formal teacher professional programs together with other modern technique are crucial in fostering different levels of teacher autonomy.

However, teachers' professional development or education for teacher autonomy is a dimension that has not received deserving emphasis (Smith, 2003). From this perspective, professional development entails the possibility to strengthen teacher autonomy. Vice versa, autonomy for teacher professional development can be crucial and decisive. To a certain degree, teachers with a stronger sense of autonomy are assumed to have greater potential to be successful and to ensure quality teaching. Without well-developed professional teachers, it is hard to obtain good teaching results or to improve student achievement.

Research also shows that professional development helps the autonomy of both beginning and in-service teachers (Castro Garcés & Martínez Granada, 2016; Dymoke & Harrison, 2006). For beginning teachers, Dymoke and Harrison (2006) highlighted the crucial connection between teacher autonomy and the field of professional development. However, they found the space is limited. For beginning teachers, many have practical problems to deal with in their first year like classroom management practices (Wright, 2012), methods of knowing students' needs, curriculum design, time control, effective corrective feedback (Ellis, 2009; Klimova, 2015; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Rassaei, 2015; Rezaei, Mozaffari, & Hatef, 2011), mother tongue use in class (Corcoll López & González-Davies, 2016; Forman, 2016; Ghorbani, 2012; Paker & Karaağaç, 2015), homework assignments (Emami, Sharif, & Jafarigohar, 2014; Rosario et al., 2015; Takahashi, 2011), etc. At this critical time, experience and professional development programs help because the beginning teacher cannot be expected to learn how to accomplish all these practices during preservice training.

For in-service teachers, they need a higher level of autonomy as required by their role. For example, Castro Garcés and Martínez Granada (2016) included in their conceptualisation of autonomy the need to know participants' professional development. However, their teacher trainer participants stated that they themselves had no clear idea on how to increase their

trainees' level of autonomy. Therefore, Castro Garcés and Martínez Granada (2016) suggested that professional development was an ongoing task and also a part of practicing autonomy.

2.1.3 Freedom dimension

In defining teacher autonomy, researchers have long emphasised the freedom dimension (Aoki, 2002; Benson, 2000, 2007, 2010, 2013; Evans & Fischer, 1992; Hoyle & John, 1995; McGrath, 2000; Myers, 2007). This dimension is "by no means new" as observed by Smith (2003, p. 3). For instance, when McGrath (2000), Smith (2003), Huang (2005) and so on defined teacher autonomy, they all mentioned 'freedom from control by others' as a key dimension among other one or two dimensions. From a sociological perspective, the freedom of teacher autonomy is an institutional attribute built on "an 'active-inert' continuum to indicate the extent to which a teacher desires, or an administrator is willing to grant" (Edgar & Warren, 1969, p. 390). There are two levels of meanings that may be inferred. On the one hand, there is variation in teachers' desires for freedom. Active teachers participate in various aspects of their work, as opposed to inert teachers' passive acceptance of decisions made by others. On the other hand, freedom depends on the decisions made by administrators in the institution. Democratic administrators may allow more space for teachers' free practice, whereas a hegemonic institutional culture may attach more emphasis to accountability for teaching practices.

A certain degree of institutional freedom is critical and desirable in language teachers' work. Though this freedom is not absolute—given the very nature of language teaching—language teachers make many pedagogical discretions in uncertain situations and within such decision-making processes, specific contexts must be accounted for (Hoyle & Wallace, 2009). Hoyle and John (1995) explained the range of this freedom; "a positive form of autonomy represents a teacher's freedom to construct a personal pedagogy which entails a balance between personality, training, experience and the requirements of the specific educational context" (p. 92). Therefore, the range of freedom is in "pedagogy", and this pedagogy comprises a balance

of four factors, namely “personality”, “training”, “experience”, and “the requirements of the specific educational context”. However, no previous studies depict CE teachers with this kind of freedom to construct pedagogy within the requirements of a specific educational context. It is worth noting that this study probes into CE teachers’ pedagogy and the document that set out the requirements of the specific institutional context to gain a better understanding of teacher autonomy.

At times, teacher autonomy as freedom to decide pedagogical practices is claimed strongly as a right. Myers (2007) maintained that “teachers were demanding autonomy: the right of all professionals to govern their own affairs” (p. 239). To a certain degree, it is reasonable to claim teacher autonomy as this type of freedom is a teacher’s right. However, regarding teachers’ “own affairs”, the answer may vary due to specific institutional contexts and the teachers’ personal experiences.

2.1.4 A summary of key dimensions in teacher autonomy

Based on Smith (2003), three dimensions of teacher autonomy were reviewed in an attempt to define teacher autonomy. Firstly, it was established that teacher autonomy primarily tends to be defined as a capability in the teacher, which is frequently analogous to learner autonomy both explicitly or implicitly (Little, 1995; Thavenius, 1999; Tort-Moloney, 1997). However, the nature of this capability varies in different definitions. The capability is supposed to be developed through self-directed or other-directed training processes. Secondly, professional development and teacher education were identified as helping to promote teacher autonomy, which is applicable to both pre-service and in-service teachers (Castro Garcés & Martínez Granada, 2016; Dymoke & Harrison, 2006). However, of the three dimensions, teacher professional development or teacher education for teacher autonomy has not received the emphasis it deserves (Smith, 2003). Thirdly, the extent to which teacher autonomy as a freedom or a right for freedom has long been supported by many researchers was also discussed (Aoki,

2002; Benson, 2000, 2007, 2010, 2013; McGrath, 2000). A certain degree of freedom is desirable in teachers' practical work and is confined to pedagogy or scholarly discretions. When reviewing the three dimensions, it emerged that the context element was sometimes involved suggesting an interplay between teachers' capabilities and institutional context. Indeed, professional development programs are usually organised in an institutional context and autonomy as teacher's freedom can also be granted or controlled by a specific institution. This phenomenon suggests more attention should be paid to teachers' working conditions or to the institutional context when defining teacher autonomy.

In sum, following Little (1995), Thavenius (1997), and Tort- Moloney (1999), I argue that teacher autonomy is in essence a capability. Developing this capability can help CE teachers to teach independently, to reflect consciously, to develop the profession purposefully, to adapt to the institutional contexts flexibly and creatively, and to open more space for the learners and himself/herself in CE classrooms. The freedom dimension in teacher autonomy is weakened in modern university contexts, but professional development can help CE teachers opening the space for autonomy. Moreover, CE teacher professionalism should also be developed with the help of the school and institution. Institutional contexts can be a constraint or a stage, because it depends on a CE teacher's attitude. In the eyes of an autonomous CE teacher, environmental conditions and students can also be good resources for teaching. This view can also help autonomous teachers to enjoy more freedom.

To pinpoint the three dimensions in a real educational context, different approaches can be employed. Evidence of a teacher's capability can be gained by observing his/her teaching practices: what s/he does, how s/he does it, etc. To test teacher professional development, a teacher's attitude toward professional identity and any plan for developing the profession are believed to be good evidence. Finally, the freedom dimension of teacher autonomy is usually

documented in institutional regulations, policies, and administrators' attitudes. In sum, the three dimensions of autonomy framed the methodology of this study.

2.2 Teacher autonomy and learner autonomy

Because learner autonomy appears ahead of teacher autonomy in research literature, and because the two concepts are closely related, their relation is revisited in this section. Firstly, the general trend from learner autonomy to teacher autonomy is tracked (2.2.1). To foster learner autonomy, language teachers are highlighted as crucial agents. It then becomes natural to argue for autonomy-supportive teaching as a manifestation of teacher autonomy (2.2.2).

2.2.1 From learner autonomy to teacher autonomy

With a long history of field research since the 1970s (Benson, 2011), studies on learner autonomy are more mature than those of teacher autonomy. Learner autonomy has largely been defined as 'an ability/capability'. Since Holec (1981) began to use 'learner autonomy' as a term in EFL research, the concept has launched a revolution first in the Great Britain and European countries, and then across the globe. Learner autonomy is widely and frequently defined as:

- "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3).
- "a capacity---for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action" (Little, 1991, p. 4)
- "the capacity to take control of one's own learning" (Benson, 2011, p. 58).

It is evident that the key words in the above three definitions are 'ability' and 'capacity', implying that the mainstream view in learner autonomy research is that learner autonomy is one or both of these things. However, the nature of the 'ability' or 'capacity' can vary greatly. For Holec (1981) and Benson (2011), learner autonomy is an issue of 'one's own learning'.

Defining the term like this obscures the distinction between language learning and the learning which takes place in other subjects. In other words, their definition of learner autonomy is also applicable in other subjects. But for Little (1991), the nature of learner autonomy is multi-dimensional, involving every process in learning from awareness to action. Illes (2012) redefined the term more explicitly in relation to language learning as "the capacity to become competent speakers of the target language who are able to exploit the linguistic and other resources at their disposal effectively and creatively" (p. 509). The core of learner autonomy in this definition remains unchanged, namely 'a capacity', but the content is confined more specifically in language competency and linguistic resources, as well as the learner's approach to language learning.

In the early stages of teacher autonomy research, some simple analogies were made between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy because of their close connection. For instance, Aoki (2002) tried to define teacher autonomy using an analogy with learner autonomy. She supposed that "if learner autonomy is the capacity, freedom, and/or responsibility to make choices concerning one's own learning, teacher autonomy, by analogy, can be defined as the capacity, freedom, and/or responsibility to make choices concerning one's own teaching" (Aoki, 2002, p. 111). She also found the definition to be problematic "in the light of the practice of learner autonomy" (ibid), because this type of teaching may not support the development of learner autonomy at all. In other words, Aoki (2002) makes one point clear: we should pursue a type of teacher autonomy that supports students' autonomous learning, not merely for the freedom of the teacher. In line with this way of thinking, I argue in this study that teacher autonomy should serve the development of learner autonomy because as Little (1995) has made explicit, learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy. Otherwise it is meaningless to develop teacher autonomy all by itself.

Over the last two decades, the research attention has increasingly transferred from learner autonomy to teacher autonomy as the latter has become a regular theme in language learning and teaching (Benson, 2000; Benson & Huang, 2008; Little, 1995; McGrath, 2000; Smith, 2000). More and more key words, characteristics and suggested behaviours are included in the concept of teacher autonomy. As suggested by Ramos (2006), the concept includes such things as negotiation skills, capacity for reflection, lifelong learning, action research institutional knowledge, a willingness to confront institutional barriers, observation, etc.

There are some hints about the relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy embedded in the two explanations below. Thavenius (1999) defined teacher autonomy as "the teacher's ability and willingness to help learners take responsibility for their own learning" (p. 160). Furthermore, Little (2000) argued that "it is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner" (p. 45). When combining the two perspectives, two assumptions can be inferred. First, if the teacher is an autonomous teacher, but the learners "do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner", the teacher's capacity and willingness to help the learners will be impacted. Second, if the teacher is not autonomous in ability or willingness to foster learner autonomy, s/he will likely experience issues when dealing with learners who 'do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner'. Simply speaking, with learners having no idea about autonomy as a precondition, how will an autonomous teacher's practices differ to the practices of the teacher who lacks ability and willingness to help developing learner autonomy?

Lamb (2008) has suggested that "any relationship between teacher and learner autonomy is essentially political, since it entails both a (re-)claiming of and a shift in power" (p. 279). Furthermore, three key components required in any teacher autonomy and learner autonomy relationship are argued as follows:

- The teacher learns how to (and has, or claims, the freedom to) develop autonomously as a professional, through critical reflection.
- The teacher has a commitment to empowering his/her learners by creating appropriate learning spaces and developing their capacity for autonomy.
- The teacher introduces interventions which support the principles and values which underpin their own and their learners' autonomy. (Lamb, 2008, p. 279)

Power distance (Hofstede,1997) is believed to have a strong influence on practice of autonomy (Matusitz & Musambira, 2012). In societies with a low power distance, individuals are not so pressured to follow societal norms, and are more likely to act according to their own will or to challenge authority. In societies with high power distance, individuals tend to be more conformed and dependent, and thus would be less likely to engage in behaviour that is not socially acceptable. China is believed to be a high power distance society (Shi & Wang, 2011). Human beings are the main focus for supervisors in a high power distance environment, but tasks are usually paid more attention in a low power distance environment (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994). Task orientation emphasizes heavily on daily work completion and performance efficiency, which in turn reduces subordinates' willingness of seeking help from supervisors (Madlock, 2012).

In line with Lamb (2008), in a high power distance classroom, as in a CE classroom, a teacher's attitude and autonomy tends to be critical in the relation of teacher and learner autonomy. If the teacher gets used to students' obedience and task orientation, it is less likely that s/he empowers space for learner autonomy. On the opposite, if the teacher treats students as equal individuals to himself/herself, it is more likely that s/he empowers space for learner autonomy. Similarly, in an institution/professional community, the order of interaction and practice between colleagues can also be determined by the political geography/ a power structure (Hargreaves, 2001). In a high power distance school, administrators may also be more task-

oriented and stress more on teacher conducting their teaching in an accountable manner, while they pay less attention to teachers' autonomy and professional development. In a low power distance school, front-line teachers may have more say in their own classroom teaching and enjoy more autonomy.

However, the relationship between teacher and learner autonomy is complex in Eastern countries. Researchers found that Eastern students usually considered their teacher to be an authority figure in the classroom, but they did not think that knowledge should be transmitted by the teacher rather it should be discovered by the students themselves (Aliponga, Johnston, Koshiyama, Ries, & Rush, 2013). Moreover, Eastern students also tend to regard the teacher as the holder of authority and knowledge and responsible for the assessment of learning (ibid). These findings show there are slight differences in the understanding of autonomy in a different cultural contexts, comparing to its original definition. Littlewood (1999) also supports to redefine and develop learner autonomy in East Asian contexts. This means cultural context is an influential factor in the relationship of teacher and learner autonomy. That is to say, if learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy (Little, 1995) in Western contexts, learner autonomy depends heavily on teacher autonomy in Eastern contexts. To be specific, if a teacher also take him/herself as an authority, s/he may be less likely to empower students to enjoy a bigger space to develop learner autonomy. In contrast, if a teacher is autonomous enough, in Lamb's (2008) words, to know how to develop his/her profession through critical reflection, to commit to develop independent learners, and to introduce interventions to underpin their own and their learners' autonomy, learner autonomy can also gain space to be developed in Eastern contexts.

This point is further supported by Zhang (2014). Zhang (2014) conducted a research by questionnaire and interview in three Chinese universities, and found that the teacher's capability to organise classroom activities and to interact with students had the greatest influence on learner autonomy. An empirical investigation by Yazici (2016) also found that

expressions of teacher autonomy in communications with students and in teaching processes are important predictors behaviours supportive of learner autonomy. However, there is a need for in-depth research to show *how* learner autonomy and teacher autonomy are related to each other. In other words, more tests or stories are necessary to explain how teacher autonomy in organising classroom activities and interacting with students' constructs a positive correlation with learner autonomy.

2.2.2 Autonomy-supportive teaching as a manifestation of teacher autonomy

Teaching in a learner autonomy supportive way has long been addressed in the literature (Lee, 1998; Mariani, 1997). Lee (1998) found several practical areas that teachers need to address in implementing self-directed learning such as learner training, teacher counselling, choice offering, etc. Mariani (1997) found other challenges that teachers faced when attempting to support learner autonomy such as developing a 'teaching style' framework, facilitating a developmental perspective, and using 'scaffolding' strategies. Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, and Turner (2004) even made the distinction between teachers' personal and instructional support in three ways: organisational autonomy support, procedural autonomy support, and cognitive autonomy support. Irie and Stewart (2012) have also provided clear and insightful descriptions of, and critical reflection on, innovative practices involving curriculum and syllabus, strategies and scaffolding, collaborative learning, and overcoming obstacles to autonomy in a range of educational contexts in Japan. More recently, learner autonomy supportive teaching has been linked to teacher autonomy.

Unlike the definition of learner autonomy in which the learner is the chief agent of their learning, teacher autonomy is a complex concept due to the teacher's role in language teaching and the development of learner autonomy. Language teachers together with their autonomy have a crucial role in developing learner autonomy. Núñez, Fernández, León, and Grijalvo (2014) even regarded teacher support as a predictor of learner autonomy. Similarly, Jang,

Reeve, and Deci (2010) found autonomy support as a unique predictor of students' self-reported engagement. Therefore, it is evident to assume that the more connotations there are in learner autonomy, the more roles there are for teachers to foster this autonomy.

Researchers have increasingly found that teachers make a difference in fostering learner autonomy, particularly in setting expectations, conversation explanations, and when setting the parameters of the curriculum (Crabbe, 1993; Feryok, 2013; Vieira, 1999). More explicitly, Feryok (2013) found that teachers are more designers and organisers in the classroom than they are controllers when developing learner autonomy. Xu (2015) found that teachers play a major role in teaching students' English learning strategies, monitoring and evaluating students' various English learning processes, developing students' positive attitudes and overcoming students' negative attitudes, and creating the appropriate English learning environment.

Moreover, teacher autonomy is usually manifested through an observable performance of how teachers can promote autonomy in learners. For instance, Yan (2010) pointed out that "teachers and learners are working on and with each other in the process of learning autonomy" (p. 68), revealing an interactive relationship within learner and teacher autonomy in a language classroom context. Thus, autonomy-supportive teaching is pinpointed as an observable application of teacher autonomy.

However, not every teacher is ready for autonomy-supportive pedagogy. Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, and Barch (2004) found there were differences between trained and non-trained teachers in relation to autonomy-supportive behaviours. To be specific, they found that trained teachers exhibited significantly more autonomy-supportive behaviours than those of non-trained teacher. For another example, in Asian countries where teachers traditionally see themselves as the authority in the classroom, teacher readiness for learner autonomy is believed to be constrained

(Liang, 2009). In other words, teachers may not be ready, not be willing, or not be able to play their role in developing learner autonomy.

Moreover, some teachers may not be conscious of their role in developing learner autonomy. This consciousness is most frequently developed from teacher autonomy. Feryok (2013) implied that teacher autonomy is the foundation on which teacher cognitions and practices are built to develop learner autonomy. The author further suggested that more studies are needed to investigate four kinds of teachers: 1) teachers who have less autonomy, 2) teachers who do not know or share learner language and culture, 3) teachers who are non-native speakers of the target language, and 4) teachers who have heterogeneous classes. Suggestions made by Feryok (2013) are echoed in this study because CE teachers in China reflect three of the teacher types (1, 3 and 4) in the above list.

Research has also found that in the Chinese context, the extent to which learner autonomy is dependent on the teacher may vary across age groups (Guo & Dai, 2011) or school backgrounds. Moreover, divergences in teachers' capabilities also account for the various roles a teacher can play in developing learner autonomy. In other words, teachers in top Chinese universities may be more autonomy-supportive because they are more capable, whereas in common universities, teachers may not adopt learner autonomy supportive pedagogy because they are less competent than the teachers in top universities (Li, Liu, & Zhang, 2007).

2.3 ESL/EFL classroom research and autonomy

The uniqueness of ESL/EFL classroom research lies in the explicit focus on the site of research. In the words of van Lier (1989); "The classroom is thus the only setting, within the field, which is singled out for scientific scrutiny" (p. 174). There are many common features in EFL and ESL classrooms, and Section 2.3 reviews the literatures on both classroom types.

The importance and value of language classroom research is self-evident. For students, classroom-based approaches are critical to foster learner autonomy (2.4.1). These approaches mainly refer to learner-control over planning classroom learning and learner self-assessment (Benson, 2011). For teachers, classroom research is essentially a great opportunity for professional development (2.4.2). What is more, the classroom is a prominent stage for teachers to demonstrate autonomy and flexibility (2.4.3). That is, teachers' levels of autonomy can be differentiated by their classroom practices.

2.3.1 Classroom-based approaches for fostering learner autonomy

The concept of classroom research is multifaceted in nature. Firstly, van Lier (1989) pointed out its educational and linguistic orientations. Therefore, language classroom research can help to facilitate lasting improvement in language education. Secondly, the author has pointed to the empirical nature of such research, both "as a place to get data, and as a place to apply findings" (van Lier, 1989, p.174). Similarly, Duff and Early (1996) stated that language classrooms remain an essential site for the examination and testing of research, theory, and practice in Applied Linguistics. Thirdly, the complexity of language teaching is an essential factor. Tudor (2001, 2003) argued that language teaching is far more complex than automobile production for instance because no one can take it for granted that there is the technology in language teaching to produce a neat and deterministic product to a predictable set of outcomes.

Allwright and Bailey (1991) maintained that classroom research is an umbrella term for "a whole range of research studies on classroom language learning and teaching" and that there is a common emphasis in these studies on "trying to understand what goes on in the classroom setting" (p. 2). In this narration, three key factors in language classroom research can be identified: "learning", "teaching", and "what goes on". In other words, from a perspective of the agent, the three factors in classroom research are realised by learner, teacher, and instructional interaction, respectively.

The three factors are also in line with Chaudron's (1988) assertion that the focus of language classroom research carried out in the 1970s and 1980s tended to be on issues or domains of inquiry that fall under one of the three general headings listed and illustrated below:

1. Teacher talk: examining the amount and type of teacher talk, questions teachers ask, speech modifications they make, and feedback they provide to students.
2. Learner behaviours: examining developmental aspects of learners' language, their personal learning styles and strategies, and the effect of different topics and task types on learners' language.
3. Teacher-student interaction: examining the effect of interactional modifications on learners' ability to comprehend and acquire the target language.

These three issues have long been classical themes in language classroom research. Specifically, Duff and Early (1996) observed that since the 1980s, much second language (L2) classroom research has examined language use (input, interaction, and output) in particular settings. They also reaffirmed the value of this research for developing our understanding of L2 development and classroom discourse.

However, Nunan (1988) proposed the need for greater focus on a learner-centred curriculum in his criticism that most classroom-based research has focused on aspects of classroom interaction rather than on program planning and implementation. According to Nunan (1988), a learner-centred curriculum "is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught" (p. 2). In other words, the following key features are given emphasis in this curriculum: curriculum planning based on an analysis of student needs, implementation in a communicative language teaching method, and assessment from both the teacher's and learners' perspectives. In contrast, Nunan (1988) failed to see the implications

for autonomy-supportive practices in the learner-centred curriculum because of historical limitation when learner autonomy was only in its beginning stage.

An advantage emerging from a better understanding of learner language use and development is that it lays a foundation for language teachers to facilitate learner development and to design a pedagogy for autonomy. For instance, with a better understanding of learners' first language (L1) use in an L2 classroom, Rivers (2011) practiced innovatively to work against the English-only policy in the Japanese ELT context and in response to the need to for the development of learner autonomy. To foster learner autonomy in language classrooms, Benson (2003) proposed five broad guidelines for teachers to follow in their classroom teaching practices:

1. Be actively involved in students' learning,
2. Provide options and resources,
3. Offer choices and decision-making opportunities,
4. Support learners,
5. Encourage reflection. (Cited in Benson, 2012, p. 33)

These very general principles are naturally followed by practical questions. For instance, how to involve them in student learning, in individual or collective forms? What kinds of options and resources to provide? How to offer choices and decision-making opportunities? How to support learners in emotional, technical, or strategic aspects? How to encourage reflection? These questions are by no means exhaustive, and answers can only be found within classroom research. This means more empirical studies in language classrooms are needed to test guidelines and answer to these practical questions.

In addition, student engagement in learning activity selection and decision-making processes also involves the power dynamic between teacher and learner control in the classroom (Benson, 2011). Benson (2011) noted that it is largely the teachers' duty to plan learning activities and

to assess learner performance, although research shows that student control over planning and evaluation in the classroom has obvious benefits. In other words, Benson (2011) observed that the effectiveness of classroom-based approaches to autonomy lies in how well a teacher can embed specific teaching techniques within a more comprehensive pedagogy for autonomy. However, the teacher's role in the planning and assessing processes is invariably restricted by the external institutional context and the curriculum requirements. Consequently, Benson (2011) called for "critical approaches to language teaching" (p.173) to integrate attempts to introduce learner control into the classroom.

In recent years, the role of contextual factors in the development of learner autonomy has been emphasised in the relevant literature. For example, Gao and Benson (2008) discussed the macro and micro contextual factors in approaches to language learning. Moreover, in Asian contexts, Barnard and Li (2016) organised researchers from eight Asian countries to investigate teachers' beliefs and practices on developing learner autonomy. In the same book, Zhang (2016) concluded from their study of eight countries' reports that "developing high levels of learner autonomy is desirable but sometimes unfeasible due to many cultural and contextual constraints" (p. 157). That is, high levels of learner autonomy are acknowledged by teachers from Asian countries as a desirable capability, but there are feasibility obstacles to the provision of this type of autonomy-supportive pedagogy. The hindrances mainly refer to "cultural and contextual constraints"; to be specific, on classroom teaching. In sum, it remains the EFL teacher's responsibility to develop learner autonomy using a classroom-based approach.

Consequently, many scholars propose a pedagogy for learner autonomy or teaching for learner autonomy (Feryok, 2013; Jiménez Raya, 2009, 2011, 2013; Reinders, 2010; Vásquez, 2015; Vieira, 1999, 2009). Crabbe (1993) claimed explicitly that it is the teacher's responsibility to foster learner autonomy from within the classroom, and gives valuable illustrations of classroom discourses about tasks and their design. As an enthusiastic supporter of pedagogy

for learner autonomy, Jiménez Raya (2009) undertook a critical analysis of language education in Europe and constructed a framework for learner and teacher development. Next, Jiménez Raya (2011) introduced a teacher development multimedia DVD package to enhance pedagogy for autonomy using a case-based approach to promote teacher reflection and action. Similarly, Vásquez (2015) supported further analysis of the implementation of pedagogy for autonomy in FLT through case studies. Furthermore, Jiménez Raya (2013) proposed nine principles to apply when exploring pedagogy for autonomy in language education at the university level, including:

1. encouraging responsibility, choice, and flexible control;
2. providing opportunities to learn and self-regulation;
3. creating opportunities for integration and explicitness;
4. creating opportunities for cognitive autonomy support;
5. developing intrinsic motivation;
6. accepting and providing for learner differentiation;
7. encouraging action-orientedness;
8. fostering conversational interactions; and
9. promoting reflective inquiry. (Jiménez Raya, 2013, pp. 127-133)

The issue of 'how' in Benson (2003) follows the nine principles proposed by Jiménez Raya (2013) in its discussion of five broad guidelines for teaching practices. One of the complexities of classroom research lies in its variety. Every teacher has his or her own way to "encourage", "provide opportunities", "create", and "interact" with students according to their individual backgrounds. Therefore, the answer as to whether the principles or guidelines are useful or applicable in specific classroom contexts can only be found in the specific classroom, in individual teachers' pedagogical practices.

In a similar vein, Reinders (2010) proposed a framework of skills that could be used by teachers as a guide to increasing learner responsibility. The practical skills include: identifying needs, setting goals, planning learning activities, selecting resources, selecting learning strategies, practice, monitoring processes, assessment and revision, and underpinning autonomous learning with reflection and motivation. Vieira (1999, 2009, 2010) proposed that pedagogy for autonomy could be supported through teacher development and education programs, or via collaborative learning communities. In well-designed professional development programs, language teachers have the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills proposed by Reinders (2010), or to conduct action research to learn more about and reflect on their own actions in the classroom. These programs help language teachers to develop their professionalism in a sustainable manner and to gain effective skills for autonomy-supportive pedagogy.

2.3.2 Classroom research for teacher professional development

Classroom research was originally conducted for teacher professional development, either by the classroom teacher himself/herself or by a teacher trainer. Conducting classroom research in a teacher's own classes and evaluating existing research in the field is a useful pathway for the teacher to become more effective (McKay, 2006). Going back to the origins of classroom research in the 1950s, teacher trainers often used observation methods and provision of feedback to solve the problems they encountered when helping student teachers to develop their teaching practices (Allwright & Bailey, 1991).

Evidently, the findings in these classroom research studies always provided insightful implications for teacher training and professional development. The new trends put forward four challenges for common language teachers as learners to meet the needs of the time. Firstly, research investigations into micro-level teacher classroom behaviours suggests teachers need to be reflective practitioners (Farrell, 2013, 2015; Farrell & Ives, 2015). Indeed the use of video recordings have been identified as a particularly useful strategy (Susoy, 2015).

Secondly, research into the macro-level sociocultural context of language teaching reminds teachers to promote their awareness of culture (Palfreyman, 2003) and to consider the ecological perspective of the language classroom against the backdrop of globalisation (Feng, 2016). Furthermore, the increasing prevalence of information and communication technologies (ICT) and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) in language classroom requires teachers to learn and embrace technology in innovative ways to meet the needs of their students (O'Hara, Pritchard, Huang, & Pella, 2013). Finally, how to make effective interactive decisions and to manage student contributions in classroom interactions are also critical skills for language teachers to learn as part of their professional training and development (Fagan, 2013). Over time, the teacher's sense of autonomy has been found to play a critical role in the development of teacher cognition, cultural awareness, technology integration, and interactive decision making (Hargreaves et al., 2013) . However, empirical evidence form studies on teacher autonomy and professional practices in language classrooms is difficult to locate.

The procedures for conducting investigations of language classroom practices have been influenced by many different disciplines including education, sociology, psychology, linguistics, Applied Linguistics, and so forth (Chaudron, 1988). Chaudron distinguished four traditions at least: psychometric, interaction analysis, discourse analysis, and ethnographic. Borrowing Edmondson's (1989) book review on three classroom-based research studies in 1988, the research methods vary from Chaudron's (1988) carefully controlled experimentation to van Lier's (1988) fight for ethnography, as well as Allwright (1988) attempt to understand how it has come about by observation. McKay (2006) developed a continuum of classroom research methods from action research, to survey research, introspective research, and on to qualitative research with many other subcategories. Among these recommendations, class-room based action research by language teachers was passionately encouraged by researchers (Burns, 1999, 2010; McKay, 2006; Nunan, 1989; Petrón & Uzum, 2016).

In sum, the above review demonstrated how teachers are a major beneficiary of language classroom research. Chaudron (1988) even broadened the range of benefits and confirmed that classroom-oriented research can guide the teacher, curriculum developer, researcher, or administrator toward principles of effective instruction by the noting different effects of language classroom processes. However, there is also the need for more classroom research that examines the relationships between the internal and external dimensions of teacher autonomy; especially teachers' attitudes and practices in the classroom in specific institutional contexts.

2.3.3 Teacher autonomy in classroom practices

In recent years, research into teacher behaviour at the micro-level (i.e., in the classroom) has gain in prominence, with focus on such aspects as teacher cognition (Borg, 2006; Kubanyiova, 2015), teacher beliefs (Doğruer, Meneviş, & Eyyam, 2010; Farrell & Ives, 2015; Hos & Kekec, 2014), and improvisation or creativity in language teaching (Berk & Trieber, 2009; Jones & Richards, 2016; Okten & Griffin, 2016). Research into micro-level aspects such as teacher cognition and beliefs account for classroom behaviour from a mental and cognitive perspective, and reveals the 'why' under observable classroom teaching phenomenon.

At the same time, macro-level research studies of the sociocultural context of language teaching have also attracted increased attention. According to Dull and Early (1996), classroom language forms and functions may need to be examined in terms of broader educational issues such as assessment, curriculum, multi-culturalism, socioeconomic reproduction, and academic discourses. It is also increasingly argued that research into language classroom practices should be context-dependent because a prerequisite for any effective change in language classroom practices is that the teacher understands the existing classroom context as much as possible (Nind, Curtin, & Hall, 2016; Wedell & Malderez, 2013). In addition, Kumaravadivelu (2012) has called for a shift from the teaching of methods and strategies to empowering teachers to

theorise about teaching practices. As argued by the author, such theorising is achieved through understanding the needs that continually manifest within their own teaching contexts, integrating changes to support these needs, analysing their teaching practices and student learning, and reflecting on the impact of their teaching. Research into the macro-level sociocultural context of language teaching will facilitate a deeper level of understanding of how external factors shape or reshape language classroom teaching.

Teacher autonomy is assumed to mediate micro-level teacher classroom behaviours and the impact of the macro-level sociocultural context. In this situation, teacher autonomy and teacher agency are interchangeable. Molina (2017) studied teacher agency among Chinese English language teachers to understand the ways in which they adapted the curriculum to their local contexts. Feryok (2013) suggested that "teacher autonomy was the foundation on which this teacher's cognitions and practices were built" (p. 223). Feryok situated the study within the framework of sociocultural theory to explain the teacher's role in developing learner autonomy, but found that teacher autonomy might be the hiding reason. Indeed, Benson and Huang (2008) have identified a research transition from foreign language learning to teaching, and accordingly learner autonomy to teacher autonomy. However, empirical research into teacher autonomy in classroom practice is rare.

One teacher autonomy practice points to teacher-learner interactions in the classroom. Research into teacher-learner interactions has a long tradition in the field, particularly since Bellack, Kliebard, and Hyman (1966) first identified the three-part interactive structure known as teacher Initiation-Response-Feedback/Evaluation (IRF or IRE). Although the importance of this typical interactive structure in classroom language learning has been established as early as Allwright (1984), the difficulty of categorising and analysing irregular patterns of interaction have long existed (van Lier, 1984). In van Lier's (1984) words; "When we carve up interaction in any way, we will always find irregular pieces and leftovers" (p. 165). For example, Boulima

(1999), and Jenks and Seedhouse (2015) found that the functional structure of a teaching exchange in language classroom discourse is far more complex than the basic IRF structure elaborated by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). The last few decades have witnessed an increasing interest in teacher-student classroom interactions (Jenks & Seedhouse, 2015). This trend has subsequently contributed to new findings on the complexity of the interactions and teachers' interactive decision-making in language classrooms. At the same time, it is evident that the interaction complexity is beyond the explanation of classical themes in classroom research, teacher curriculum design, teaching methods, or professional training. This is due in part to the autonomous discretion demonstrated by teachers in the complex patterns of interaction.

In these complex, dynamic, and fluid interactional processes, language teachers' decision-making cannot be considered as a basic skill (Kleven, 1991). For instance, Chiang (2006) found that the schemata of expert teachers' interactive decision-making comprised well-developed knowledge structures and effective classroom strategies, along with on-going monitoring, assessment and reflection. As a result, making such interactive decisions poses different types of demands on teachers (Zhu, 2014).

The global trend in education towards technology-based classroom practices also challenges teacher autonomy. ICT and CALL have emerged as a new focus of classroom research interest. ICTs have unquestionably changed language classroom practices (Gilakjani, 2014) and although there are many advantages associated with their successful integration in the classroom (e.g., Gilakjani, (2014)), many teachers remain reluctant to embrace ICTs (Papadima-Sophocleous, Giannikas, & Kakoulli-Constantinou, 2014). In addition, a general lack of CALL preparation in teacher preparation programs was observed (Papadima-Sophocleous et al., 2014). As a result, researchers call for more formal in-and pre-service teacher training and rich affordances of ICT knowledge for EFL teachers to facilitate language teachers' better utilisation of ICTs in the classroom (Gilakjani, 2014; Papadima-Sophocleous

et al., 2014). Particularly, teachers' attitudes toward ICT in English language classrooms (Seraji, Ziabari, & Rokni, 2017) and autonomy-supportive teaching in CALL contexts (Reinders & White, 2016) are emerging as increasingly attractive and promising research fields.

2.4 CE teacher autonomy in China and its constraints

2.4.1 CE teacher autonomy in China

Regarding CE teacher autonomy in China, this review focuses on three issues: 1) the meaning of the concept of teacher autonomy in the Chinese context, 2) the current situation of Chinese CE teacher autonomy, and 3) the feasibility of autonomous teaching in China.

Regarding the first issue, there are many different views. For example, Li (2013) defined teacher autonomy in China as the teacher's ability to be autonomous in their teaching in relation to knowledge structures, thinking, and creative ability. In addition, one of the most complex understandings of teacher autonomy belongs to Gao and Li (2011) in which they propose six capability levels:

> 1. The capability to combine pedagogical theories and teaching reality to flexibly master and internalise the teaching syllabus, as well as design and revise course aims and plans;
> 2. The capability to choose and integrate teaching materials and methods, and to conduct inside and outside of class activities;
> 3. The capability to train learners to master and utilise learning strategies, and to encourage learner autonomy in effective pedagogical strategies;
> 4. Teacher's self-monitoring and reflecting on teaching processes and behaviours;
> 5. The capability to handle external constraints; and
> 6. The capability for autonomy development and life-long learning.
>
> (Gao & Li, 2011, p. 30, translated by the author)

It is evident that Chinese scholars have attempted to adapt the Western concept of teacher autonomy to the Chinese context. Firstly, there are many literature reviews on the introduction of the concept of teacher autonomy into China (Fang, 2013; Jiang & Ma, 2012; Qian, 2005). Qian (2005) reviewed major works on teacher autonomy in both China and abroad, and discussed the relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy. Furthermore, the author suggested several ways to realise autonomy in teacher professional development. Fang (2013) introduced major works on teacher autonomy in Western countries from a sociocultural perspective and commented that the Chinese counterparts were young and insufficient.

Chinese scholars also applied their own understanding of teacher autonomy to its definition. For example, in response to the rapid development of language centres and the internet in China, Zhang and Song (2014) discussed the concept of teacher autonomy in an information technology environment and the Chinese EFL context. There are also a small number of researchers who advocate teacher autonomy as a 'right'. One such researcher is Wu (2004), who has argued that symbolic control of curriculum autonomy is the form of communication by the institution to its teachers. Therefore, teachers should read school texts critically as a way to achieve self-empowerment through discourse. To sum up, most Chinese researchers view teacher autonomy as a series of capabilities, while there are also those who have the opinion that more rights should be given to teachers to act with autonomy in the classroom. Moreover, time characteristics—like information technology—and Chinese sociocultural factors are increasingly included in the interpretation of teacher autonomy in China.

The relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy is also subject to the unique sociocultural context in China. The examination system in China is such a prevalent common objective that it presents as an obstacle to learner autonomy and teacher autonomy. Concurrently, the CET4/6 examination unites learner autonomy and teacher autonomy, given the importance of examination results for both teachers and students in China. To clarify,

teachers need the examinations to prove the effectiveness of their teaching or to use as learning support materials to promote student application and students need examinations to pursue further education, a diploma, or better job opportunities. Autonomously, "the teachers focus on helping their students prepare for these tests, and the students focus on passing them" (Sun & Henrichsen, 2011, p. 2). In other words, passing the CET4/6 examination becomes a shared expectation between CE teachers and their students, which gives both teacher and learner autonomy a direction.

Furthermore, empirical studies on the relationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy in China align with the claim made by Little (1995) that learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy. In the Chinese EFL context, the findings by Chen (2011) support the view of Little (1995) that teacher autonomy has an overall and positive impact on learner autonomy. Chen (2011) specified that effective communication between teachers and students has the greatest effect on learner autonomy. Chen's study collected empirical data via questionnaire and in-depth interviews from 207 non-English major students and their English teachers (6 in total) at a Chinese university. The author measured six learner autonomy variables and seven teacher autonomy variables. The six learner autonomy variables included: knowing the teaching aim, planning learning targets, using strategies, monitoring strategy use, and monitoring the learning process. The seven teacher autonomy variables included: moderating teaching content, organising classroom teaching activities, motivating student interest, effective communication, assessing student performance, developing students learning ability, and creative teaching. Although the study comprised only a small sample (especially the teacher sample) from a common Chinese tertiary school, it claims to have high internal consistency.

When comparing Chinese and Western researchers' views of teacher autonomy, it is apparent that both parties believe teacher autonomy to be a capability. However, Chinese researchers

tend to broaden the range of this capability (e.g., Qian (2005)), whereas Western researchers seldom define teacher autonomy in such a detailed way. In addition, the discussion and consideration on other dimensions of teacher autonomy given by Chinese scholars are insufficient.

In terms of the current context of CE teacher autonomy in China, most studies present negative results. That is, Chinese CE teachers are not autonomous enough in their teaching practices. Gao and Li (2011) found that CE teacher autonomy is not strong in general. They conducted a questionnaire survey of 116 CE teachers at five Chinese universities and found that CE teachers are not autonomous in six key aspects: 1) flexibly mastering and internalising the teaching syllabus; 2) selecting, developing and utilising textbooks or course-related resources, and in their willingness to spare time and energy to organise teaching activities out of class; 3) training students in cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and in knowing students' strategy utilisation; 4) reflecting on teaching processes and behaviours; 5) handling external constraints; and 6) writing research papers at a satisfactory level.

Quantitative methods seem to be preferred by Chinese scholars when researching teacher autonomy in China. For instance, Zhang and Shu's (2014) questionnaire surveyed 300 CE teachers at 10 Chinese universities and colleges. Their questionnaire consisted of seven more complicated and refined aspects: teaching goal and plan, teaching content design and selection, ability to control the teaching process, assessment and reflection, facilitating learner autonomy, adapting to the environment, autonomous learning, and professional development. The authors found only average level ability of CE teachers to act autonomously.

Qualitative methods like interviews are gradually gaining their place in CE teacher autonomy research. For example, An's (2011) empirical study included face to face interviews with 30 CE teachers to examine three aspects of autonomy: control of teaching environment, flexibility

in classroom teaching, and professional development. An (2011) found that teachers' personal desire for professional development is not strong enough and that the external autonomy-supportive environment needs to be improved.

Regarding the feasibility of autonomous teaching in China, there are two considerations from internal and external perspectives, respectively. From an internal perspective, whether CE teachers can teach autonomously depends on the capabilities of the CE teachers in China. However, the survey results presented in previous paragraphs showed that the autonomous teaching in China is not progressing adequately because CE teacher autonomy is generally not satisfying. From an external perspective, it depends on whether the CE teachers' working conditions allow them to conduct autonomous teaching. In the following paragraphs, I will review studies of the external conditions of CE teachers' autonomous teaching in China.

Many studies on CE teacher autonomy have noted a certain degree of constraint due to the nature of the Chinese education system and the educational reforms. For example, scholars have begun to pay attention to the constraints, influences and countermeasures of CE teacher autonomy or its development from various perspectives (Chen & Liu, 2012; Shi, 2011; Zhang, 2008). Regarding the unavoidable constraints, CE teachers' attitudes play a critical role in the feasibility of autonomous teaching in the Chinese context. However, the above research failed to demonstrate how these external constraints influence CE teachers' attitudes toward autonomous teaching. Therefore, it is worthy of this study to examine CE teachers' attitudes to autonomous teaching which is subject to external constraints.

2.4.2 Constraints on teacher autonomy in China

The word 'constraint' appears frequently in many studies on teacher autonomy. Many scholars have mentioned the various factors to constrain teacher autonomy from their specific perspectives. Trebbi (2008) claimed that teachers are never free from constraints and pointed

to three main constraints: external, in the form of institutional and curricular constraints; internal, such as teacher attitudes and beliefs; and supportive, such as those which offer new experiences and encourage critical reflection on existing representations of teaching and learning. From a practical perspective, a needs analysis of Chinese teachers of English related to designing teacher training materials by Sinclair (2009) found several constraints that make Chinese CE teacher feel frustrated:

- Teachers have a relative lack of freedom as professionals, but have a desire to be more flexible and innovative, and to use more learner-centred methodologies.
- A culture of examination-oriented teaching and goal-setting dominates classroom practices.
- Students are not used to taking responsibility for their learning and are mostly instrumentally motivated by the need to pass examinations.
- Classes tend to be rather large (40 to 70 students), so student learning needs go unrecognised.
- Among teachers, there is a relative lack of experience in using new technologies for learning and teaching, but a desire to do so.
- Teachers perceive a need for greater learner autonomy and teacher autonomy.
- Teachers are not familiar with ways to promote greater autonomy in their learners.
- Teachers feel disempowered to some extent as professionals in their context. They are generally able to exert control over their teaching only with regard to methodology and, to some extent, by introducing supplementary materials once the syllabus has been completed. (Sinclair, 2009, p. 182)

This list of eight constraints on CE teachers in China can be categorised into two parts. The first four items are rooted in teachers' working conditions including: institutional administration, examination-oriented culture of education, student obedience, and large

language classes. The last four items relate to the CE teachers themselves. They lack experience, desire for autonomy, lack strategy in promoting learner autonomy, and have a feeling of disempowered. According to Wilches (2007), the first four items belong to external constraints, while the latter four are internal constraints.

Benson (2010) was aware of the systemic constraints in Hong Kong secondary public schools, and stressed "Schemes of Work" and school-based supervision and surveillance mechanisms were the root causes of the problem. Benson (2013) then determined there were six layers of outer constraints on teaching and learning interaction in the classroom (Figure 2.1): classroom rules and conventions, school rules and conventions, curricular/schemes of work, public examinations, education policies, and conceptions of language teaching and learning. Benson's six-layer explanation of constraints illustrates the situation of CE teaching in China. Schemes of work and public examinations, particularly are influential factors in Chinese universities. However, understanding how these constraints influence practical classroom teaching requires more empirical evidence.

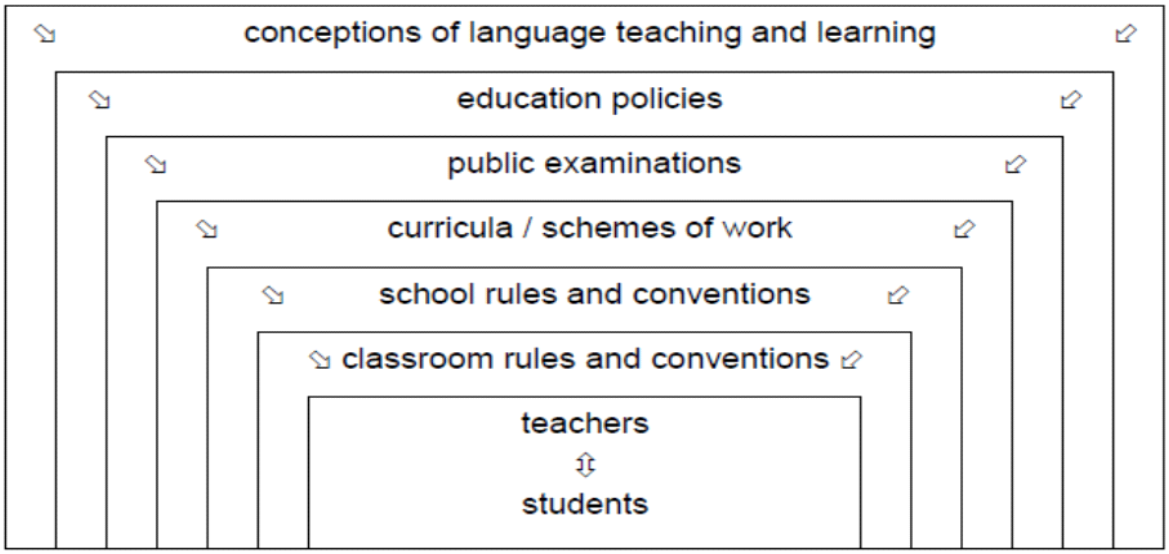


Figure 2.1Constraints on teacher autonomy (Benson, 2013, p. 9)

2.5 Research questions (RQ)

The review of the literature above was used as a springboard to gain a better understanding of teacher autonomy and its relation to learner autonomy. In this process, the theoretical framework of teacher autonomy in Smith (2003) was taken as a starting point. Some key dimensions were then pinpointed and revisited, including teacher capability, professional development, freedom in institutional context, and teachers' attitudes towards autonomy-supportive teaching. In addition, autonomy-supportive teaching was argued to be a manifestation of teacher autonomy. There is clearly the need for language classroom research to gather further evidence of teacher autonomy because all theoretical constructs of teacher autonomy are assumed to be realised through pedagogical processes (Benson, 2010; Little, 1995; Tort-Moloney, 1997). Moreover, this review highlighted that CE teacher autonomy has unique characteristics and constraints in the Chinese sociocultural context because teacher autonomy is suggested to be better understood as a non-static and relative concept (Helgøy & Homme, 2007) in a specific school institutional context.

From a teacher's perspective, if autonomy as teacher capability is something that can be measured psychologically (2.4.1) and fostered educationally (2.1.2), it is natural to see higher or lower levels of autonomy among different teachers. At the same time, from a sociocultural perspective, it is the administrators' responsibility to foster teacher autonomy or to create an autonomy-supportive environment (Strong & Yoshida, 2014), and the teachers' responsibility to reflect on and promote autonomy in themselves (Gao & Li, 2011; Qian, 2005). In other words, research studies of teacher autonomy should attach greater importance to the role of contextual factors in the development of teacher autonomy.

Moreover, several empirical studies on CE teacher autonomy in China were reviewed. The data-based research revealed three characteristics of teacher autonomy in the Chinese context. Firstly, Chinese researchers tended to define teacher autonomy as a capability (Gao & Li, 2011).

Accordingly, the dependence of learner autonomy on teacher autonomy also showed sociocultural characteristics in the Chinese context. Secondly, the research findings on teacher autonomy in China were not optimistic (Gao & Li, 2011; Zhang & Shu, 2014). In other words, CE teacher autonomy in China is not satisfactory. Thirdly, internal and external constraints on CE teacher autonomy were evident (Benson, 2013; Sinclair, 2009).

All literature reviewed guides the research on teacher autonomy towards teachers' classroom practices (2.3.3), especially teachers' attitudes towards the influence of autonomy on their teaching practices in their specific context. Therefore, the research questions in this study are:

1. What are Chinese CE teachers' attitudes toward learner autonomy and teacher autonomy in their work?
2. What are CE teachers' practices in their classrooms?
3. Do their teaching practices align with their attitudes toward autonomy?
4. What does teacher autonomy mean in the context of CE teaching in China?

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study is a single case study to explore teacher autonomy at a Chinese public university. I will explain in detail the case selection (3.1), participant selection (3.2), data collection (3.3), and data analysis (3.4) processes. Finally, the validity, reliability and ethics issues (3.5 &3.6) are also discussed.

3.1 Case definition and selection

A case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, p. 16). This study adopts a case study approach, which according to Stake (1995), is not so much the choice of the researcher, but the choice of the research itself. To clarify, Yin (2014) explicitly lists three decisive criteria related to the choice of research strategy: (a) the type of research questions posed, (b) the extent of the control the researcher has over actual situations, and (c) whether the research focuses on contemporary or historical phenomena. A precondition of choosing a case study design is thus a clear understanding of the research questions, as well as the type and characteristic of the questions.

Firstly, a case study is suitable for this research because of the type of research questions being asked. The research questions in this study aim to explore how teacher autonomy functions in Chinese CE classroom teaching context. They are characterised as descriptive and explanatory. "A case study research method is appropriate when the researcher wants to answer a descriptive question or an explanatory question" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 445). So, a case study design can help me to answer the research questions. Another reason for choosing a case study

design is, “the operational constructs using closed-ended responses developed by researchers fail to uncover the deep nuances and dynamic interactions between thoughts and actions within and between individuals” (Woodside, 2010, p. 3). Here, fixed choice questionnaires are typical closed-ended response structures developed by researchers. Though a questionnaire survey has many advantages, an in-depth case study is preferred to explore the deep nuances and dynamic interactions in and between teachers’ thoughts and actions. Since the focus of this study—teacher autonomy—is considered a complex and dynamic interaction between teachers’ capabilities and the institutional context, it is necessary to describe this interaction in detail. All in all, a case study approach is appropriate and useful for this study.

Secondly, one case was selected in this study for the possibility of an in-depth investigation shedding light on a larger class of cases. Stake (1995) distinguishes case studies into three categories: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. An intrinsic case study is undertaken out of the researcher’s intrinsic interest in the specific case. An instrumental case study uses the case to understand something else, something more general. In other words, one case can be studied as an instrument to understand more cases. With regard to this study, it is undertaken as a result of this researcher’s intrinsic interest in the case, furthermore, the case also serves as an instrument to learn more about a large class of cases as well as to probe the theory of teacher autonomy. Gerring (2007) understands a case’s instrumental function similarly, stating: “a case study may be understood as the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is—at least in part—to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population)” (p. 20). In this study, my personal experience entails an intrinsic interest to study the case which served as an instrument for readers to also gain insight into more similar public universities in China.

Finally, this study attempts to investigate teacher autonomy in classroom practice, which is obviously contemporary rather than historical. The practice of teacher autonomy changes according to different times and places (Wermke & Höstfält, 2014). In contemporary China,

CE is experiencing rapid and profound reform, while the issue in question is changeable and disparate from university to university. Therefore, this study focuses on only one university in contemporary China.

3.1.1 Research site

According to Stake (1995), "the case is a specific, a complex, functioning thing", and "an integrated system" (p. 2). In this study, a Chinese public university is just such a 'thing and system'. However, Chinese public universities generally fall into two categories: key and non-key universities. Key universities are fewer and enjoy a large amount of financial support and creative space from the central government, whereas non-key universities are far more common and receive less financial support and freedom from the local government.

The case university is a non-key public university in central China. As a provincial multi-discipline university, it has a history of over 50 years, specialising in engineering, with other undergraduate programs covering majors such as science, management, economics, and the liberal arts. The university has an enrolment of more than 20,000 full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students under the supervision of 2300 faculty members. The data used in this thesis is adopted from the official website of the university which is not noted explicitly for confidential reasons.

The selected university meets four criteria to be the case in this study. The purpose of the study is the first criterion. Because the focus of this study is teacher autonomy in EFL classrooms, CE teachers in a non-key public university are the most represented. Given the unbalanced development between universities in different areas of China, a non-key public university in central China avoids going to the extremes, which is the second criterion in this study. In terms of the third criterion, the scale of the case is a factor that should be considered. A university which is too large or too small is not suitable for this research. Finally, researcher access is the

fourth criterion. Since I keep a position at the university, I enjoy full access to the participants and can obtain rich information in the most effective and the least defensive way.

The School of Foreign Languages is one of 16 schools at the university. It is composed of six teaching units: two College English Departments, one English Department, one Business English Department, a Department of Language and Culture Dissemination, and a Postgraduate English Department. Among the six departments, the College English Departments are regarded as lower profile than the English Department because teachers in the former teach non-English majors, whereas teachers in the latter teach English majors. As a result, teachers teaching English-majored students are expected to have a Doctor's degree, but not those teaching non-English majors in the College English Departments.

3.1.2 Staff composition

There are 125 full-time staff in total in the School of Foreign Languages (all data in this part was calculated in October 2015 during data collection), comprising 107 faculty members and 18 teacher administrators. The faculty members are a rather young group—the average age is 36 years—the majority of whom are women (n = 84). In terms of academic titles, there are eight professors, 41 associate professors, 53 lecturers, and five associate lecturers. All faculty members hold a Master's degree or above, while nine hold a Doctor's degree. It is an increasing trend in China's universities that faculty members have overseas education experience.

3.1.3 College English teachers

Among the 125 faculty members, there are 58 full-time College English teachers at the school. The teachers do not have their individual office to work in, and are assigned and managed in two big meeting-room-like offices: College English Teaching and Research Office (1) and (2).

In Office (1) there are 29 faculty members, three males and 26 females. Four members in the Office were absent for this study: two were visiting another school as a scholar, one is pursuing

a PhD degree aboard, and one is working abroad. In terms of the academic titles of the faculty members in this office, one is a professor, 10 are associate professors, 16 are lecturers, and two are associate lecturers.

In Office (2), there is the same number of faculty members: six males and 23 females. There were three members absent: one was visiting another school as a scholar, one is pursuing a PhD degree aboard, and one was on sick leave. Regarding their academic titles, 12 are associate professors, 15 are lecturers, and two are associate lecturers.

3.2 Participants

Fourteen CE teachers and six administrators were recruited for this case study. This participant recruitment result reflected to a certain degree the CE teachers' desire to be given attention and their enthusiasm to participate in academic research.

3.2.1 Teacher participants

As I introduced in Section 3.1.3, there are 58 full-time CE teachers at the School, with seven absent for different reasons. There were 51 potential participants in the case. It was impossible for me to interview and observe all of them within the time and budget limitations. Therefore, a set of criteria (three criteria) was necessary for the recruitment of teacher participants.

Firstly, a balance between two teaching tasks was a criterion. Because there were two College English Offices (one who oversaw freshmen CE teaching and one who oversaw sophomore students), five to 10 CE teachers were recruited from each Office based on the different teaching tasks. Secondly, years of teaching experience were set as another selection criterion. I tried to cover all teaching experience groups from novice teacher (less than three years' teaching experience) to experienced teachers (more than 10 years' teaching experience). Finally, professional titles were the third criterion. According to the stratified sampling

principle (O'Leary, 2014), a similar percentage of teachers was chosen for each academic title, namely professor, associate professor, lecturer, and associate lecturer. However, the 'highest degree' held by the teacher was not a criterion even though it has been found to influence teacher autonomy significantly (Zhang & Shu, 2014). Because all CE teachers in the case held a Master's degree, which was a must for teachers in the school, no teacher with a higher degree could be found until the time of data collection.

As for the recruitment procedure, I first posted my project advertisement online on the official department social media website. I then emailed all 51 teachers to introduce my project and to ask for volunteers.

Table 3. 1 The demographic information of the teacher participants

No	Office	Name	Sex	Age	Title	Working years	Class size
1	1	Donna	F	41-50	L	≥16	31
2	1	Grace	F	31-40	L	≥16	40
3	1	Lisa	F	31-40	L	11-15	24
4	1	Mary	F	31-40	L	11-15	33
5	1	Sam	M	41-50	L	1-5	20
6	1	Sarah	F	21-30	A	1-5	28
7	1	Ruth	F	31-40	L	11-15	22
8	1	Helen	F	21-30	A	1-5	25
9	1	Betty	F	31-40	AP	≥16	25
10	2	Linda	F	31-40	L	11-15	66
11	2	Nancy	F	31-40	L	6-10	32
12	2	Susan	F	31-40	L	11-15	38
13	2	Mark	M	41-50	AP	20	67
14	2	Elisa	F	41-50	AP	≥16	71

Note: A=Associate Lecturer; L=Lecturer; AP=Associate Professor

Finally, 14 CE teachers were recruited as participants. Their demographic information is illustrated in Table 3.1. To ensure confidentiality, all participant names have been replaced with pseudonyms. There are several points in the table that should be noted. Firstly, there were nine teachers from Office (1) and five teachers from Office (2). This imbalance was due to the national policy of one-month freshmen military training, a traditional and a compulsory course

for all freshmen in Chinese tertiary education. In the first month of data collection—September 2015, CE teachers in Office (2) were on leave because their freshman students were undertaking military training at the beginning of their campus life. As a result, I could only collect data from teachers in Office (1).

Secondly, most participants were female teachers (n = 12). It is a common phenomenon that female teachers occupy most teaching positions at the School of Foreign Languages. The percentage of male teacher participants (14%) in this study aligned approximately with that of male teachers in all CE teachers (15.5%, calculated from data provided on the School official webpage). This gender difference observed the stratified sampling principle I adopted during participant selection. Third, my participants were generally young—most in their thirties—which also reflected the age of most CE teachers. Fourth, most participants were experienced teachers with a 'Lecturer' title. This outcome similarly reflected the titles generally held by the CE teachers at the School.

Finally, 'class size' in the table referred to the class being observed. Every teacher had to teach three classes to meet the minimum workload requirement at the school. Because I only observed one class offered by the participant, it was the observed class marked here. Class size varied from 20 to more than 70 students. Table 3.1 shows nine teachers in Office (1) worked had comparatively smaller classes because these classes included sophomore students who had not passed the national exam (CET4). As such, they had to attend the CE class to prepare for the exam again. In contrast, the five teachers from Office (2) had large classes because all freshmen students had to attend this course as a compulsory requirement.

3.2.2 Administrator selection

Erickson (1967) views school administrator as "the formally designated leader" (p. 417), school principals most frequently. However, in the Chinese college context, a school principal

is a faraway symbol, while middle or high-level administrators are direct leaders of teachers' work and evaluation, and the organisers of weekly faculty meetings most frequently. What is more, the word 'administrator' is an umbrella term for many different levels of bureaucratic officials. At School of Foreign Languages in the case university, the two main administrator categories are teaching management and administrative management—in charge of academic and administrative affairs, respectively—and each is comprised of four ranks as shown in Table 3.2:

Table 3. 2 Organisational structure of administrators

	Teaching management	Administrative management
Highest leader	Dean	Secretary of the Party
High level	Vice Deans	Deputy secretary of the Party
Middle level	Directors of the Teaching and Research Offices	Chief clerk
Low level	Teaching secretaries	Clerks/Political instructors

Administrators in this study refer to middle or high-level educational administrators. There are two reasons for selecting administrators in this range. For one thing, school principals are not a regular factor in CE teachers' work routine. For the other reason, middle or high-level administrators have a direct influence on teacher management and work practices. For example, one director from each CE Office is in charge of 29 faculty members. S/he arranges the workload of teachers, organises weekly faculty meetings, conveys important news or decisions from the School management, evaluates teachers' performances, etc. They may therefore play a role in creating or restricting autonomy in the teaching environment.

Finally, the Dean and a Vice Dean of the School of Foreign Languages, two Directors of the College English Teaching and Research Offices, a Director of Teacher Professional Development Office of the University, and a teacher supervisor were interviewed. The demographic information of the administrators is illustrated in Table 3.3. To ensure confidentiality, all participant names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Table 3. 3 The demographic information of the administrator participants

No	Name	Sex	Age	Title	Working years
1	Jack	M	≥50	Dean	≥30
2	Sue	F	41-50	Vice Dean	≥16
3	Yung	F	41-50	Director	≥16
4	Mark	M	41-50	Director	≥16
5	Leon	M	31-40	Director	≥10
6	Rose	F	≥50	Supervisor	≥30

There are two points worth noting in Table 3.3. Firstly, Mark was interviewed and observed as a CE teacher as well as an administrator because he worked at the school as a double-tasked faculty member—a so-called 'two-shoulder in charge' in Chinese. The work experience accumulated from the administrative position can always lay a foundation for a promotion to a higher-level position.

In addition, Jack and Rose were over 50, the retirement age. They were reemployed after retirement for their rich experience in academic management and teacher supervision skills, respectively. Jack has many years of experience at a top university and a private university, while Rose was the only professor at the College English Department for many years before her retirement. She was considered as a CE teacher coach and reemployed after retirement.

3.3 Data collection

Data collection in the case university in China lasted eight weeks from September to October in 2015. According to the three principles outlined by Woodside (2010), data in this study were collected systematically. First, triangulation methods and multi informants should be a necessity to confirm and deepen information. Second, as an objective, case study research can be used to probe theory. Third, multiple cases, or multiple behaviours and events within one case study, can be examined to deepen understanding of patterns and contingencies related to

theory. To be specific, in this study, 14 teacher participants (3.2.1) served as the main informants. Their classroom teaching was observed, and their opinions were obtained via interview. Hence, their thoughts and actions were triangulated with reference to documented data such as national policies, school rules, classroom observation field notes, etc. Though this study investigated only one case, participants' multiple behaviours and events in the classroom were examined to deepen our understanding of the concept of teacher autonomy and its function in classroom practices.

3.3.1 Theory for data collection methods

To answer the research questions, data were collected according to particular purposes and methods. The relations among the three parts are shown in Table 3.4:

Table 3. 4 The relationship between the research questions and data collection methods

	Research questions	Purposes	Methods
1	What are Chinese CE teachers' attitudes toward learner and teacher autonomy in their work?	Probe into theory	Teacher interviews
2	What are CE teachers' practices in their classrooms?	Comparison	Classroom observations SRI
3	Do their teaching practices align with their attitudes toward autonomy?	Comparison Triangulation	Teacher interviews, SRI Classroom observations
4	What does teacher autonomy mean in the context of College English teaching in China?	Probe into theory Triangulation	Documents Administrator interviews Classroom observations

According to Merriam (1998), "the data collection techniques used, as well as the specific information considered to be 'data' in a study, are determined by the researcher's theoretical orientation, by the problem and purpose of the study, and by the sample selected" (p. 70). Using the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 as my theoretical orientation, I considered my data mainly from three groups of informants: teachers, administrators, and documents. In terms of data collection techniques, "data collection in case study research usually involves all three strategies of interviewing, observing and analysing documents" (Merriam, 1998, p. 137).

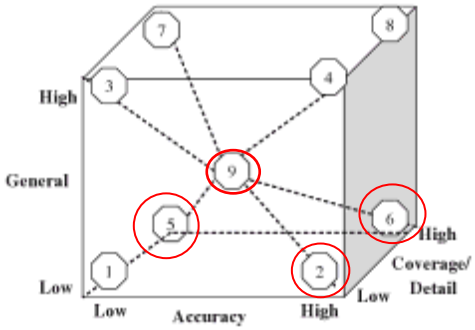
Therefore, I adopted three main qualitative data collection techniques in this study: classroom observation, participant interview, and document analysis.

14 CE teachers (3.2.1) were the primary group of informants and they provided three sources of data. Firstly, semi-structured teacher interviews were conducted to explore participants' attitudes towards autonomy. Secondly, teaching practices were observed and recorded via classroom observation. Thirdly, stimulated recall interviews (SRI) on the teacher's classroom teaching video were conducted to probe their thoughts and insights into the teaching process.

This study aimed to understand teacher autonomy in a specific institutional context. Therefore, rich supporting evidence reflecting the actual context was necessary. The second group of informants were the six administrators (3.2.2). Their opinions on autonomy and teacher assessments were collected via semi-structured interviews which included similar questions to those asked of the teachers. Finally, national/school policies and other documents were a group of silent informants in this study. The second and third group of informants together provided substantial data pertaining to the teaching context.

Moreover, two sources of data were used to gain both internal and external perspectives of teacher autonomy. The internal factors influencing teacher autonomy were derived from the teachers themselves via semi-structured interviews and a direct record of their practices via classroom observations. The external factors influencing teacher autonomy were gathered via the analysis of relevant documents and via administrator interviews.

Furthermore, Woodside (2010) presents a more vivid three-dimensional metaphorical box illustrating eight kinds of research methods and their triangulation in case(s) study research. In Woodside's Box, each method has its high/low degree of general accuracy and coverage/detail, and multiple methods to complement each other as illustrated in Figure3.1.



Metaphor of Case and Multiple Case Study Research. Notes: Key to numbers in Woodside's box: (1) Anecdote, SPI; (2) Thick description; role playing; FMET; CPI; DSA; (3) Fixed-point surveys; (4) Fuzzy set social science; historical analysis; simulation models of thinking and deciding; (5) Multiple anecdotes in different contexts; (6) Multiple case study in same contexts; (7) Naïve observation; (8) Multiple-case system dynamics modelling; (9) Triangulation; mixed-methods; decision systems analysis. SPI, subjective personal introspection; CFI, confirmed personal introspection; FMET, forced metaphor elicitation technique; DSA, decision systems analysis.

Figure 3.1 Woodside's Box metaphor of case and multiple case study research (Woodside, 2010, p. 23)

Based on Woodside's Box metaphor for case(s) study research, data were collected from four sources in this study. Firstly, semi-structured interviews to ascertain CE teachers' understanding of autonomy related to opinions of teacher professional identity, learner autonomy, teacher autonomy, and teacher professional development.

Secondly, the administrators' views were pivotal in this research and worthy of exploration. Most frequently in a Chinese school context, the administrators function as policy makers, supervisors, in-service teacher educators, judges of promotion, and representatives of external and supportive constraints (Trebbi, 2008). Regarding my study on teacher autonomy in CE classrooms, the teachers' attitudes or work results had a direct influence on their pedagogy. For this reason, their opinion were explored via interview.

Thirdly, the teachers' classroom practices were observed to pinpoint their autonomy-related practices in question. Until now, the information obtained from steps one and two has been

reported by the agents themselves. However, O'Leary (2014) points out that “the gulf between what people say they do and what they actually do can be far and wide” (p. 230). In this regard, the alignment between what the teachers reported they do in the classroom and what they did do needed to be verified by classroom observation. The reasons for this are evident: on the one hand, the teachers are the agents of teacher autonomy and are directly influenced by most constitutional and curricular policies which can be reported by interview. On the other hand, the teachers themselves influence their own autonomy according to Trebbi (2008) and Wilches (2007). This means they may not be fully conscious of their actions in the classroom.

Finally, secondary materials were analysed as crucial supporting documents for insights into the external contexts of teacher autonomy. These materials included the Teachers Work Handbook, guidelines, regulations, etc. To be specific, the teachers work manual is a collection of national policies, laws, and mandatory requirements, as well as school rules, conventions and regulations. This small handbook can serve as a tool for triangulation.

The methodology in this study includes a ‘data source triangulation’ protocol (Denzin, 1984). Explained in Woodside’s Box (Figure 3.1), data gathered from three sources: thick descriptions about the research issue (illustrated by ②), a study of multiple subcases in the same context (illustrated by ⑥), and multiple anecdotes across different contexts (illustrated by ⑤) were triangulated (illustrated by ⑨). Firstly, the documents along with the administrators’ interviews formed thick descriptions about the teacher autonomy context in research, providing a high level of data accuracy in theory. Next, all 14 participants’ semi-structured interviews and their classroom practices represented multiple subcases within the same university context. This allowed for a high coverage on data collection. Teacher SRI responses and classroom observation notes comprised multiple anecdotes in different contexts, providing highly detailed accounts of the research issue. Finally, data from these three perspectives were triangulated, constituting a robust theory system for data collection.

3.3.2 Classroom observation

Classroom observation is a powerful method in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) research and is defined as "non-judgmental description of classroom events that can be analysed and given interpretation" (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999, p. 35). This definition indicates some critical issues in the research method. Firstly, classroom observation usually refers to a core approach mostly used by ethnographers when trying to understanding people's views and life in their actual living context (Crang & Cook, 2007). In this study, classroom observation means gaining access to a classroom, attending the class to grasp the 'classroom events', and making sense of these events through 'analysis' and 'interpretation'.

There are many advantages to observation as a major method of qualitative research (Silverman, 2011). Observing a person and video recording their actions has the advantage of allowing the researcher to access data directly rather than having to depend only on self-reported answers. Another advantage is to allow the researcher to re-examine the actions and to gain insights into the real situations in classrooms, increasing the reliability of the research.

Observation was a feasible and effective method for me to collect critical data in this study. There were several advantages derived from conducting such observations. Firstly, as claimed by McDonough and McDonough (2014), it provided a "built-in advantage" (p. 116) as a teacher in the school. From one perspective, as I observed my old colleagues I was in one sense a 'participant' or 'privileged' observer because I was a member of the faculty in the School. Secondly, it was the most effective way for me to do so. As a faculty member of the school, it saved me a significant amount of time to observe the classroom teaching as an invading outsider. I entered the field easily and naturally, including making contact with participants, arranging consent, establishing my role, and building relationships, etc. (Richards, 2003, p. 120). Thirdly, I was encouraged and supported to do so. In terms of institutional culture, to conduct peer observation was widely encouraged at the School. I had already obtained

permission to conduct the research from the School Vice Dean and the participant recruitment process was also welcomed by my old colleagues.

However, an 'intimate insider' status with old colleagues may also be problematic as Taylor (2011) reminds. This relationship made me feel confused at times because, as the researcher, I was "forced to look both outward and inward, to be reflexive and self-conscious in terms of positioning, to be both self-aware and researcher-self-aware and to acknowledge the intertextuality that is a part of both the data gathering and writing processes" (Taylor, 2011, p. 5). Therefore, it is necessary for me to develop some external tools to help keeping the researcher role clear in mind, in case I distract too far away by this old colleagues' perspective.

It was reasonable for me to observe the teachers' classroom practices in this study using a semi-structured checklist (Appendix A). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013) describe a semi-structured observation as a method with "an agenda of issues in a far less pre-determined or systematic manner" (p. 305). They also suggest a feature of this observation method in hypothesis-generating, in contrast to highly structured observation in hypothesis-testing. In this study, I hold an assumption that teacher autonomy is functional in classroom practices. However, how it functions is the focus of my research questions and is waiting to be observed. Therefore, a semi-structured checklist for observation is properly adopted here.

Indeed, I had an agenda of issues to consider during my observations. Though the many famous coding systems are mentioned in relevant guidebooks discussing observation methodologies (Cohen et al., 2013; Dörnyei, 2007), most experts still encourage researchers to develop their own coding system scheme or category to suit their particular research purpose (McDonough & McDonough, 2014). For this reason, a semi-structured classroom observation checklist was prepared in this study. Merriam (1998) lists seven elements likely to be present in any setting that is worthy of observation: 1) the physical setting, 2) the participants, 3) activities and

interactions, 4) conversations, 5) subtle factors, and 6) your own behaviour. Thus, class information, student number, and teachers' basic information were set as fixed parts in my classroom observation checklists. At the same time, my observations were open to critical incidents in the classroom (activities, interactions and conversations) in teaching procedures. The checklist also served as a note-taking sheet for classroom observation in this study.

Observation is a great tool for research with the following four preconditions: 1) serves a formulated research purpose, 2) is planned deliberately, 3) is recorded systematically, and 4) is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability (Kidder, 1981, p. 264). These four principles served as a guide to the way I conducted the classroom observations in this study. The research purpose is clear in this study: how teacher autonomy functions in classroom practice. Therefore, the CE teachers and their teaching procedures were the focus of my observation.

It is also highly recommended to integrate classroom observation into other research methods or techniques (Dörnyei, 2007; McDonough & McDonough, 2014). Though classroom observation itself can serve as a primary research method in second language classroom research, as in Harbon and Shen (2010), there are weaknesses in the methods—as open or closed observations, field-notes, or video-recorded observation. For instance, open observations may be challenging and time-consuming for data analysis, whereas closed observations means some classroom dynamic nuances may be missed. Taking notes only may lead to validity problem, and video-recording the class can also distort the data or limit the view provided by the camera lens.

Therefore, in this study, a video recording of classroom teaching practices was employed at the same time as note-taking. The video served as a stimuli in SRI (3.3.3) as suggested by McDonough and McDonough (2014). In this way, video recordings facilitate interview

transcription in the latter analysis procedure. At the same time, field notes taken during the classroom observation were triangulated with other data collected from interviews and document materials. In this combination, my observations were recorded systematically using field notes and video recording clips, and were subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability.

I planned the classroom observations carefully. To directly observe the CE teaching I initially contacted the 14 teachers to obtain their permission to video record their teaching. Generally, one class is of 45 minutes' duration. It is also common for teachers to combine two classes for a 90-minute class. Consequently, each participant volunteered a 90-minute class to be observed and video recorded by the researcher. In total, 41 hours of classroom observation video were collected.

In the complementation process, I was also very careful. During the observation, notes were taken on the semi open checklist and the teaching processes were simultaneously recorded using a video recorder. Because this study focuses on teacher autonomy in classroom practices, events like teacher-learner interactions were paid special attention. Guided by studies reviewed in Section 2.3.3, I identified teacher autonomy in classroom practice by any change that the observed CE teacher made to adapt the curriculum to their practical contexts (Molina, 2017), and any autonomy-supportive way of teaching in classroom interactions. After the class/observations, I collected a copy of the teacher's lesson plan and lecture PowerPoint as documents and support materials.

3.3.3 Stimulated recall interview (SRI)

According to Gass and Mackey (2000), stimulated recall is "one subset of a range of introspective methods that represent a means of eliciting data about thought processes involved in carrying out a task or activity" (p. 1). In this study, teacher autonomy works consciously or

unconsciously in the teaching process and may not be observed easily and directly. In this case study, the SRI method is introduced as another critical method to help uncover the unconscious cognitive processes which might not be evident through simple observation.

Immediately after the classroom observation I made an appointment with the teacher to interview him/her as soon as possible. Conducting an interview immediately after observation in this study was of great necessity because I could not directly observe autonomy in their capability, mind, or attitude (Merriam, 1998). It was also because teachers' ideas came up suddenly in the teaching process and may fade over time. Ideally, this interview is best conducted immediately after the class. Sometimes the participants' timetables did not allow this to happen and in these cases another time was arranged to conduct the interview.

The SRIs in this study usually lasted for about one hour with the classroom observation video recording as a stimulus for recall further checking the teachers' feelings, attitudes, and thoughts behind their classroom practices. The interview was usually conducted in an empty faculty meeting room. Because neither I nor the teacher in the case had an office, the field just could not afford such interviews conducted in a private space. Furthermore, the rooms were available for interviews because teachers rarely stayed in the faculty meeting rooms when they were not teaching classes. As a negative result, the interview might be disturbed by other teachers occasionally. Generally, the interviews were conducted smoothly and audio was recorded with the teacher's permission.

There were some preparations required to conduct the SRIs. In this interview, video recordings were prepared as a stimulus to help the interviewee recall the thinking processes underpinning their classroom practices. The classroom observation videos were connected to a laptop computer to get ready for broadcasting. The researcher (interviewer) made sure that all equipment (laptop computer and audio recorder) was ready. According to Gass and Mackey

(2000), both interviewer and interviewee sit before the computer and the interviewer needs to inform the interviewee of the basic rules of SRI (Appendix B). For example, it is important that both parties can stop the video whenever they have anything to say or any question about the teaching process. If necessary, I show the interviewee how to control the equipment.

When I discussed the video recording with the teacher, the most frequently asked questions were: "What did you think when you teach this way?" or "What were you thinking when asking that question?". Then, I allocated enough time and patience for the interviewee to express themselves fully and freely. Usually, some critical incidents in the teacher's classroom teaching were paid more attention in the SRI, especially when the teacher proposed an open question for discussion, required students to engage in an activity, made any sudden change in the way of teaching, or interacted more turns with a certain student than others. Unless otherwise explained, all interviews (SRIs and semi-structured interviews) in this study were conducted individually using Mandarin Chinese. Finally, 14 hours of SRI data was collected totally, and all the data (video and audio) was coded and documented to be analysed later.

3.3.4 Semi-structured interview

As for the aim of this study, it is necessary to schedule and conduct a second round of interviews to investigate the participants' attitudes toward autonomy because SRIs focus mainly on the teaching processes and contents.

The interview method is a crucial tool in case study research with the purpose of allowing the interviewer to enter the interviewees' perspective. The semi-structured interview is considered as an appropriate method to "obtain a sense of how individuals view their situation and what their experiences have been around the research topic" (Morris, 2015, p. 8). According to Merriam (1998), interviews can be conducted in a continuum from highly structured (standardised), semi-structured, to unstructured (informal). In this study, a semi-structured

interview was prepared which included 18 questions. This meant each participant was asked the same 18 questions. This allowed for a comparative analysis of the data across all 14 participants. The interview questions were informed by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. However, although the questions were used to guide the interview, the semi-structured format meant it was possible for the questions to stimulate secondary questions and to obtain lengthy elaborations of some points. This enabled the researcher to probe for more in-depth information and to clarify certain points during the interview process.

The 18 interview questions covered seven main topics (Appendix C): (1) teacher professional identity, (2) teacher sense of freedom and constraints in classroom teaching. (3) classroom regulations, (4) learner autonomy, (5) teacher professional development, (6) school functioning, and (7) teacher autonomy and self-comment.

The semi-structured interview after the classroom observation and the SRIs allowed this researcher to probe issues under both types of data, not only in relation to individual teachers but across the whole sample. As the study progressed, patterns of behaviour and themes common to all the participants became more evident and they could be further explored in this group of interviews. Furthermore, this sequence helped to avoid prejudice and purposeful performances by teachers in the classroom. Because the participants were more cognizant of the constructs the study was examining, a full interview conducted at the beginning of the study might have affected the observational data collection. Finally, the interviews aimed to mine for the implied attitudes towards autonomy. The interviewer sought the participants' informed consent prior to commencing the process and the interviews were audio recorded. Each interview was approximately 50 minutes' duration, and about 11 hours of data in total was collected, coded and documented for analysis.

3.3.5 Administrator interview

Administrators are responsible for teacher development. However, they may have a different perspective to the teacher on how such development is best achieved. Consequently, it was necessary to probe the administrators' opinions through semi-structured interview. Appointments were made beforehand allowing the informant to allocate time from his/her busy agenda. Each interview was guided by 12 questions that addressed similar themes included in the teacher interviews (Appendix D).

In total, six administrators (3.2.2) were interviewed in the present study. Middle- or even high-level administrators frequently carry some of the teaching workload. However, this did not form internal conflicts in this study. The administrators provided insightful views on teacher autonomy in classroom practices from the perspective of both roles. Data collected from the administrators provided insights into the context of teacher autonomy. Each interview was approximately one hour duration and was conducted in the administrator's office. Hence, about six hours of administrator interview data was collected in total.

3.3.6 Documents

In this study, the term 'document' is used as "the umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, and physical material relevant to the study at hand" (Merriam, 1998, p. 112). As such, school policies, rules, conventions, official website contents, the Teacher Work Handbook, teachers' lesson plans, classroom pictures, etc. were collected as documents.

A little more explanation of the Teacher Work Handbook is provided in relation to the specific case in this study. It is a book composed of a wide range of documents from national laws and policies on teaching as a profession and higher education teachers' daily routines, evaluations, and punishments and rewards. To explore teacher autonomy in their classroom practices, some of these documents reflect the direct external context of teachers' professional acts and

development. The handbook is applicable to all faculty members, but there are also several chapters specifically on CE and how it is to be taught. A detailed description of the handbook as a critical system context was provided in Section 4.2.

Furthermore, some documents served as background materials, while others were important to support or triangulate with the observation and interview data. Document sources were also yielded from this researcher as field notes, diary entries, and field work illustrations.

3.3.7 Piloting

Piloting is a key process in case study research. Yin (2014) points out that for a case study investigator, the pilot case study helps to refine data collection plans about both the data content and the collection procedures. In addition, the criteria for selecting pilot cases are generally convenience, access, and geographic proximity (Yin, 2014). For convenience, this researcher selected Macquarie University as the site for the pilot study where most primary theoretical and preparatory work was done by her as a PhD candidate.

All observation and interview methods adopted in the case study were piloted. Taking Gass and Mackey (2000) recommendation, I carefully piloted all instruments to ensure time estimates in every procedure. First, classroom observations and teacher interviews were piloted in a Chinese language class at Macquarie University. However, the teacher had rich CE teaching experience in China before transferring to Macquarie University. I practiced operating an audio-recorder, video recorder, and taking observational notes. I also learned to transfer audio and visual data from the recorders to my laptop, and to run broadcast software. According to the pilot study results, I improved my semi-structured interview questions in specific expressions and structure with the help of my bilingual colleagues.

Secondly, my SRI skills were also trialled on a fellow colleague. From the experience, I learned to sequence my equipment and interview. First, before the interview, I got the audio recorder

and laptop ready. I then patiently explained the purpose, method, and procedures of the interview, as well as the laptop operation to pause the classroom teaching video to the participant. Finally, in the pilot test, the interviewee feedback helped me to ask the right questions in the right manner, that is, not to influence, push, or mislead the participant. Thus, pilot testing was a critical component of the data collection procedures.

3.3.8 Summary

This section summarises the theoretical framework for the data collection methods in this study. Three common methods (observation, interviews, and documents) for case study research were adopted, representing high coverage, high detail, and high accuracy data collection methodology (Woodside, 2010). A detailed explanation of the data collection processes for the two groups of participants: CE teachers and administrators was also provided. A brief outline of the pilot testing process and outcome was given. All these procedures helped me to construct a systematic methodology of data collection and to establish the validity and reliability of this study.

Overall, the data collection processes went smoothly. A summary of all data collected and their respective categories according to the sources and participants are outlined in Table 3.5:

Table 3. 5 Data summary

	14 CE teachers	6 Administrators
Observation	14 classroom observation videos 14 classroom observation notes	
Interviews	14 stimulated recall interviews 14 semi-structured interviews	6 semi-structured interviews
Documents	10 teachers' timetable, text PowerPoint and curriculum design Pictures of classroom teaching Teacher Work Handbook faculty demographic information	School official website information Documents of school CET 4 reform policy

In addition to the data listed above, the data collection diary entries composed over the two months (39 pieces in total) were also documented as supporting evidence to triangulate with some observation or interview data.

3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis is a crucial and challenging part of this project. As noted by Yin (2014), "the analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed aspects of doing case studies" (p. 132). The case study design does not define any spectacular data collection method or data analysis method accordingly. This means there is not a fixed or golden rule for analysing case study evidence when faced with various data sets. Yin (2014) recommends four general strategies: (1) relying on theoretical propositions, (2) grounded theory, (3) developing a case description, and (4) examining rival explanations. The case in this project is described at the beginning of the methodology chapter. Based on the data collected, grounded theory has been selected to underpin the data analysis (3.4.1). Followed a discussion of this theory is a discussion of the tool used for analysis and analysing procedures (3.4.2). Finally, avoiding researcher bias in the data analysis process is also a crucial consideration in this methodology (3.4.3). Though data analysis software was used as a tool in this process, this reflective attitude increased the reliability of the case study.

3.4.1 Theory for data analysis

The theoretical framework for data analysis in this study was divided into two major parts. One was for the analysis of the classroom observations data set. The other was for the semi-structured interviews and SRI data sets. The rationale for the division was mainly to take full advantage of the core data and to better answer the research questions.

To analyse the data collected from the classroom observations, two methods were employed. Firstly, textualizing the critical incidents in the videos. According to Tripp (1993), a critical incident is "an interpretation of the significance of an event" (p. 8). Classroom teaching events or activities that are impressive or "vividly remembered" (Brookfield, 1990, p. 84) by both the researcher and the relevant teacher were extracted as "critical incidents" for further discussion and research. Farrell (2013) believes that teachers can make better sense of seemingly random experiences that occur in their teaching by talking about and reflection on these critical incidents. Similarly, Tripp (1993) also values critical incidents as "an excellent way to develop an increasing understanding of and control over professional judgement, and thereby over practice" (p. 24). Therefore, in this study, the critical incidents related to classroom interactions were transcribed and coded under themes like patterns of interaction, improvisations, flexibility, etc. Relevant SRI transcriptions were then matched to account for these incidents.

Secondly, to visualise the contrasts in teacher-learner interaction patterns, illustrations of the seating charts in the two classrooms were created. "Maps" (Chesterfield, 1997, p. 12) or "seating charts" (Malu, 2015, p. 18) are recommended by experts as useful tools in classroom observation data collection process and for the data analysis process. The tools have also been identified as a good way to support teacher professional development (Chesterfield, 1997; Malu, 2015). In the adapted bird's-eye view maps of the classroom seating arrangements (e.g., Figures 8.1 & 8.2), direction arrows were used to indicate and highlight the interactions between the initiator and the reactor. If well designed, this multimodal data analysis strategy provides a means to gain a better understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Wheeldon, 2010).

Grounded theory was adopted to analyse the semi-structured interview and SRI data. Grounded theory is "a method of qualitative inquiry in which researchers develop inductive theoretical analyses from their collected data and subsequently gather further data to check these analyses"

(Charmaz & Bryant, 2011, p. 292). Regarding the research questions in this study, I employed grounded theory for my interview data analysis because the purpose of grounded theory is "theory construction, rather than description or application of existing theories" (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011, p. 292). Its inductiveness and flexibility, which are distinguished from other qualitative methods, are particularly suitable for dealing with qualitative data collected in this case study investigation of teacher autonomy. Sociologists Glaser and Strauss's (1967) book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* is commonly accepted as the concrete origin of the method (Charmaz, 2015; Wertz et al., 2011). Glaser and Strauss (1967) introduced it as a "systematic, inductive, iterative, and comparative" method, and argued that it answered criticisms of qualitative research because of its rigor, explicit strategies, and generalizability (Wertz et al., 2011). This is one of the most frequently recommended theories for qualitative analysis by key authors in the field like Yin (2014), Silverman (2011), O'Leary (2014), and Wertz et al. (2011). In addition to theory construction, Charmaz (2015) added three other objectives of the method: explicating and providing systematic strategies for collecting and analysing data, developing a method for studying processes, and democratising the practice of theorising. In this study, I used grounded theory primarily as a method to analyse the data and to construct a theory of teacher autonomy.

This data analysis process followed three core strategies: coding, memo writing, and theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2015). That is, the interview transcription content was first systematically analysed line by line. Then, strings of words, sentences, or even paragraphs that reflected an integrative meaning were coded at one instance. At the same time, analyst memos were formed. This coding process proceeded until categories began to form. Coded categories were then sorted into specific themes. Finally, samples were selected to induce a theoretical construct. Next, I will introduce and discuss the tools and procedures applied in the data analysis process.

3.4.2 The tool for analysis and procedures

Audio data in this project was completely transcribed into text files by this researcher. This process also helped me to become familiar with the data. For data analysis, preparing the data into a workable and adaptable format is necessary because video and audio data are not acceptable to use directly in a thesis. The conventions followed in the transcription process were listed at the beginning of the thesis. The transcribed data included teachers' SRIs, semi-structured teacher interviews, and administrator interviews. If the extracted data was to be used as excerpts in the thesis, the transcription of the interview was translated into English by the researcher and checked by a bilingual colleague.

Classroom observation recordings were extracted, transcribed, and translated selectively. Classroom observation recordings were collected in video and graphical form. Video data mainly served as a stimulus for SRI or as material in support of the teachers' classroom practices. Hence, it was transcribed and translated selectively. Documents in text forms and class photos in graphical form were dealt with comparatively easily. Similarly, documents and photos were used selectively. If any part of the document was relevant to the research question it was extracted and translated.

All data were imported into the qualitative data analysis computer software package, NVivo 11, including classroom observation videos, interview transcriptions from the SRIs, semi-structured interview responses, documentary materials, and pictures. NVivo 11 (QSR International, 2015) is a software platform developed by QSR International for the analysis of all forms of qualitative data. With a history of less than two decades, NVivo 11 is the latest version of the software suitable for data analysis in my study. It has been specifically designed for qualitative researchers who need an in-depth level of analysis on either small or large volumes of data. For this reason the software is widely adopted by researchers across social sciences. It is the researcher, however, and not the software that does the analysis (Bazeley &

Jackson, 2013). Though it is powerful software, I used it only as a tool to facilitate effective data coding in particular.

NVivo also accommodates a wide range of research methods, and grounded theory in this study. Because NVivo is designed to help users organise and analyse non-numerical or unstructured data, it is powerful in dealing with rich text-based, multimedia information, information from internet websites, and/or a mixture of them. The main functions in the software are sources, nodes, classification, queries, and reports, to name just a few. They allow users to store unlimited amount of data; to classify, sort and arrange information; to examine relationships in the data; to combine analysis with linking, shaping, searching and modelling; and to visualise the results of data analysis through diverse forms of maps, charts, diagrams, or sheets in the report (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). All these advanced and excellent capabilities made the software a useful tool in this case study.

The data analysis approach then followed step by step the three major strategies in grounded theory: coding, memo writing, and theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2015, p. 405). The coding process was at first a descriptive process first (Richards, 2005). In the first round of coding, the imported data were coded line-by-line into nodes, an NVivo expression of the basic codes. This approach helped me to gain a general view on the issue of teacher autonomy from each participant. In the second round of coding, an incident-by-incident coding process was adopted. This approach was of great importance to the process of comparing the teachers' different classroom interactions with their students. The NVivo 11 software allows the researcher to code within the coded data and these coded nodes were subsequently categorised into themes in accordance with the emergent contents of the data.

Memo writing is defined by Charmaz (2015) as "a way for researchers to take their codes apart and study what constitutes them" (p. 405). This process functions as a bridge that connects

coded data with a theoretical analysis draft, which is an intermediate stage of writing. With the help of NVivo 11, this step was completed quickly and the coded data was categorised under nodes.

Coding and memo writing were then interwoven with each other (Richards, 2005). This process involved a certain degree of analysis whereby the data coded under one node were constantly compared with data coded under other nodes. As a result of the comparing process, certain items of data coded under one node were sometimes moved to another node. As this process progressed the nodes, categories and themes were developed into a node tree as shown in Figure 3.2:

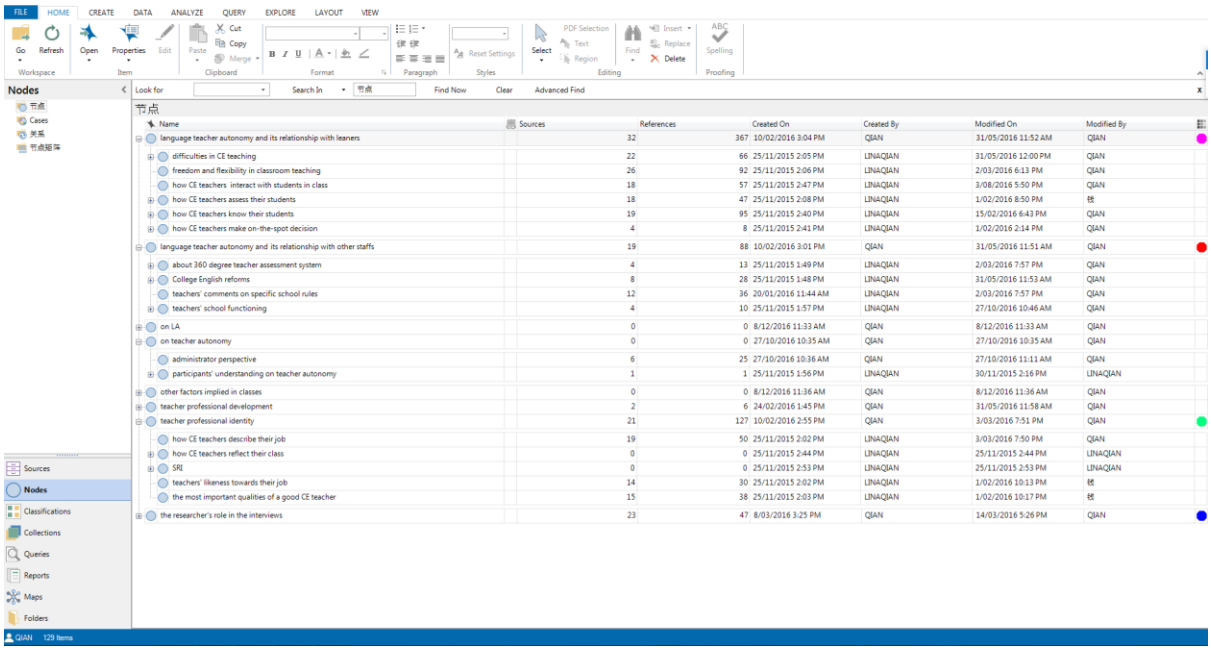


Figure 3.2 NVivo 11 screenshot: the hierarchy of nodes tree

The final stage of the process involved theoretical sampling, which is defined as "sampling to develop, refine, or fill out the properties of tentative theoretical categories" (Charmaz, 2015, p. 406). It was quite perceptible that many and various themes had emerged when all 14 teacher participants' and six administrator participants' responses were analysed and that selectivity in

reporting the results was required. The theoretical sampling process therefore helped to identify and separate the robust nodes from the weaker ones and to arrive at a 'theoretical saturation' whereby the research circle could be finally closed when fresh data or new category properties no longer appeared (Silverman, 2011).

It used to be difficult to conduct comparisons across groups during theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2015). However, with the help of NVivo 11, this process was made easy in this case. Three main themes surfaced when all topics were carefully compared: teacher autonomy, teachers' attitudes toward autonomy, and teacher autonomy in classroom practices. These three themes and their relationship with each other are reported in Chapters 4 to 8.

3.4.3 The researcher position and bias

Reflecting and writing the researcher self in the report is crucial in a high-quality thesis. As Ezzy (2002) states, there are several advantages in doing so including to note the aspects of the research process, to enhance the authenticity of the research, to adopt a disciplined approach in the analysis process, and to produce 'better data'. Therefore, the following section discusses the three reasons why it was important to reflect specifically on the researcher position and bias in this study.

Firstly, co-construction in interviews is observed by many scholars (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Mann, 2010). It is easy for the researcher to focus on the contents of the statements from their interviewees. However, Mann (2010) reminds us in his critical review of qualitative interviews in applied linguistics, the researcher who also plays the role of interviewer in a case study should be paid greater attention. As explained in Section 3.3.1, classroom observations and participant interviews were the main sources of information in this study. During the interviews the researcher engaged in in-depth communication with the participants and had a greater influence on them than during the observation process. This means that the researcher played

an active role in data collection procedure, particularly during the interviews. That is, an interviewer is not simply an 'interviewer' and an interviewee is not simply an 'interviewee' in the data formation. Both parties in the interview bring their own language habits, cognition, purpose, and personality. In this study, I communicated extensively with the participants to set up the interviews, adopting a co-constructive attitude during the whole data collection process. Following the data analysis, I emailed the interview transcription, extract and extract translation to the relevant participant to co-construct my data. To certain degree, this is also a critical consideration in research ethics in that the interviewees were given the right to access to the final version of their comments.

Secondly, the multiple roles a researcher can play during data collection and analysis were considered. One characteristic of all forms of qualitative research observed by Merriam (1998) is that researchers play multiple roles in the project, with data collector and analysist as the two primary ones. Stake (1995) also states explicitly that "the case researcher plays different roles and options as to how they will be played" (p. 91). Although I am currently a full time PhD student at Macquarie University, I keep my position in the school as a CE teacher. Therefore, an insider's view has been adopted in this study.

However, I also played different roles from my previous work as a CE teacher. During the data collection process, I worked as a visiting scholar. I observed the participants' classroom teaching practices and interviewed CE teachers and administrators who were my old colleagues. This old colleagues relation facilitated me to set up observation and interview, but it may also lead to an "observer paradox" (Labov, 1972, p. 209) in which the person being observed was unwittingly influenced by the presence of the researcher.

To reduce the influence of the observer paradox, I provided the explanation in response to the fact that they could have been distracted by my participation. Before observing each lesson, I

always briefly explained to the students the aims of my research and the purpose of the observation. Although they were involved in the observation process, they were not the subjects to be observed in the study. Moreover, I was playing a different role of pure interviewer with different interviewees. For instance, when interviewing the administrators including the Dean or Vice Dean of the school, the teacher supervisor (who is an emeritus professor at the school), and the office directors, I was a subordinate or a novice researcher. When interviewing the teachers, however, I was a fellow colleague, or a teacher tutor because I also interviewed some novice teachers. Nevertheless, I have to admit that my existence still could exert influence on their personal plan for development.

Lastly, reflecting on the researcher position can enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research investigation. Because a detailed narrative on the researcher's roles in the data collection process helps to provide readers with the whole picture of the 'how' as well as the 'what', this section is a critical part in the thesis. I developed a reflective and sensitive approach during the interviews. I reflected that I should have paid attention to monitoring and controlling my self-expression and to giving more talking time to my interviewees. It is also quite reasonable that I developed new ideas after interviewing several participants and accumulated more experience in the interviewing process.

In this way, the three advantages of case studies identified by Donmoyer (2000) can be fully applied. The advantages are accessibility, seeing through the researcher's eyes, and decreased defensiveness. As an insider, I had full access to the CE classrooms because of my faculty member status at the school. Moreover, the training I gained during the doctorate candidature at Macquarie University allowed me to apply the researcher's perspective. It was also easy for me to create a relationship of trust with the teachers and administrators as my participants. Readers of this thesis can see real Chinese CE classes through my eyes. To achieve lower defensiveness during the observation process, I contacted the relevant participant first, arrived

at the venue beforehand, and got his/her permission to video record the teaching process. Similarly, to avoid disturbing the participant, it was necessary for me, as researcher, to spend time explaining the purpose of the observation and recording actions to participants and to obtain informed consent prior to conducting the investigation. I even explained my research aims and objectives to relevant students in the classes I observed in case they felt nervous. All these considerations aimed at observing the participants in real life situation.

Mehra (2002) observes that "researcher bias and subjectivity are commonly understood as inevitable and important by most qualitative researchers" (p. 3). Bias and subjectivity can occur in many stages of qualitative research such as planning, data collection, and data analysis. Indeed, subjectivity can be a problem in qualitative case study, although the value of qualitative research could not be denied simply by subjectivity. Controlling researcher bias is regarded as a practical way to increase the validity of the research (Norris, 1997). Towards this aim, Shenton (2004) provides a detailed list of the possible provisions a researcher can make to demonstrate the rigour and trustworthiness of the qualitative study.

Along with many other important strategies, the following three approaches from Shenton's (2004) list were given special attention in this study to avoid researcher bias in data collection and analysis: (1) use of 'reflective commentary'; (2) description of background, qualifications and experience of the researcher; and (3) member checks of the data collected and the interpretations/theories formed. An attempt was made to utilise all three approaches to ensure consistency and to avoid researcher bias.

Firstly, a thick description of my background, qualifications, and experience was provided in the methodological design of my study. In Chapter 1, I introduced my English learning experience and College English teaching qualification in the case university. In addition, the researcher position and roles were explained in detail. This thick description was provided to

enhance researcher credibility and to give admission of this researcher's beliefs and assumptions.

Secondly, I kept a diary during the two-month data collection period in which I recorded my main actions, feelings and evolving understanding of issues under investigation, as well as my plans, preparations, and further decisions for the next day's work. This journal served as an effective 'reflective commentary' on my data collection actions. During this period, I also maintained weekly email contact with my supervisor in which I reported my progress, concerns and problems. For example, after the first round of interviews with some of the administrators and novice teachers I considered that a potential problem was my excessive free expression on certain topics or ideas that interested me. I reflected that I should control my expression to allow more opportunities for my interviewees to express their thoughts and opinions as suggested by my supervisor.

Thirdly, I had the data collection instruments and data double checked by other members to reduce personal bias. I invited native speaking friends and bilingual translators to check the English versions of the semi-structured interview outlines which were translated by myself. In addition, I emailed my interview transcription and extract translations to relevant informants to check their quality. This was also a co-constructive process.

Gass and Mackey (2000) also recommend some useful and often-used procedures to reduce the subjectivity of qualitative coding from tabulating, counting, quantifying and triangulation perspectives to draw inferences about relations among different kinds of utterances. I tabulated many critical data whenever it was possible. In this section, there are Tables provided of the main CE reform periods in the case, the organisational structure of administrators, participants' demographic information, and data summary, to list just a few.

In terms of avoiding prejudice by counting, I depended on computer technology as much as possible. Using computer software like NVivo 11 to deal with the qualitative data, counting and quantifying acts can be achieved automatically and precisely. The software helped to reduce subjectivity by counting or quantifying the analysis process. Therefore, the researcher's personal preference was avoided. What is more, in the critical step of theoretical sampling, the software showed the number of codes and represented their degree of saturation. In other words, the category with the largest number of codes was the most saturated and tentative category. These nodes were selected and seriously considered by the researcher. As a result, researcher bias was further decreased.

3.5 Validity and reliability issues

The quality of academic research including case study should be evaluated by two basic criteria: validity and reliability (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) innovatively identifies several tactics for four commonly used quality-establishing tests when doing case study research, as illustrated in Table 3.6:

Table 3. 6 Case study tactics for four design tests (Yin, 2014, p. 45)

	Tests	Case Study Tactic
1	Construct validity	Use multiple sources of evidence Establish chain of evidence Have key informants review draft of case study report
2	Internal validity	Do pattern matching Do explanation building Address rival explanations Use logic models
3	External validity	Use theory in single-case studies Use replication logic in multi-case studies
4	Reliability	Use case study protocol Develop case study database

The following section explains the quality control procedures of this study following the sequence in Table 3.6. Construct validity tests whether operational measures for the concepts being studied are correct or not (Yin, 2014). If the researcher fails to establish an operational set of measures and 'subjective' judgments are used in data collection, the construct validity of case study is brought into question (Yin, 2014). In this study, according to the Yin (2014) recommendation in the above table, multiple sources of evidence and chains of evidence (as detailed in Section 3.3) were designed to ensure the construct validity.

Internal validity identifies the reliability or accuracy of the study results (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010). Because this is an exploratory case study, internal validity is mainly embodied by its methodology development including: the description of the researcher's background, qualification, and experience; the design of data collection and analysis models; and control of researcher bias. For example, the same questions were asked to both teacher and administrator groups to achieve certain pattern matching. Of course, rival explanations will be addressed in the data analysis and discussion chapters.

External validity defines the domain to which a study's findings can be generalised (Yin, 2014). Though case studies are believed to be an unsuitable basis for generalisation, Stake (2000) still claims "a natural generalization" for case studies (p. 19). Yin (2014) also suggests theory utilisation to achieve external validity in single-case studies. Therefore, following Yin's tactics, the utilisation of a teacher autonomy theoretical framework in this study was intended to add to the external validity of this study.

The last criteria to be judged is reliability, which demonstrates that the operations of a study can be repeated with the same results (Yin, 2014). Following Yin (2014), techniques which may be used to increase reliability were adopted in this study. For instance, I recorded observations and actions using as concrete language as possible, and a tape recorder or video

camera was used to record data mechanically. This study was also conducted according to a semi-structured case study protocol. Furthermore, this study attempted to achieve meaningful parallelism of the findings across multiple data sources.

Specially, a validity issue emerged during the transcription and translation of the data in this study. Because all participants were native speakers of Mandarin Chinese and the case study research was conducted in a Chinese-speaking country where English was a foreign language, Mandarin Chinese was used in all interviews to support the interviewees to provide more detailed responses. To assure the quality and validity of this study, transcription and translation work posed a great challenge for the researcher and the translator. Following Birbili (2000) techniques for dealing with translation-related problems, all interview questions were reviewed and discussed with two bilingual colleagues, then piloted. These colleagues helped to improve the English expressions in the interview questions to ensure they were designed in a more native and academic way.

Compared with the translation of interview questions, it is more challenging to translate the audio-recoded data from Chinese to English because of the language and cultural differences. Many words and expressions are similar in form but different in meaning, thus lexical in-equivalence. As the data and excerpts are what my project is based on, to achieve the quality assurance of the English translation of Chinese data, I translated all excerpts and sent my translation to the relevant participant and a native speaker. Because all the teacher participants were CE teachers, they were bilingual to certain degree. Thus, they double-checked the Chinese transcription of their interviews and excerpts in the English version. They generally gave me approval on the accuracy of the Chinese transcription and meaning of the English translation. Then the native proof-reader I employed could make sure the English versions of the Chinese data were expressed in native forms, though he did not understand Chinese. Therefore, the

three parties worked together to guarantee the excerpts in this thesis were true to the participants' original in meaning and form.

3.6 Ethics

Ethics issues were given serious consideration in this study due to the inclusion of human participants and to the personal nature of the information they provided. This study was assessed as low risk in ethics requirements according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) issued by the Australia Government. I applied for and was granted approval by the Faculty of Human Science Research Ethics Sub-Committee on 7th July 2015 with the code number 5201500496 (Appendix E). With this ethical approval, I entered the case university on September 2015 and started the participant recruitment and data collection procedures.

Four procedures were utilised to secure the anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of their personal information. Firstly, before commencing data collection, an informed consent form was signed by all participants (Appendix F). The form stated clearly the research questions and purposes, types of information to be collected, confidentiality terms, participants' right to withdraw at any time and to know how their data is being used, and contact details of the researcher and the authorising institution should they have any queries or complaints. Therefore, all participants in the case university were aware of my role as a researcher (or an observer) conducting academic research.

Secondly, during the data collection process pseudonym codes were created to protect the privacy of the participants. Thirdly, confidentiality was ensured during the observation and interview processes. Accordingly, the identities of all participants were kept anonymous during interviews. This was necessary because both teachers and administrators were interviewed and

for fear that teachers would not express their true feelings and opinions regarding the practices of administrators. Furthermore, if some participants had extreme ideas about the management system, they may fear that honest comments may cause trouble. To avoid this situation, I explained to the participants that all data was to be kept confidential and that only the researchers involved in this project would have access to the data. No participant could get information about the contents of the interviews and observations of other participants. Moreover, the participants were assured that all information collected from them was to be used for this study only, and not to make any judgment or assessment of their teaching. Hence, all appropriate steps were taken to protect participants' confidentiality in order that objective data were collected during this research investigation.

There are five chapters in total reporting the findings in this study: context of teaching in Chapter 4, teachers' attitudes in Chapter 5, and their classroom practices in Chapters 6 through 8. The five chapters present a holistic view of teacher autonomy. The national context as background provided in the introduction (Chapter 1) and the case or institutional context provided in the methodology (Chapter 3) have been described separately. However, a refined report on instructional settings as a finding is still necessary because of its uniqueness as a case. It is also important because context is a multilevel and complex system. The two main purposes of Chapter 4 are to illustrate a clear context for teacher autonomy and to lay a foundation for the following chapters. In Chapter 4, only the contexts that are most relevant to CE teachers' daily work are reported including: institutional context, system context, expectation context, and physical context.

Chapter 4

Context of teaching

This chapter reports the findings of my study. The participants' teaching context is reported from four dimensions: institutional context and agenda (4.1), system context (4.2), expectation context (4.3), and physical context (4.4). The supporting evidence used throughout the discussion was collected via document analysis and semi-structured interviews with participants (see Appendix G for all excerpts in original Chinese). The context is closely related to language teachers' daily work. The four dimensions play an important role in shaping language teachers' teaching plans, decision making, expectations, attitudes, and classroom behaviours. The detailed examination of the teaching context provides a foundation for us to better understand the attitudes toward autonomy and behaviour observed in the participants' classroom practices as discussed in Chapters 6 to 8.

4.1 Institutional context and agenda

To better understand the case university and its relation to this study, a specific chapter for the context is necessary. Methodologically, any study of teachers and their practice that is isolated from their context might be partial and problematic. Borg (2015) stresses: "The study of cognitions and practices in isolation of the contexts in which they occur will inevitably, therefore, provide partial, if not flowed, characterizations of teachers and teaching" (p. 324). The background of CE at the national level in China is outlined in Section 1. 2. Section 4. 1 outlines the CE context at an institutional level. There are two institutional agendas most related to this study: CE teaching reforms and the school policy of promoting CET4 examination passing rates.

Since the turn of the century, great attention has been paid to CE teaching reforms with the aim to improve student pass rates in most Chinese universities—including the case university—in national examinations such as CET4 and CET6. In my opinion, there are three reasons for this phenomenon. Firstly, the CMoE has called for universities to improve college students' English proficiency. There is also a similar trend in CE teaching in China. As discussed in Section 1.2, the aims of the CECR (CMoE, 2007) are stated explicitly as follows:

> With a view to keeping up with the new developments of higher education in China, deepening teaching reform, improving teaching quality, and meeting the needs of the country and society for qualified personnel in the new era, College English Curriculum Requirements have been drawn up to provide colleges and universities with the guidelines for English instruction to non-English major students. (CMoE, 2007, p. 1)

The above CECR reveal four aims, with 'deepening teaching reform' ranked first among them. In addition, it is stated clearly that the four aims are to be considered as official guidelines. It is therefore not surprising that almost all colleges and universities in China have launched a new wave of reforms.

The CECR also set down an autonomy-supportive model of teaching as one of the objectives, which is stated as follows:

> One of the objectives of the reform of the teaching model is to promote the development of individualised study methods and the autonomous learning ability on the part of students. The new model should enable students to select materials and methods suited to their individual needs, obtain guidance in learning strategies, and gradually improve their autonomous learning ability. (CMoE, 2007, p. 30)

In line with the CMoE guidelines, there were four waves of reform in the case university, each of which is illustrated in Table 4.1:

Table 4. 1 Main College English reform periods at the case university

Time	Reform contents	Results and discussions
2002-2003	Teach students according to their language proficiency Students select teachers.	It aroused complaints from students as well as teachers and was suspended because of student management problems.
2009-now	English self-access learning classes were added to the traditional classroom lecturing formats. Teachers work on shifts to answer questions at the self-access centre.	Students lacked motivation except when monitored by teachers. Teachers cannot see the significance of the consultancy and there is a lack of effective organisation, particularly with the management of the self-access centre.
2013-now	Condense the teaching time into three semesters.	Teachers complained about time pressure.
2014-now	Divide the course into two sections: (listening and speaking classes & reading, writing and translating classes).	No results or explanations currently.

From Table 4.1, several reform characteristics at the case university can be summarised as follows. Firstly, the frequency of reforms is quite high and has become even higher in recent years. Over approximately 10 years, the school has conducted CE teaching reforms four times, meaning that there have been four textbook changes and four role changes for teachers during this period. Consequently, teachers must constantly adapt themselves to the new teaching systems, which challenges their knowledge (both personal practical knowledge and content knowledge) as well as their teaching methods and techniques.

Secondly, it is evident that teacher professional development is inadequate and not included in the policy. This is despite the fact that the reforms are closely related to CE teachers and their teaching. Thirdly, the reforms seem to be learner-oriented whereby the efficiency of student progress is pursued. This means the School tries to achieve a balance between education quality and education costs, which also challenges teachers' abilities and agency. Fourthly, the effects seem to be invalid. The many complaints from teachers and students led to the suspension of

the first reform. Furthermore, policy makers were evidently not satisfied with the result of the reform and subsequently introduced further reforms. Lastly, there is no third party responsible for the evaluation of the reforms. However, the interference of a third party is necessary and useful in assessing the effect of the reform.

A second reason for the CE teaching reform is that the fierce competition in the job market forces the CE teaching reform to pursue improved CET pass rates. College graduates need CET certificates to prove their English proficiency. Those who have a CET certificate are more competitive in the job market than those who do not have one. Therefore, students are highly motivated to learn English for examination purposes, which calls for a reform of the traditional CE teaching system. Furthermore, students have rights to assess teachers' teaching in the current system. Therefore, some teachers believe that they must adopt an exam-oriented approach so that they can ensure the CET pass rates as well as receive a good evaluation from the students. Although this belief may lead to an exam-oriented teaching approach, teachers would not take the risk of losing their income because it is directly related to students' assessments of their teaching.

A third reason for the CE teaching reforms comes from the university administration. A new President took office at the case university in 2011 and has since implemented a series of reforms in English teaching. The new President has overseas education experience and because he understands the importance of English he has placed great emphasis on the CE course. He also understands the importance of CET certificates for graduates. Under his direct requirement, only graduates who have achieved the CET4 certificates are eligible to be granted the Bachelor's degree. In addition, students' CET4 pass rates were directly related to their teacher's income. This policy brought about direct financial benefits and thus great attention was paid to the results of passing CET4 and CET6. This policy represents authority expectation and is

closely related to CE teachers' practical teaching, which will be reported in detail in Section 4.3.1.

4.2 System context

Figure 4.1The cover and the catalogue of the *Teacher Work Handbook*

System context here refers to all national laws, institutional regulations, rules, programs, measures, and projects, etc. They regulate teachers' professional behaviours, describe teachers' tasks in every aspect of their daily work, assess teaching quality, and identify outcomes. In the case university, the system context is depicted in the *Teacher Work Handbook* which is a small handbook compiled by the Academic Affairs Department of the school. Although the handbook was issued in 2006, it is still used as a basic guideline for the routine teaching practices. At the same time, it constructs a systematic constraint on teacher autonomy as a freedom (2.1.3). In addition, every new teacher is required to attend a pre-service training program. One task of the training program is to learn the *Teacher Work Handbook.* Every office also keeps a copy of the handbook for a reference. The handbook is applicable to all faculty members at the university, particularly CE teachers who teach a public compulsory course. Figure 4.1 shows

the cover and the catalogue of the *Teacher Work Handbook*. This two-hundred-page book includes a wide range of national laws and acts, school policies, regulations for the management of teachers' routine work (including work standards and calculation methods of teaching quality index), which can be seen in the English version catalogue in Table 4.2:

Table 4. 2 Catalogue of the *Teacher Work Handbook* in English

Chapter	File name	Page
1	Higher Education Act of People's Republic of China	1
2	Teacher Law of the People's Republic of China	19
3	Measures for the violation of national education examinations	30
4	Some opinions on further strengthening undergraduate teaching in colleges and universities	44
5	Strengthen Teaching Work, Improve Teaching Quality (Education Minister ZHOU Ji's speech at the second work conference of national undergraduate teaching in colleges and universities in China)	51
6	XXX Basic duties of teachers' positions (for trial implementation)	68
7	XXX Some provisions on teachers with a senior professional title must undertake undergraduate teaching task (for trial implementation)	73
8	XXX Teachers' work norms	75
9	XXX Measures for the management of teaching research projects	80
10	Some opinions on strengthening bilingual lecturing (for trial implementation)	86
11	XXX Measures for the management of changing or suspending a teaching schedule	89
12	XXX Measures for the management of course examinations	92
13	XXX Measures for the management of public elective courses	98
14	XXX Multimedia teaching management (for trial implementation)	101
15	XXX Standards for making multimedia teaching software (for trial implementation)	105
16	XXX Multimedia classroom management (for trial implementation)	113
17	XXX Experimental teaching management	116
18	XXX Internship management regulations	122
19	XXX Undergraduate graduation design (thesis) regulations	131
20	XXX Measures for the management of undergraduate students to complete graduation design (thesis) off-campus	141
21	XXX Methods for the selection of excellent graduation designs (thesis) and excellent supervisors	144
22	XXX Provisions on the management of college students' studentship in general higher education	154
23	XXX Measures for the management of undergraduates' academic records	190
24	XXX Regulations on the management of textbooks (for trial implementation)	174
25	XXX Measures for the administration of compiling teaching materials	178
26	XXX The implementation of teaching quality assurance systems	184
27	XXX Teaching quality evaluation methods (for trial implementation)	190
28	XXX Teaching quality evaluation index system and its calculation methods	194
29	XXX Quality requirements and evaluation indicators of theoretical teaching	197
30	XXX Teaching incidents identification and accountability measures	202
31	XXX Teaching management system phone numbers	207

Note: XXX stands for the university name which is kept anonymous for confidential purposes.

As for the relevant information in the handbook for this study, Section 4. 2 introduces and discusses the following four aspects: textbook regulations (4.2.1), work norms (4.2.2), teaching

quality assurance and assessment systems (4.2.3), and the identification of teaching incidents (4.2.4).

4.2.1 Textbook regulations

Textbook regulations are in Chapter 24 of the *Teacher Work Handbook*. The regulations on the management of textbooks state that one textbook is primarily used as a base for one course. CE, as a compulsory course, has one set of textbooks from level one to level four. According to the regulations, there should be only one set of textbooks, one syllabus, and one final examination paper. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the course teachers who work as a group teach at one pace by adopting the same textbook, syllabus, and final examination paper. Evidently, this uniformity in CE teaching is very convenient for management. However, the uniformity ignores individual differences and thus poses a challenge for the course teachers to adapt the teaching material to students with different language proficiencies and backgrounds.

4.2.2 Work norms

In Chapter 8 of the handbook, there are a total of 13 items that depict teachers' work norms. The work norms include general principles and detailed requirements on every procedure of teaching (i.e., procedures from preparation to completion of a course). Among them, the five items (items 6-10) of most relevance to CE teachers' classroom practices include: (6) lecture preparation, (7) classroom teaching, (8) after-class exercises and in-class discussions, (9) tutoring and answering students' questions, and (10) homework assignment and marking. As for this study, items 6 and 7) are the most relevant.

Item 6 stipulates lecture preparation requirements in detail. Firstly, it stresses that teaching plans should be strictly completed. This only allows a little space for teachers to make flexible on-the-spot decisions. Secondly, it also sets a principle for compulsory courses that the

preparation of these courses should be done collectively and that uniformity is required in course requirements and teaching pace. In the collective preparation of the course, workload is assigned to different groups of teachers. For example, CE teachers in Office One are supposed to prepare a unified curriculum design for one course, one subsection in CE. The curriculum design is typically assigned to different teacher groups and one group is normally responsible for one unit. Once finished, a complete curriculum design is distributed to every teacher in the office as a basic plan for the course. This uniformity is reasonable to a certain degree in promoting efficiency and in encouraging peer communication and cooperation. However, it ignores student diversity and teachers' individual teaching styles in its pursuit of uniformity.

Item 7 details the requirements of classroom teaching, which include the contents of the first class and students' attendance records. More specifically, it states that course teachers should make all rules clear in the first class, including teaching plans, attendance record keeping, the form of final examination, and the assessment of assignments, etc. Furthermore, it states that course teachers are responsible for students' attendance and that they have the right to criticise students who do not attend or are late to class. If the criticism does not work, course teachers can cancel the final assessment of those students.

4.2.3 Teaching quality assurance and assessment system

The teaching quality assurance and assessment system is stated in Chapter 26 of the *Teacher Work Handbook*. Because the case university assigns first priority to teaching quality, a special centre has been established to take responsibility for assessing and monitoring the quality of teaching. The centre is called the Teaching Quality Assessment and Monitor Office and is under the direct administration of a Deputy President. The Office is only one of seven subordinates in the Academic Affairs Office. Others include the Department Office, Teaching Affairs Office, Pedagogical Research Office, Students' Registry and Enrolment Office, Textbook Office, and Internship Teaching Management Office.

In the handbook catalogue, five items and an Education Minister's speech are directly related to teaching quality. Two items have far-reaching influence on the course teachers' routine work: the implementation of teaching quality assurance systems, and teaching quality evaluation methods.

To ensure teaching quality, six systems have been set up as follows:

1. Routinely teaching inspection system,
2. Teacher supervisor inspection system,
3. Teaching quality evaluation system,
4. Student feedback system,
5. Graduate tracking system,
6. Reward and punishment system.

(*Teacher Work Handbook*, pp.188-189)

These six systems exert different strength of influences based on their outcomes. There is also a certain degree of overlapping in some of the items. For instance, the outcomes of 'teacher supervisor inspection' and 'student evaluation' are critical elements of the 'teaching quality evaluation system'. Therefore, they are combined as one part. The 'graduate tracking system' is the weakest in the whole system because it is rarely used as a measure and it scarcely included in the final 'teacher reward and punishment system'. Therefore, I would like to report the following three general and critical systems: 'routinely teaching inspection system', 'teaching quality evaluation system', and 'teacher reward and punishment system'.

Firstly, the 'routinely teaching inspection system' mainly refers to three large-scale inspections organised by the school Academic Affairs Department. The inspections are conducted early-term, mid-term, and end-of-term and are very influential and stressful for teachers because they are conducted by university leaders. Leaders of different levels may be involved in the class

visiting and inspecting including the university Presidents and Deans. One of the hot topics for teachers on the first day of a new term is whether their class is to be inspected. Some teachers may be 'lucky' enough to be inspected by a team of school leaders. Here, 'lucky' is in quotation mark because it is an ironic sense. Most teachers are reluctant to put themselves under huge pressure to be inspected suddenly by the leaders. Course teachers are usually very nervous whenever there is an inspection.

Secondly, the 'teaching quality evaluation' includes the following four methods: student evaluation, supervisor evaluation, peer evaluation, and self-evaluation. These four evaluation methods form a so-called 360-degree evaluation system, implying that the evaluation system is comprehensive and thorough. The system exerts huge pressure on teachers' daily work. Many teacher participants expressed their feelings of stress. For example, Donna complained:

> **Excerpt 4.1 Donna (interview)**
>
> How stressful! Evaluate us in such a comprehensive way. Teaching is something that goes both ways, but it is not just teachers' business. This is too subjective, isn't it?

Among the four evaluations, student evaluation is given the most weight, and supervisor evaluation is the most stressful and controversial. Supervisor evaluation is described clearly in the handbook, as shown in Excerpt 4.2.

> **Excerpt 4.2 *Teacher Work Handbook* (p. 190)**
>
> Supervisor evaluation means teacher supervisors make an assessment of the teachers' teaching based on classroom observations, checking teaching plans, tutoring and assignment marking. This is conducted by the teacher supervisor committee and the teaching quality assessment and monitor section, the Academic Affairs Department.

More specifically, senior/emeritus professors from different departments are appointed as internal supervisors to conduct classroom observations, which is part of the university's teaching quality assurance mechanism. According to the university's policy, a supervisor has the right to observe any teacher's class without a providing advanced notice. After a classroom observation, the supervisor must give the observed teacher a mark on a form containing eight detailed criteria according to the assessment system. The mark, together with student feedback, peer evaluation, and self-evaluation, constitute a teacher's annual performance assessment. Thus, teachers are ranked as excellent, good, qualified, basically qualified, and unqualified. Excellent teachers are awarded a certain amount of money as well as an honorary certificate. If a teacher has been judged to be 'basically qualified' for two successive years, s/he will be suspended from teaching and will be transferred to another position. If a teacher has been judged to be 'unqualified' for two years, his/her teaching qualification will be cancelled (*Teacher Work Handbook*, p. 192).

In this study, participants' attitudes toward the evaluation system fall into three categories: oppositional, mixed, and supportive. Some teacher participants are strongly against the system. For instance, Elisa was straightforward in her criticism of the evaluation system as revealed in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 4.3 Elisa (interview)

I feel it is unfair to ask a non-English-major teacher to observe an English class. Furthermore, it is unreasonable to allow him/her to assess the classroom teaching.

Another teacher participant, Sam, also criticised the supervision system as shown in his remarks below:

Excerpt 4.4 Sam (interview)

> When teachers enter the classroom, they get used to having to glance over the students to see whether there is any strange faces (a teacher supervisor), which I feel is very terrible.

Excerpt 4.3 reveals that Elisa was against the supervisor inspection system from a professional perspective, whereas Excerpt 4.4 indicates that Sam was against the system from an emotional perspective. Sam thought it was "terrible" to see a "strange face" in his classroom. This reminds teachers of the need for a sense of safety and respect in the teaching context.

Some teacher participants gave a mixed comment. For instance, Mark and Nancy commented on the supervisor system, as in Excerpt 4.5 and Excerpt 4.6, respectively:

> **Excerpt 4.5 Mark (interview)**
>
> As administrators, they do need detailed data to quantify teachers' work, which is understandable, but I cannot accept the current way of quantifying.
>
> **Excerpt 4.6 Nancy (interview)**
>
> Actually, it should be that the evaluation is necessary. If there is no evaluation, there will be no feedback for teachers to reflect on their teaching. In that case, teachers will not make any progress. However, I feel that extreme measures should not be taken to punish teachers based on their poor evaluation results.

Excerpt 4.5 shows that Mark accepts the necessity of the evaluation system. However, he does not like the current method of evaluation in which outsiders quantify teachers' work in numbers. Excerpt 4.6 reveals Nancy also accepts the evaluation system because she believes that the evaluation helps the teacher reflect on their teaching, which is good for professional development. However, Nancy also thinks that it is not a good idea to take extreme measures to punish teachers, implying that she prefers a consultative or constructive evaluation rather than a judgmental one.

Only one teacher participant, Linda, supported the system, as revealed in the following remarks:

Excerpt 4.7 Linda (interview)

I respect the supervisors of our school. They are the persons that really want to make a difference, and do not muddle with their duties. I have a very good impression of two of the supervisors. If either of them gave me their comments and suggestions, I would feel happy.

Excerpt 4.7 shows that Linda speaks highly of the supervisors, their work attitudes, and the system, and that she is happy to receive feedback from them. Her comments are closely related to her personal experience, which suggests that administrators and supervisors should treat every teacher in a respectful way and provide constructive feedback such that they can win some support from teachers and thus help to improve teaching quality.

Some teacher participants did not express their real attitudes towards the supervisor system directly, but concealed their negative attitudes. They also tailored their teaching to meet expected standards when there were supervisors in the classrooms. Susan represents this kind of teacher as demonstrated in her following remark:

Excerpt 4.8 Susan (interview)

When a supervisor comes into my class, I will restrain myself in carrying out some of my teaching activities.

Excerpt 4.8 indicates that there is the possibility that teachers will give a ‘showcase’ lesson if there is a supervisor in the classroom. The showcase lesson does not necessarily represent their genuine way of teaching, but is simply intended to achieve a good score from the supervisor. In relation to such showcase lessons, normal teaching procedures may be disrupted and could therefore diminish teaching quality in the long run.

4.2.4 Teaching incidents

教学事故 *jiàoxué shìgù* (teaching incidents in English) are serious mistakes or misbehaviours that teachers make in the process of teaching. Because these mistakes and misbehaviours are believed to seriously disrupt normal teaching practices and procedures they are labelled as 'incidents' by administrators. For example, if a teacher does not deliver a lecture as scheduled without an acceptable reason, s/he will be judged by administrators to have committed a serious teaching incident. The incident-maker will be given a heavy fine and will be deprived of rights to apply for honours. Teaching incident identification and accountability measures are also major components in the teaching quality assurance system, stated in Chapter 30 of the *Teacher Work Handbook* as the last line of defence in the teaching quality assurance system. However, punishments for teaching incidents are severe and can seriously impact teachers' professional development.

To be specific, there are three categories of incidents: teaching administration (10 provisions), teaching (19 provisions), and teaching facilities category (7 provisions). In addition, all incidents are classified into three levels (levels I, II, and III) according to severity and negative impact, with level I the most serious. Among the 19 provisions of teaching incidents, six are the most relevant to teachers' routine work and are listed as follows:

Excerpt 4.9 *Teacher Work Handbook* (p. 204)

1. To change a teaching plan, a teaching assignment arbitrarily or report an incorrect teaching assignment. (Level II)
2. To carry out teaching activities without a syllabus, a teaching schedule, and a lesson plan, or to assign or modify student exercises without compliance of the requirements of the syllabus. (Level II)
3. Fail to implement a unified examination for the same teaching task. (Level III)

4. Teaching progress mismatches teaching plan by 6 lectures. (Level III)
5. To be late; to leave early; to leave the class unorganized; or to engage in unrelated activities in the process of teaching or invigilating an examination. (Level III)
6. To use a mobile phone to receive or send messages in the process of teaching. (Level III)

There are advantages and disadvantages to regulating teachers' classroom behaviour in such a detailed way. The provisions are quite reasonable to some degree, for the sake of regulating teachers' classroom behaviours and for assuring teaching quality. Provisions 5 and 6 are particularly good disciplines to guarantee good teacher processes. If the provisions work, the first two Level II teaching incidents can be avoided effectively because they can prevent dynamic or unpredictable events from taking place in the teaching process. However, the provisions also constrain language teachers' autonomy and agency to make flexible on-the-spot decisions and to engage in improvisational teaching, which do not appear in the prescribed teaching plan.

4.3 Expectation context

Expectations from administrators, teachers and students form a critical context of teaching. The three parties have their own expectations of the language class. On the surface, such expectations appear perfectly reasonable, but conflicts in fact exist between the development of students' language abilities and preparation for CET4 and CET6 due to the limited CE class time. At the same time, these expectations form a constraint on CE teacher's freedom in governing their own affairs, such as teaching contents (2.1.3).

4.3.1 Authority expectation

Authority expectations are outlined in a policy document at the case university. Because national English examinations like CET4 and CET6 are so influential and well-recognised in China, the school authority attaches great importance to them. A document was issued directly to guarantee the student pass rates for the examinations. As a result, the student pass rates increased dramatically. The following is a summary of the CET4 pass rate in recent years according to statistics reported in a formal document titled, English Teaching Quality Improvement Scheme at the case university:

Excerpt 4.10 English Teaching Quality Improvement Scheme (a formal document)

The first CET4 pass rate among the 2011 student cohort was 75%, and their accumulated pass rate (through to graduation) amounted to 90%.

The expected first CET 4 pass rate for the 2012 student cohort and for the coming years was 80%, and their accumulated pass rate was expected to reach 95% upon examinee graduation.

This formal document states the expectations of the university authorities in an explicit and direct manner. At the same time, it sets up a clear goal for course teachers and calls for accountability for English teaching quality.

In addition, a series of reward and punishment policies were closely related to the course teachers' income. The first two items of the reward and punishment policies assign an explicit reward amount to different examination pass rates and outlines the punishments as follows:

Excerpt 4.11 English Teaching Quality Improvement Scheme (a formal document)

1. For the two CE Teaching and Research Departments: if the one-time CET4 pass rate of the student cohort reaches 75% there will be a reward of 150,000 yuan. In addition, each percentage point over 75 will be allocated an extra

reward amount of 10,000 yuan. If the pass rate does not reach 75%, there will be no reward.

2. For individual CE teachers: if the CET4 pass rate of a teacher's class ranks first place in the school, s/he can be fully funded by the school to study abroad for one year. If the CET4 pass rate of a teacher's class maintains one of the top three positions for three consecutive years, s/he can be promoted to a higher technical position, or get a direct promotion in professional position. If the CET4 pass rate of a teacher's class remains in the bottom 10% of all classes for two consecutive years, the teacher's promotion will be put off by one year. "A veto policy" of the CET4 pass rate applies to teachers' annual assessment. As a result, if the CET4 pass rate of the teacher's class is lower than the average rate for the whole school, the teacher will have no chance to receive an excellent grade at either department level or at university-level in the annual teacher assessment.

The attractiveness of the rewards and the cruelty of the punishments are clearly evident in this system. Firstly, a large amount of money is directly invested to improve examination pass rates. Secondly, teachers' chances of studying aboard, getting promoted, and achieving better annual assessment are determined by their students' CET4 pass rate. Therefore, teachers become highly motivated in their work to improve students' examination success. However, such motivation leads some teachers to turn the course into an examination training class in which the contents of the examination replace the textbook activities as the main focus in the teaching procedures. In short, this context changes teachers' pedagogy to a large extent.

Interviews with school administrators showed that they expect more than a high examination pass rate. For example, the Vice Dean of the School of Foreign Languages at the case

university told the researcher that she took both student test ability and communicative ability into consideration when designing the latest reform, as evidenced in her following remarks:

> **Excerpt 4.12 Vice Dean (interview)**
>
> Because the purpose of compressing the course from four semesters into three semesters is just to improve CET4 pass rates, the training time for skills testing is concentrated. But our CE course teaching requirements do not say the same thing. We want to improve our students' abilities to use English in the long run. So, after dividing the course into two parts (reading, writing and translating & listening and speaking), we are still a bit on the traditional side in reading, writing and translating classes, right? Each week, teachers set aside some time to train students' in their listening and speaking skills to improve their English communication ability, especially their oral English. (…) That is, we should take both parts of the course into account, right? So, we call it the reform of dividing the course into two teaching models. Since 2015, our CE teaching has been conducted in this way.

The Vice Dean's explanation shows that the genuine purpose of CE teaching reform was to improve the CET4 pass rate. Although the reform changed the course into two different parts, no equal importance was attached to them. On the surface, the reform designers took the two parts into account, but the time given to CET4 training is three times that given to the development of students' English communication abilities. Furthermore, administrators expect teachers to help their students to prepare for their examinations, and also facilitate development in the students' communication abilities. This is revealed in the following remarks by the Vice Dean:

Excerpt 4.13 Vice Dean (interview)

He (the superior) thinks that you are just developing students' humanistic qualities. Yes, the examination does not contradict the development of communication abilities. He asks us to help students to be good at both examinations and communication abilities.

On the surface, this expectation is idealistic. It is problematic in practice however because the examination does not test all abilities involved in the comprehensive language course, particularly in relation to students' oral English communication abilities. As a result, the exam-oriented policy leads to exam-oriented pedagogy. At the same time, expectations from the administrators are hard to realise because they conflict with natural and practical CE teaching in terms of time and textbook contents.

Therefore, the examination contents direct CE teaching practices to a large extent. The examination tests listening, reading, writing and translation, all of which are taught in CE classes. In short, what is tested in the examination is taught in CE classes, whereas what is not tested is ignored. Because CET4 and CET6 are proficiency tests not achievement tests, phonetics, oral communication skills, and cross-cultural communication abilities are not tested in the examination. As a result, conflicts develop between authority expectations and CE teaching practices. Even if it is boring to conduct exam-oriented teaching, teachers will not spend time on language skills that are irrelevant to CET4 because such teaching activities cannot gain direct acknowledgment from the School. Because their class hours are so limited, it is also challenging for teachers to help students to prepare for the examination and develop other capabilities at the same time. A significant amount of time is needed for the teacher to help the students become familiar with examination rules, examination question types, and examination skills. Moreover, students also need enough time to rehearse the test. Therefore,

there is not enough time left for training students in language skills that are irrelevant to the test.

Teachers generally perceive the expectations of authorities to simply be the pursuit of improvement to examination pass rates. For example, Linda made the following remarks:

Excerpt 4.14 Linda (interview)

For us, the school expectation is to improve the CET4 pass rate.

In the students' eyes, passing CET4 is equivalent to obtaining a Bachelor's degree. Students generally do not like examinations, much less CET4 or oral communication abilities which are neglected and unvalued implicitly by the school expectations. If the school does not implement the policy to associate students' Bachelor degree attainment with their CET4 results, the students may not take the test seriously. From the students' perspectives, the school expectation is that they must pass CET4 before they graduate.

4.3.2 Students' and teachers' expectations

Students' and teachers' expectations are similar because they have face to face interactions in class. Reflecting the authority expectation, all students expect to pass CET4 as soon as possible. This is particularly true for students with little interest in English language learning. However, it is not difficult for highly motivated students to pass the test. In addition, such students also want to promote their all-round language abilities with the help of their teacher. Irrespective of ability level, no student can tolerate a boring lecture, especially when it comes to learning a foreign language. Psychologically, it is natural for students to expect teachers to make the course interesting. As a result, there are at least three expectations of all course teachers:

1) Promote students' examination passing rate;
2) Complete textbook teaching tasks; and
3) Make lectures as interesting as possible.

In addition, half of the participants expressed that one thing that they most desired but could not realise was students' cooperation. It is reasonable to expect for students' cooperation because above three expectations can be realized only if students cooperated to the teacher's design. However, this desire was hard to achieve because of many reasons, like students' low English proficiency, low motivation, little interest, or busy personal agenda. If students are not cooperative in pedagogy, it seriously influences the teacher's pedagogy and emotion. In all, teacher-student collaboration as a team, and it is natural for them to expect something from each other.

Different teachers internalise these expectations at different levels. In other words, some teachers take ownership of all the above expectations, while others may take ownership of only one or two. Firstly, all teachers expect to complete their teaching task without complications. For example, one teacher participant, Sam, believes it is a must to complete his teaching tasks and to cover all the language points in the textbook that may appear in the final examination. This can be seen in the following remarks:

> **Excerpt 4.15 Sam (interview)**
>
> (As a teacher) you have to complete your teaching task in time no matter if it is boring or not. If anything is missing in the process of teaching, students will complain that the relevant teacher is too irresponsible to cover the points that appear in the exam paper. If that happens to me, I will feel guilty because I am paid to do it. If I do not complete my task, I will not feel good.

What Sam said reveals that he is a responsible and careful teacher. He has a strong sense of responsibility and he is afraid of being the subject of complaint from his students if he misses any language point. He connects this responsibility directly to his salary. In addition, he does

not care particularly whether the lesson contents are boring or not because he believes that he is paid to convey all textbook knowledge to his students.

Ruth expressed similar opinions, but in a more emotional way. She adopted a highly controlled way of classroom teaching as shown in her following comments:

> **Excerpt 4.16 Ruth (interview)**
>
> To be honest, I feel that, in the class … the key issue is the time limitation in each class. Because the time is so limited and you have to do this and that, I feel it is impossible to take every student's needs into account. Therefore, I set the pace!

From the researcher's observation, Ruth's teaching plan included textbook contents and exam skills training. She felt somewhat stressed about having to cover all of this content within a limited amount of time. As a result, she could only focus on the important contents, forgetting to make the class interesting. At the end of her remarks, she claimed defiantly, "I set the pace!' This does not mean she is indifferent to the students' emotional needs, but rather that she has no choice.

There are also teachers who have the ambition to meet even more expectations. Consequently, they must take additional factors into consideration. They must consider students' expectations and emotional needs. At the same time, they must also take into consideration the students' capabilities to cope with the higher expectations. Mary is an example of this kind of teacher and she manages to make it work in her class by being flexible in her teaching methods. She said:

> **Excerpt 4.17 Mary (interview)**
>
> Sometimes, both my students and I feel it is very boring to have CET4 training classes. On the one hand, they expect to pass the test by having intensive training, but it is rather boring to do it all day long. So, after the training starts, they hope

> that I add something interesting in between. I cannot do much in my regular classes, but I try to make some changes in my English Test class. I tend to spend some time on extracurricular knowledge and then get back to the contents of CET4 and CET6. In doing so, I take the two aspects in consideration.

Mary's strategy to meet the expectations is to introduce some extracurricular knowledge into the middle of an examination training class to make it a little bit more interesting. However, this strategy is conditional. It depends on students' cooperation and their language proficiency. In Mary's regular classes, students are not so cooperative and self-regulated, so they cannot accept too much knowledge. Mary cannot spend too much time on non-examination materials in such classes and therefore they have the potential to become less entertaining. That is, the teacher is primarily expected in such classes to align with the students' expectations to pass the examination or to complete the textbook contents.

Similarly, another ambitious teacher, Linda, was also concerned about the issue of having to meet an ideal expectation in her practical teaching. She said:

Excerpt 4.18 Linda (interview)

> Students come into the classroom with an ideal expectation, and so does the teacher.

However, the reality is that it was a great challenge for Linda to manage such a big class. She thought a lot about how to evenly allocate opportunities to students to practices and as well as to organise class activities in a more acceptable manner. This made Linda very frustrated. Finally, Linda found a gap existed between school expectations and that of the teachers, and drew the following conclusion:

Excerpt 4.19 Linda (interview)

> The school expectation is actually not what you expect. That is to say, there is a discrepancy between dream and reality.

Linda's comments suggest that the school authority expected only good examination results and student performance. However, they ignored the emotional needs of teachers and students during the teaching and learning process. Teachers and students expected interesting class activities, but regarded achieving good examination results as a final goal. A gap thus emerged between exam-skills lessons and a desire for interesting classes which posed significant challenges to teachers.

To fill the gap, CE teachers were under great pressure. They had to work extremely hard to cover all examination contents and textbook knowledge while keeping the course interesting. As a result, teachers expect a high level of student cooperation. Based on the findings of this study, one-third of participants identified student cooperation or involvement as the most desired aspect in their teaching, which ranked first among all expectations. As a result, CE teachers' expectations accumulated ultimately into four items: to help students pass CET4 and CET6, to help students acquire textbook knowledge, to make the class more interesting, and to have cooperation from the students to achieve all the goals effectively. Consequently, teacher expectations mainly focused on students, with greater expectations resulting in higher levels of stress.

4.4 Physical context

There are two CE classroom settings in this study: a fixed setting and a moveable setting. A fixed classroom setting for CE teachers is more common and is introduced and explored first.

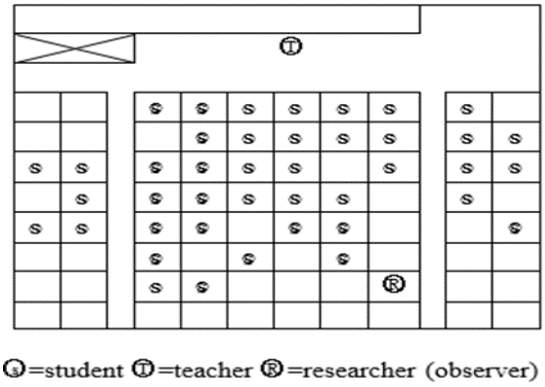


Figure 4.2 CE teacher's typical classroom setting (Left)

Figure 4.3 Seating chart of a typical fixed setting classroom (Right)

The above picture and seating chart show the setting of Lisa's class. This picture is of a typical setting with fixed rows of desks and chairs. At first glance, the classroom looks tidy and clean, and the setting positions the students to face towards the front of the classroom or to look at their own workbook. At the front of the classroom is a platform, two moveable blackboards, an overhead projector and screen, and a lectern. These artefacts are standard equipment for most classrooms at the case university. This setting is also used for most language classes. Table 4.3 shows that 11 out of 14 teacher participants worked in a classroom like this.

The physical setting is influential for language teachers. Figure 4.2 shows that the desks and chairs in the classroom are fixed, and there is no open area for role play or other activities that require students to move around. In Hall and Hall's (1977) words, "the practice of bolting desks and chairs to the floor…makes it impossible to rearrange the classroom to accommodate to the needs of either the teacher or the students" (p.142). It is not convenient for group discussion or other forms of interactions. It is not also suitable for face to face conversations among students. This fixed and crowded space can also be possible to lead to more controlling behaviour in the teacher (Perry, undated). Thus, the physical setting forms an obstacle for teacher autonomy as

a freedom in teaching depicted in Section 2.1.3. For instance, Grace expressed her strong desire to teach in a classroom with moveable desks and chairs. The following is what she said:

> **Excerpt 4.20 Grace (interview)**
> I just like them to have classes in a small-sized room. It is best when the desks and chairs can be moved around. But my expectation cannot be satisfied because the facilities at our university go against to what I expect.

Evidently, Grace believed that a classroom with moveable desks and chairs 'is the best' for her to conduct teaching activities. However, these things are out of the teacher's control. The equipment and facilities at the case university have been upgraded in recent years, but the school authority still favours classrooms with fixed desks and chairs.

Class size is another factor that influences some of the course teachers. In this study, although most teacher participants taught in a class with less than 40 students, as shown in Table 4.3, it was common to see large classes with more than 60 or 70 students, such as in the classes taught by Linda, Mark and Elisa. A classroom with fixed desks and chairs, and 60 to 70 students would be rather crowded. However, this is a practical situation that most language teachers at the case university have to face. Linda said:

> **Excerpt 4.21 Linda (interview)**
> There is no space at all to conduct teaching activities. You at least need space for activities. However, the classroom is so squeezed with students sitting one next to another that you cannot move at all, much less do any activity.

Linda's complaint revealed that large class sizes and limited space seriously constrained language teachers' classroom teaching practices. In language classes, communication and

interacting activities are undoubtedly important for the students' language development. However, the physical CE classroom setting does not facilitate this.

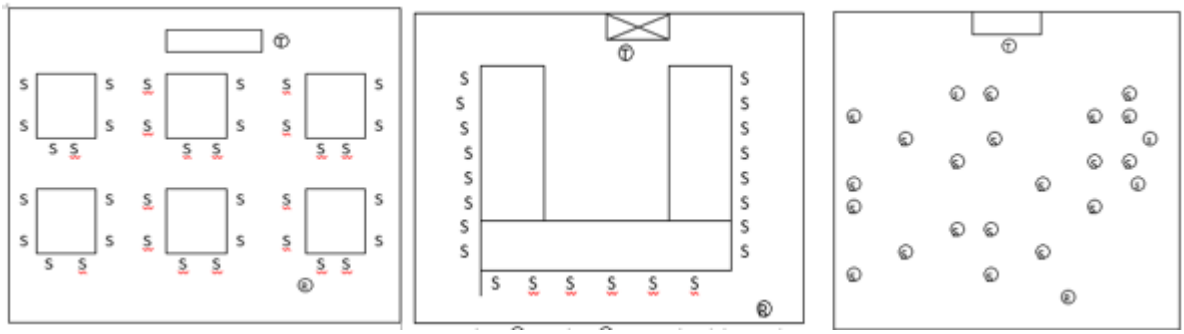
There are also special classrooms for a minority of students. In these classrooms, moveable desks and chairs are provided. Meanwhile, it is a privilege for the students to use these classrooms. They are usually students with excellent English proficiency who were identified on the first day of enrolment. These students comprise several special classes and are trained to participate in all kinds of English tests or competitions to earn honour and fame for the university. There are also some creative classes established by different faculties which enjoy the use of these classrooms. In this study, three participants worked in such classrooms as shown in Table 4.3:

Table 4. 3 Participants' class size and classroom setting

	Donna	Grace	Lisa	Mary	Sam	Sarah	Ruth	Helen	Betty	Linda	Nancy	Susan	Mark	Elisa
Class size	31	40	24	33	20	28	22	25	25	66	32	38	67	71
Class setting	F	F	F	M	F	F	F	M	M	F	F	F	F	F

Note: 'F' refers to fixed class setting; 'M' refers to moveable class setting

Table 4.3 shows that Mary, Helen, and Betty worked in moveable setting classrooms. When their classes were observed, both Mary and Betty taught an English Test class and Helen taught an oral English class. This was why they had the privilege to use the classrooms with movable desks and chairs. I found that Mary and Helen took advantage of the moveable setting in their teaching, but Betty did not.



Note: S/ⓢ= student Ⓣ= teacher Ⓡ= researcher (observer)

Figure 4.4 Seating chart of Mary's class (Left)

Figure 4.5 Seating chart of Helen's class (Middle)

Figure 4.6 Seating chart of Betty's class (Right)

As Figure 4.4 shows, Mary's classroom was set up in a pattern that was convenient for group discussions. Her students were seated around six tables. It was convenient for them to conduct face to face interaction. Figure 4.5 demonstrates that Helen's classroom was arranged as a 'U' shape to open up the space for role plays in her class. Group discussions, activity episodes, or role plays were observed in Mary's and Helen's classes, respectively. Organising of role play activity can be a possible demonstration of teacher autonomy because it is believed to be a learner-centred instructional technique (Koc, 2011). Richards (1985) observes that it is more possible to improve learner's conversational competence by alternative classroom arrangements and activities that engaging learners in conversational interactions in the classroom, role play in particular.

However, as shown in Figure 4.6, there were no tables in Betty's class. Her students were seated on moveable chairs with tablet arms, with the chairs scattered across the classroom. However, Betty did not make use of this setting to organise group or pair activities in her teaching. This may imply that Betty was not as autonomous as Helen and Mary.

4.5 Summary

Chapter 4 reports on the four aspects of the teaching context at the case university relevant to the participants' teaching and teacher autonomy: institutional context, system context, expectation context, and physical context. Firstly, institutional context sets guidelines for CE

teaching. CE teaching reforms and CET4 examination pass rates are considered as the most critical in current institutional agenda.

The system context sets detailed rules and regulations for teachers' classroom behaviours. Four elements of the system context are reported in detail: textbook regulations, teacher work norms, the teaching quality assurance and assessment system, and identification of teaching incidents. This system context increases teaching accountability and strengthens school management. The system context also plays an important role in shaping language teachers' teaching plans, decision making, and classroom behaviour. However, there are also disadvantages to regulating teachers' behaviours in such a rigid way. They may form external constraints on teacher autonomy to a certain degree. This context will help us better understand the behaviour observed in the participants' classrooms in Chapters 6 to 8.

Secondly, there were some discrepancies between the expectations of administrators and students, and between the expectations of administrators and teachers. The authority had a general and implicit expectation to improve students' language abilities, but a more specific and explicit expectation to improve student examination pass rates. In addition to the above two expectations, the students expected their emotional needs to be met and for the language learning activities to be interesting. Finally, all expectations fell on the shoulders of the course teachers. With expected cooperation from students, teachers were supposed to help their students to meet their expectations. The more teachers expected, the more stressed they felt. Because class time was very limited, the course teachers had no choice but to meet some of the expectations, but gave up less important ones.

Finally, this study found that the most common physical contexts for the teacher participants were standardised classrooms with fixed desks and chairs. Several participants suggested that this fixed classroom setting style was not convenient for them to organise student activities or

group discussions. Though more classroom activities and student group discussions were encouraged in EFL education, the participants in this study were unable to make decisions in this regard due to the school authority's traditional beliefs. In addition, large class size was another problem the participants needed to overcome in their teaching design. According to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the context of the case university was very typical in CE teaching contexts of China. Large class sizes particularly were known to hinder a language teacher's ability to improve their teaching quality and effect. To a certain degree, these three dimensions of context compose a network of external constraints on teacher autonomy, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

Chapter 5

Teacher attitudes

Chapter 4 reported the teaching contexts representing the external conditions of teacher autonomy. These conditions are influential, but not decisive. As the agent of classroom teaching, teachers' attitudes toward autonomy are the core of their decisions about teaching practices. To lay a foundation for understanding the participants' classroom practices in Chapters 6 to 8, Chapter 5 reports teachers' attitudes toward autonomy. The word 'attitude' in this study is used as an umbrella term that refers to the participants' point of views, opinions, perceptions, preferences, term interpretations, and approvals or disapprovals on questions relevant to autonomy. These attitudes are crucial to probe into participants' interpretations of the critical concepts under investigation. More specifically, Chapter 5 reports findings from semi-structured interviews on the participants' attitudes toward four concepts: their professional identity (5.1), learner autonomy (5.2), professional development (5.3), and teacher autonomy (5.4) (see Appendix H for all excerpts in original Chinese). In addition, the participants are categorised into three groups (less autonomous group, moderately autonomous group, and more autonomous group) according to a comprehensive assessment on their attitudes (5.5).

Before reporting the findings, it is necessary to note the translation of the terms in this chapter, especially key terms like 'autonomy', 'learner autonomy', and 'teacher autonomy'. As explained in Chapter 3, all interviews were conducted in Chinese (3.4.3) to facilitate participants yielding their opinion conveniently and fully. The author of this thesis translated all the terms from Chinese to English. In this section, I use Chinese characters followed by italicised pinyin to note the key terms, allowing non-Chinese readers to pronounce the terms if

they want to discuss them. '学习者自主' *xuéxízhě zìzhǔ* was translated as 'learner autonomy' because the concept has been widely-accepted and there are no disputes with this translation.

However, 'teacher autonomy' is a comparatively new concept. There are different interpretations of the Chinese translation or definition of the term. Consequently, there were several Chinese versions of 'autonomy' when the participants were discussing its relevance to teacher or teaching. However, the interviewer's questions did give the interviewees some hints on the term. For instance, the participants were asked the following two questions about the concept of teacher autonomy:

1) What is your understanding of the term 'teacher autonomy' (教师自主 *jiàoshī zìzhǔ*)?

2) Do you consider yourself as an autonomous teacher (自主的老师 *zìzhǔ de lǎoshī)*?

The participants exhibited difficulties in using the term 'autonomy'. Some participants used '教师自主' *jiàoshī zìzhǔ* 'teacher autonomy' in line with the interviewer. So, '教师自主' *jiàoshī zìzhǔ* was translated into 'teacher autonomy'.

However, participants also mentioned: 1) 自主 *zìzhǔ*, 2) 自主性 *zìzhǔ xìng*, 3) 自主权 *zìzhǔ quán*, and 4) 自主度 *zìzhǔ dù* in the discussion of teacher autonomy. These variant expressions implied the participants' dispositions on different dimensions of autonomy. Consequently, the contexts of these expressions were taken into consideration when they were translated. The detailed rules of translating the participants' four expressions are illustrated as follows:

1) The word 自主 *zìzhǔ* 'autonomy' can be used as an adjective, an adverb[1], or a noun in Mandarin Chinese, depending on its distribution. When it is used to describe a noun, it is an adjective, corresponding to 'autonomous' in English. For example,

[1] In Mandarin Chinese, the adjective marker *de* or the adverb marker *di* can be omitted in some cases.

One participant said: "你才能够有自主发展 *nǐ cái nénggoù yǒu zìzhǔ fāzhǎn*".

My translation was: *So, you can have autonomous development*.

When the word 自主 *zìzhǔ* precedes a verb or a verb phrase, it is interpreted as an adverb, corresponding to 'autonomously' in English. For instance, one participant said: "所以你要自己去自主发展 *suǒyǐ nǐyào zìjǐ qù zìzhǔ fāzhǎn*", and I translated it as: *So, you have to develop autonomously all by yourself.* Finally, when the word 自主 *zìzhǔ* follows another noun (i.e., 教师自主 *jiàoshī zìzhǔ*), it is interpreted as a noun. So, the expression 教师自主 *jiàoshī zìzhǔ* was translated as 'teacher autonomy'.

2) 自主性 *zìzhǔ xìng* refers to autonomy as an attribute, a property, or a character that is owned by the subject teacher. In this context, 自主性 *zìzhǔ xìng* usually means a capability or a psychological character. For instance, a participant said '我最开始以为是老师自主性 *wǒ zuìkāishǐ yǐwéi shì lǎoshī zìzhǔ xìng*'. So, the English translation of the sentence was 'I saw it as teachers' autonomy at very beginning'.

3) 自主权 *zìzhǔ quán* means autonomy as a right. To be specific, it is a right embedded in national law and other authorities that teachers act according to their own will. It was still translated into 'autonomy' because this 'right' was also a basic dimension in 'autonomy'. For example, one participant stated: '我们基本上没有什么自主权 *wǒmén jīběnshàng méiyǒu shénme zìzhǔ quán'*. I translated it as, 'we basically have no autonomy'. If however, the Chinese expression 权力 *quánlì* ('right' in English) was stressed separately and modified by 自主 *zìzhǔ*, I translated into 'the right to be autonomous'. For example, one participant stated: '教师有自主的权利 *jiàoshī yǒu zìzhǔ de quánlì'*, and I translated it as, 'teachers have the right to be autonomous'.

4) There was also a participant using 自主度 *zìzhǔ dù*, literally speaking, which meant 'the degree of autonomy'. This expression implied a meaning of freedom. In this situation, I still translated it as 'autonomy'. For instance, the participant said '但是大学英语这一块，可能我们就没有这个自主度了 *dànshì dàxué yīngyǔ zhèyíkuài, kěnéng wǒmén jiù méiyǒu zhège zìzhǔ dù le*'. So, my translation of the sentence was, 'but in the field of CE, maybe we do not have such an autonomy'.

These expressions were still within the three dimensions of teacher autonomy to emerge from the review of literature provided in Chapter 2. So, all in all, varied expressions used by the participants when discussing teacher autonomy were generally translated into autonomy, though they stressed different dimensions in the definition of autonomy. Only when a specific dimension was singled out and highlighted by the user was its English translation adapted accordingly.

5.1 Attitudes to professional identity

Professional identity in this study refers to participants' social role as CE teachers. Though Day and Kington (2008) warn against mixing professional identity with role, there is no real problem in setting this role as a starting point in this study. On the one hand, because "identity is not something one has, but something that develops during one's whole life" (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 108), it is not always stable or positive (Day, 2012). In other words, identity is something that is changeable and developing. In this study, 'professional identity' is used to refer to a comparatively stable social role: CE teachers. This social role can be a critical starting point in the development of one's professional identity.

Furthermore, Beijaard et al. (2004) also found that in some studies, professional identity is related to teachers' concepts or images of self. It is generally argued that these concepts or

images of self strongly determine teachers' classroom practices, their professional development as teachers, and their attitudes toward educational changes (Beijaard et al., 2004). As such, this section presents evidence of CE teachers' attitudes toward their role as CE teachers so as to lay a foundation for understanding their classroom practices in Chapters 6-8. In addition, participants' likes and dislikes in their professional work and lives based on both their experiences in practice and their personal backgrounds were also covered.

A simple three-way coding system was set up to describe the participants' attitudes to their professional identity. The criteria for analysing the attitudes of the participants toward their professional identity was: '+' was used to identify a positive attitude; '-' was used to show a negative attitude; and 'o' was used to indicate an unclear attitude. To be specific, when the participant was asked to identify his/her profession (e.g., when they were asked in the interview: 'How would you describe your job as a College English teacher to outsiders?' or 'What do you tell people when you are asked what do you do?', the answers were categorised into three groups. If the participant used explicit and positive statements such as: 'I am a College English teacher', 'I teacher English in a university', or 'I work as a College English teacher', the participant's attitude toward his /her professional identity was judged to be positive.

There are two key points in the positive judgement. One is the course characteristic, which should be 'College English' or 'English' at least. The other is the institutional attribute, which should be a 'college' or 'university'. If the participant's reply to the question was a general term such as 'teacher', 'faculty member', or 'English teacher' without the institutional attribute, the answer was categorised as 'unclear attitude' because the identity did not show the subject characteristic and institutional attribute together. Finally, if the participant used other subject names or any negative statements to identify his/her profession as a teacher, like 'PE teacher', 'Math teacher', or 'I do not know', the answer was categorised as 'negative attitude'.

How the participants identified themselves in the profession is reported first (5.1.1). The details of their likes and dislikes in the job are then summarised in Section 5.1.2.

5.1.1 Teacher, college faculty, English teacher, or College English teacher?

What do you do? It is a simple question which is commonly used in people's daily life to get to know someone's profession. However, the diversity of my participants' answers to this simple question was not what was expected by this researcher when the question was asked at the participant interviews. According to the above criteria, all participants' attitudes toward their professional identity are showed in Table 5.1:

Table 5. 1 Participants' attitudes toward their professional identity

	Donna	Grace	Lisa	Mary	Sam	Sarah	Ruth	Helen	Betty	Linda	Nancy	Susan	Mark	Eliza
On PI	o	o	+	o	o	+	+	o	o	+	+	o	-	o

Table 5.1 shows that the participants' overall responses to the question about their professional identity was very unclear. Among the 14 participants, eight held an unclear view on their professional identity. That is, they either identified themselves as a general 'teacher', a 'faculty member', or an 'English teacher'. In other words, they did not identify themselves as a 'College English teacher' directly and explicitly. However, there were teachers who held a rather positive view of their professional identity. I list a few of their answers to show their varied attitudes in detail:

Excerpt 5.1 Donna (interview)

I first say that I teach English … then I try my best not to tell them this (my affiliation).

Excerpt 5.2 Grace (interview)

I usually say 'teacher'. It seems that I don't want to stress I am a member of the faculty in particular.

Excerpt 5.3 Lisa (interview)

I first say what I do, a college faculty. Then teach what, English.

Excerpt 5.4 Susan (interview)

I just say I am an English teacher.

Excerpt 5.5 Mark (interview)

I say I am a PE teacher.

Generally, the teachers' identifications vary from: 'a teacher', 'a college faculty', 'an English teacher', to 'a PE teacher'. The ambiguous, unclear, or negative answers also provide various reasons as to why the teachers held negative attitudes toward the profession. For example, Donna said she would not tell her affiliation to others because she was ashamed of the reputation of the university where she worked, which is a second-class university. Grace did not highlight her faculty member status for fear of other people's attachments of unrealistically high expectations to the title. In other words, the participants' descriptions of their professional identity also reflected an uncertainty about their professionalism. They doubted teaching CE as a serious profession. Particularly, the teacher who described himself as 'a PE teacher' denied the subject (i.e., CE) completely. He further added that he saw no value in the job of teaching CE and he believed the job should be done by women rather than men.

The participants' reasons for these attitudes varied. Some felt they were not taken seriously. Others believed that they felt no social respect from doing the job. A number also expressed their dissatisfaction with the low income and high demands of the job. So, this reflected the importance of external factors on participants' attitudes toward their professional identity.

Nevertheless, some of the participants held a positive view of their professional identity. They gave the following reasons:

Excerpt 5.6 Linda (interview)

Actually, putting it in the society as a whole, (people) have a positive impression on this job. I respect my profession.

Excerpt 5.7 Nancy (interview)

When I say I teach in a university, people's first reaction is my comparatively young age. As a consequence, I feel proud of myself as soon as they say so.

It is evident from the participants' explanations that social status associated with the job or people's general impression of the job that are the main reasons for their sense of being respected. Such external reasons may influence the participants' attitudes toward their professional identity. The capability to teach in a university at a young age, which is a common phenomenon for CE teachers, can also increase the confidence as CE teachers.

5.1.2 Likes and dislikes in the job

Participants were asked during their interview: Do you like your job as a College English teacher? Appling the same criteria as above, the 14 participants' preferences toward the job are reported in Table 5.2:

Table 5. 2 Participants' preference toward their job

	Donna	Grace	Lisa	Mary	Sam	Sarah	Ruth	Helen	Betty	Linda	Nancy	Susan	Mark	Eliza
Like/not	o	+	+	+	o	+	-	+	+	o	+	+	-	+

Table 5.2 shows most participants loved their job. To be specific, nine of them gave positive answer (see names with '+' in Table 5.2). They gave positive answers for the following reasons:

Excerpt 5.8 Elisa (interview)

I didn't like the job before, but now I do like it. Now I feel it is good to be a teacher. It makes me feel young.

Excerpt 5.9 Grace (interview)

Except for this, I don't know what else I can do, really.

Excerpt 5.10 Lisa (interview)

Like. Mainly because I can be together with my students, then I can always feel young in men's thought.

Excerpt 5.11 Nancy (interview)

So, when you want to talk about likes and dislikes in detail, it is possible that it (the job) has been a part of your life.

Excerpt 5.12 Mary (interview)

For one reason, it is honourable to be a teacher, and respectable… For another reason, my family and I myself would like to engage in the field to be a teacher.

From the above group of extracts, the key elements representing the participants' likes in the job include: age growth, communication, life style, social respect, and family support. Firstly, a teacher's love toward their job may grow as time passes. The more the teacher knows the job and their students, and the longer s/he stays in the field, the more s/he will love the job. This emotional development is rather explicit and natural. Secondly, given a core aspect of the job is communication it is not surprising that this can be a key factor in the extent to which teachers enjoy their work. Thirdly, some participants may take on the job as their life style. These teachers usually have high-level identification with the profession. There are also some teachers who choose to love their job because they have no other choice. Nevertheless, external factors like social and family influences cannot be ignored.

Another group of teachers held a complex feeling toward their job. Because their love toward the job depended on uncertain factors, their preference to the job was taken as unclear and was marked as 'o' in Table 5.2. Sometimes, they loved certain aspects of the job, but did not like

other parts such as test-preparation, research, and many types of teacher assessments. Several participants also expressed their dissatisfaction towards the income from the job. Or their love toward the job depended on the student cooperation, teaching contents, or other pressures. This is revealed in the following extracts:

Excerpt 5.13 Sam (interview)

If the CET4 pressure is not so heavy, I think this is a quite good job.

Excerpt 5.14 Donna (interview)

If my students cooperate, I like it very much. If they don't cooperate, I feel rather gloomy.

Excerpt 5.15 Linda (interview)

Teaching and educating students, I feel I really like, if there is no other extra work like preparation for promotion, this assessment, that assessment.

The teachers' comments above make it clear that external factors influence their love toward the job. The factors may include exam pressure, student cooperation, preparation for promotion, and many kinds of teacher assessments, and can be a source of instability and changeability for individual teachers. However, the obligatory aspects of the CE teacher's work cannot be changed, and can only be accepted passively. From an emotional perspective, these factors may be internal triggers to constrain their autonomy in their practical work. This finding aligns with Liu (2016). Teachers in the unclear attitude group revealed an unstable love toward their job compared to the definite and explicit love for the job expressed by teachers in the positive attitude group.

However, two participants still expressed their dissatisfaction with the job. Mark told the interviewer directly that he did not like the job, but he did not give a reason. Furthermore, Ruth expressed her negative attitude toward the job emotionally. She said, "I am just very unsatisfied with the working environment and living environment." (Ruth)

It is worth noting that some participants provided positive responses when asked about their likes in the job, but also provided a negative or unclear description of their professional identity. A comparison of the data in Table 5.1 and 5.2 shows that this phenomenon was true for Grace, Mary, Helen, Betty, Susan, and Elisa. This phenomenon reflected "an unavoidable interrelationship between cognitive and emotional identities" (Day & Kington, 2008, p. 8). In terms of this study, the participants held negative or unclear attitudes toward their professional identity cognitively, but they loved the job emotionally. Day and Kington (2008) found overwhelming evidence to show that teaching demanded magnificent personal and emotional investment in the process of their professional identity formation. They called this emotional fabric, "emotional identity" (ibid, p. 8). In turn, emotional identity may account for the discrepancy between teachers' positive preference to the job and negative or unclear attitude toward their professional identity. Because of this emotional identity, they completed their duty in harbouring their negative attitude towards their professional identity.

5.2 Attitudes to learner autonomy

Learner autonomy and its relationship with teacher autonomy was reviewed in Section 2.2. Because a teacher's attitudes to learner autonomy directly influence the teacher's pedagogy, and because autonomy-supportive teaching is taken as a critical manifestation of teacher autonomy (2.2.4), these attitudes are considered critical components in developing teacher autonomy. In this study, all participants reported that they had heard of learner autonomy and many showed a rather high-level understanding of the construct (5.2.1). Nonetheless, there were discrepancies among participants in relation to their acceptance of the theory of teacher autonomy. Some teachers then reflected on their role in promoting learner autonomy (5.2.2).

To judge the participants' attitudes toward learner autonomy, the '+', 'o', and '-' signs were employed again to symbolise their 'positive', 'unclear', and 'negative' attitudes, respectively.

1. If the participant held a positive attitude toward his/her students' autonomy, it meant the participant was confident in the students' capabilities to conduct autonomous learning. However, regarding the highly standardised national exams as an overall goal for language learners in the case context, having the learners set the goals by themselves was not included as a part of learner autonomy in this study. That is, if the participant believed that the students could be autonomous in the process of achieving the external goals set by the teacher or the school, the participant was believed to hold a 'positive' attitude towards learner autonomy.
2. However, if the participant used a negative word or expression like 'weak', 'cannot', 'poor', 'do not', and so on to describe his/her students' autonomous learning abilities, this participant was counted as holding a 'negative' attitude toward learner autonomy.
3. Finally, if the participant did not explicitly express a positive or negative attitude toward the concept, and only stated his/her opinion in an indirect way like they needed further instruction, s/he was considered to hold an 'unclear' attitude and was therefore represented as an 'o'. Sometimes, the participants expressed confusion with the concept and they were allocated to the 'unclear' group.

Thus, all participants' attitudes toward learner autonomy are summarised in Table 5.3:

Table 5. 3 Participants' attitudes toward learner autonomy

	Donna	Grace	Lisa	Mary	Sam	Sarah	Ruth	Helen	Betty	Linda	Nancy	Susan	Mark	Eliza
On LA	-	o	+	+	o	o	-	o	o	o	+	+	+	+

Table 5.3 shows an equal number of participants held 'positive' and 'unclear' responses toward student autonomy. To be specific, among the 14 participants, six of them held a positive view

of their students' autonomy and six held an 'unclear view. Moreover, two participants gave negative answers. In other words, most participants lacked confidence in their students' abilities to learn autonomously.

5.2.1 Teachers' interpretation of learner autonomy

All participants more or less knew of the concept of learner autonomy as evidenced in their interview responses. Some participants showed a rather high-level understanding of the concept from a theoretical perspective. Many teachers explained the concept in a quite systematic way. Some of them even studied the relevant theory as part of in their Master's studies (Betty and Mary) or learned about the theory by reading journal papers (Sarah and Linda). Extracts 5.16-5.18 list some of the participants' interpretations of learner autonomy or autonomous learning:

Excerpt 5.16 Mark (interview)

Autonomous learning is mainly about learners planning their own learning, assessing their learning, judging whether a learning method is suitable or not, and then making corresponding adjustments.

Excerpt 5.17 Mary (interview)

When it comes to autonomy, I think it is, to put it simply, to make a good plan on one's own learning, including deciding the learning goals and the learning content. If one is autonomous, he will choose learning methods and means, and make self-comments.

Excerpt 5.18 Susan (interview)

It is a capability to plan one's time, actively control oneself, and have one's own plan. This is learner autonomy.

Excerpts 5.16 to 5.18 indicate that the teachers held a rather systematic understanding on learner autonomy and put much emphasis on the detailed processes to be an autonomous learner. Planning one's time and contents in the learning process was typically set as the first priority. Susan pointed out directly and exactly that learner autonomy is a 'capability' which is a description that is well-accepted in the literature.

However, many participants held an unclear or negative view of the concept. They doubted the feasibility of applying the concept in their teaching. Furthermore, they simply described it as the learner's own job.

Excerpt 5.19 Donna (interview)

I find that Chinese children, because from their childhood, learn in the context controlled by their teacher. If you do ask them to learn autonomously, for them it only means to meet the time requirement at the language centre.

Excerpt 5.20 Linda (interview)

Autonomy is something that sounds really good, very ideal. But for students who have learned in a purely teacher-controlled and parent-monitored environment, where is the direction for their own autonomy?

Excerpts 5.19 and 5.20 indicate that Donna and Linda had their own understanding of the learner autonomy concept. Donna saw it from a Chinese sociocultural context, whereas Linda believed it to be an 'ideal' goal. At the same time, both Linda and Donna strongly believed that their students were used to a controlled learning environment—by their teachers or parents rather than themselves—because of the teaching tradition China. In other words, the teachers doubted their students' capabilities to learn autonomously due to contextual factors like the teacher-centred learning tradition in China and the Chinese way of parenting.

Except for sociocultural considerations, the way in which teachers weigh learner autonomy in their mind can be a reason. In a controlled learning environment and exam-oriented context depicted in Chapter 4, whether teachers want to assign more autonomy to learners is a big issue. The basic tone here is quite different from the ideal context of learner autonomy in which the learner controls every aspect of their learning, particularly goal-setting. In the context of this study, teachers usually have to weigh-up the options between the personal benefits in exam-oriented teaching and the benefits to learners in the provision of autonomy-supportive teaching. To teach in an autonomy-supportive way, the teacher may be challenged by students (they want to pass CET4), and may risk his/her own bonus if the student pass rate is not good, even though this way of teaching can benefit students in the long run. It takes time, courage, and capability for CE teachers to develop learner autonomy under various pressures and risks. Thus, it is also worthwhile investigating the participants' reflections on their role in fostering learner autonomy.

There were also teachers who believed that learner autonomy depended on the learner themselves, namely their ability to develop a habit of independent learning. In the participant's words:

Excerpt 5.21 Grace (interview)

Learner autonomy, autonomous learning, is just to arrange one's time for learning.

That is, these teachers see learner autonomy simply as letting the student learn independently. Echoing this sentiment is the attitudes expressed by Ruth in the following extract:

Excerpt 5.22 Ruth (interview)

A teacher assigns a learning task, then a student relates it to his own reality, arranges it reasonably, and accomplishes it autonomously. Isn't this autonomous learning?

In Ruth's words, the teacher's role of supporting learner autonomy is only to "tell (students) the learning task". Ruth's interpretation of learner autonomy puts emphasis on the learner's role in relating the learning activity to their own reality, an opinion that was also expressed by Grace, indirectly. However, this attitude is rather superficial as it ignores language teachers' active role in the process of developing learner autonomy.

5.2.2 Teacher's roles in fostering learner autonomy

As part of the data collection process, some participants were asked an additional interview question on their role in developing learner autonomy. However, the answers to this question were not coded into three-way markers as were the answers to the question on teachers' attitudes toward learner autonomy. There were two reasons for not applying the same coding process and to report the answers as a crucial component in this section. On the one hand, all participants were not asked this question during the interview. It would therefore be unfair to take this data into consideration when assessing their views of their autonomy. On the other hand, it was an open question and all answers were reasonable. Therefore, there were no justifiable criteria to code these data. Nevertheless, data in this part served as significant supplement for Section 5.2.1.

When the participants were invited to reflect on their roles in fostering learner autonomy, the three most frequently used words were 'guide' (8 times), 'monitor' (5 times), and 'facilitator' (4 times). Other roles were also mentioned such as resource bank, reminder, inspirer, adviser, and booster.

Excerpt 5.23 Linda (interview)

As for learner autonomy, I think it is actually the teacher's guidance that is the most important for freshman students.

Excerpt 5.24 Donna (interview)

In the concept of learner autonomy, a teacher is always believed to be a guide.

Excerpt 5.25 Nancy (interview)

I think that I should be a guide. That is to say, a teacher should guide his students on how to be autonomous.

Excerpt 5.26 Susan (interview)

You can only become a guide, or help them, remind them, and monitor them, but actually not too much.

Excerpt 5.27 Elisa (interview)

For learner autonomy, I think that the teacher should only play the role of being a monitor and a facilitator.

The above participants' attitudes revealed that they have abstract awareness of their roles in fostering learner autonomy. In their own words, they were mostly a "guide" or "helper" in developing their students' autonomy. Based on their descriptions, it is hard to differentiate between their understandings of their role in developing learner autonomy. Because a 'guide' is a rather abstractive role, the way of guiding can vary greatly. They may refer to everything they do as their way of being a guide, and can refer to a direction or requirement as a guide. In the former, it means they lack a theoretical and conscious reflection on their act of 'guiding'. In the latter, it means they lack adequate skills and strategies to play an active role in developing learner autonomy. Therefore, they simplify some of their directions or requirements into one word, 'guide'. This over-abstract understanding on their role in fostering learner autonomy may be an internal constraint to make autonomy-supportive teaching feasible in their classroom. Furthermore, they do 'guide' learners to develop their autonomy in various ways, but do not consciously do so or they lack theoretical reflection.

5.3 Attitudes to teacher professional development

Teacher development is usually described as a "process of continual, intellectual, experiential, and attitudinal growth of teachers" (Lange, 1990, p. 250). The importance of professional development for developing teacher autonomy cannot be over-stressed as reviewed in Section 2.1.3. For both pre-service and in-service teachers, professional development and teacher education can help to promote their autonomy (Castro Garcés & Martínez Granada, 2016; Dymoke & Harrison, 2006).

In this study, however, when it comes to professional development the two most frequently used words by the participants were 'confused' and 'helpless'. Their attitudes toward professional development will be reported from three perspectives. Firstly, their personal plan for professional development (5.3.1). Secondly, obstacles to their professional development as revealed in the interviews (5.3.2). Thirdly, opinions of the school facilities to support teachers' professional development (5.3.3).

As a starting point, the 'personal plan' was set as the only standard used to judge the participants' attitudes toward their professional development. That is, if the participant had a plan for himself/herself to develop professionally, either a short- or long-term plan, the participant was counted to hold a positive attitude towards the concept and was given a '+' mark. In contrast, the participant was given a '-' mark for a negative attitude. Because there was only existence of the plan or not, no middle category was set and thus all participants' attitudes toward their professional development were allocated to two groups. The 14 participants' attitudes toward their professional development is summarised in Table 5.4:

Table 5. 4 Participants' attitudes toward their professional development

	Donna	Grace	Lisa	Mary	Sam	Sarah	Ruth	Helen	Betty	Linda	Nancy	Susan	Mark	Eliza
On TPD	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-

Table 5.4 illustrates that there were only six teachers who indicated they had a personal plan for their own professional development, whereas most teachers (i.e., eight) indicated that they had no personal plan at all. This summary echoed their general comments and feeling towards professional development as “confused” and “helpless”.

Moreover, because the school’s program on faculty professional development was most often out of the control of the participants, it was unreasonable to count it when judging the participants’ own capacity. Nevertheless, although the participants experienced obstacles to professional development they can still comment on this aspect and make proposals to improve the school facilities.

5.3.1 Personal plan

A personal plan is a critical starting point, while it is well supported that teachers themselves manage their professional development (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001). Although professional development processes can be implemented by teachers or the institution, the teachers are the best source to achieve the most effective outcomes (Bailey et al., 2001). Therefore, the participants’ personal plans for professional development are reported in this section.

Firstly, Table 5.4 shows that most participants did not have a plan for their professional development. In effect, eight participants told the interviewer simply and straightforwardly that they had no idea about their professional development, they were not clear, or they had no clear plan. Mark even claimed that it was not necessary to develop professionally because the job only needs the teacher to be a mouthpiece for the stakeholders. In addition, he saw no value in the job at all, so he would not invest the extra time and energy needed to develop as a professional.

Furthermore, some participants' responses to this question were very positive. They indicated that they had a clear plan for both short-term and long-term development as a professional in a systematic and practical way. Notwithstanding their plans, there were still a number of this concerns raised by the participants. As one participant reported explicitly:

Excerpt 5.28 Nancy (interview)

Of course, I know that currently I still have to do something. I can only do, maybe because of the heavy teaching workload this term… I can only fulfil my teaching tasks at present. This is my short term (plan), an arrangement for this term right now. Then, I want to work out a visiting scholar plan next year.

Nancy's statement in Excerpt 5.28 shows that she had a clear short-term plan and a practical plan for the following year. She further revealed that her application for a visiting scholar position at a British university was approved. It is not rare to hear teachers complain about their heavy workload, whereas it is unusual to hear of such a positive attitude toward work pressure and a clear vision on the future. According to the participants in this study, 'a visiting scholar plan' was understood in effect to be a chance for a teacher to learn from colleagues at another university, which is a critical activity for teacher professional development. Other participants (Lisa and Mary) expressed a similar desire to be a visiting scholar at a top university in an English-speaking country.

5.3.2 Obstacles

The obstacles to professional development vary from person to person. This study revealed that four obstacles were most evident among the study participants: insufficient awareness, passiveness in action, family, and personal reasons.

Firstly, in terms of lack of awareness of how to develop professionally, when the participants were asked about their plan to develop their professionalism their responses overall were rather

negative. Their answers included: “I am poor in this aspect” (Donna); “Actually, I feel rather confused” (Mary); and “No, no, I have no plan at all” (Ruth).

Secondly, evidence in this study showed that some participants were rather passive when making a determination to develop their professionalism. That is, they were not actively volunteering to take part in such kinds of activities. Some of the participants simply, passively, and superficially equated professional development with general teacher learning or a promotion in academic title. The rules for promotion are set by external and institutional authorities, so this equation was actually a passive decision from the teachers. Nevertheless, the participants had no clear idea about what to learn or how to get promoted by implementing a practical plan of action. Indeed, they had no systematic knowledge base of professional development. One participant put it straightforwardly:

Excerpt 5.29 Nancy (interview)

Yes, sometimes we hope to get professional instruction, but I don’t know where I can start.

This means the participant had the desire to learn or had a subtle awareness of the importance of developing as a professional, but took no further action.

Next, the issue of professional development can inevitably lead to the classical debate on keeping the balance between work and family. Especially for my participants in this case, most of whom are young mothers, as revealed in the following extracts.

Excerpt 5.30 Elisa (interview)

It is not because the school doesn’t give us chances, but because I have my family reasons. I cannot go, you know, in the next three to five years. Before my child becomes independent, I have no chance. Or if it is short-term training, it is OK for

me. But if it means studying abroad, or studying far away, it will be hard for me to participate in such professional learning.

Excerpt 5.31 Mary (interview)

But I cannot, my husband and child are in China, I cannot study abroad without their company.

In Excerpt 5.30, Elisa admitted that the school provided opportunities for professional development, but she gave up because of family reasons. It was almost a common phenomenon among my participants that they had young child to be taken care of and beloved ones to be together with. Interviews revealed that most participants were young mothers, nine to be exact. This situation is a practical issue in professional development programs and is a great challenge and consideration for the institution when organising such programs. This situation may also form internal constraints on their autonomy to a certain degree. It implied that short-term, school-based, or autonomous teacher professional development programs with stable expert support may be a good solution.

Lastly, the attitude may be due to their personal attributes such as age, personality, health, or even airsickness. These obstacles imply that internal reasons occupy a considerable portion in these obstacles. See the following examples:

Excerpt 5.32 Elisa (interview)

I am forty years old and I have a child to support. Therefore, I feel it will be impossible for me to receive any further education. Even if I have such a plan, it will be encumbered by the reality of my life.

Excerpt 5.33 Linda (interview)

I have many ideas, but my health condition does not allow me to pursue the ideas.

Excerpt 5.34 Donna (interview)

I don't mean I don't like those (professional development programs). It is only because of my personal reasons. For instance, for the overseas education programs, I feel I am afraid of them because I get airsick on long trips, and my airsickness will get even worse with a frightening feeling.

Other obstacles were also mentioned. For instance, Mark mentioned that the subject characteristics were the biggest obstacles for language teachers' professional development. He thought that one of the most obvious characteristics of the CE subject does not come to fruition in its application of teaching methods. In other words, this characteristic determines that teaching rather than research is given greater emphasis in the subject, whereas the reality is that CE teachers are judged and promoted more by their publications in the institutional contexts according to relevant rules in the school. However, CE teachers were usually busy completing their heavy workload and investing their time in curriculum design and classroom management practices, rather than undertaking further research. As a result, it was hard for them to develop as a professional. Mark also argued that many theoretical research findings on language teaching methodology were not adaptable in practical EFL classrooms. This further discouraged language teachers to relate their practice with theory research. Thus, teachers' professional development was hindered.

5.3.3 School facilities

The participants' attitudes toward school facilities for their professional development went to two extremes. On the one hand, some were satisfied with the amount of services provided by the school. They thought they were enough for their professional learning, but did not have enough time, the inclination, and the energy to absorb them all. For example:

Excerpt 5.35 Mark (interview)

The school actually provides teachers with many kinds of professional development programs every year. For example, you can apply for the candidature to be a visiting scholar every couple of years.

Excerpt 5.36 Sam (interview)

I graduated from a teacher university. If not, how can I teach? So, they asked me to attend pre-service training programs after I joined this university. They asked me to take exams on Psychology, on Teaching Methodology. I said I graduated from a teacher university and I was an excellent graduate with scores as high as 80 and 90, why should I sit for these exams again?

Excerpt 5.35 shows that Mark believed there were adequate professional development programs for teachers including the chance to be a visiting scholar. In Excerpt 5.36, Sam did not directly express his attitude towards school facilities for pre-service teachers' professional training, but showed confidence in himself as a qualified teacher because of his education background. He believed that there was no reason for him to be trained in pre-service training programs because he was "an excellent graduate" from "a teacher school".

Furthermore, some participants complained that the school facilities for teachers' professional development did not fit them as a sound system. This extreme contrast can be illustrated in Linda's opinion expressed in Excerpt 5.37:

Excerpt 5.37 Linda (interview)

There is no systematic and long-term plan in the section of teacher professional development. Generally speaking, I haven't seen such a plan yet.

From Excerpt 5.35 to 5.37, two main opinions on the school facilities for teacher professional development were presented. On the one hand, the participants indicated there were an adequate amount of professional development programs at the case university. However, they were not sure of the necessity for them to attend the programs. On the other hand, the participants seemed dissatisfied with the quality of such services. It may be inferred form their dissatisfaction that the institution needs to conduct a teachers' needs analysis and tailor suitable professional development plan for individual teachers.

5.4 Attitudes to teacher autonomy

To understand participants' attitudes toward teacher autonomy is a core aim of this study. Asking the participants directly about their perceptions of teacher autonomy is somewhat exploratory however and no doubt challenging for respondents. Nonetheless, their responses exceeded the researcher's expectations in terms of their understanding of this comparatively new concept. When they were asked in the interview: 'What is your understanding of the term 'teacher autonomy?', many participants revealed that it was the first time they had heard of the concept. However, most tried to define the concept in their own words, and their interpretations demonstrated comprehensive and in-depth thinking. Their understandings covered almost every dimension of the concept to emerge from the literature review in Chapter 2. In Section 5.4.1, firstly, participants' understandings of teacher autonomy will be reported. This is followed by a discussion of their self-comments on their autonomy (5.4.2).

To judge the participants' attitudes toward teacher autonomy it was necessary to set the criteria at the beginning. Similarly, '+', 'o', and '-' signs were employed to symbolise their 'positive', 'unclear', and 'negative' attitudes, respectively. If the participant commented himself/herself as autonomous, a '+' was marked on it. For example, some participants stated: 'I have

autonomy'; some others said explicitly: 'I am autonomous'; and others even gave a score to his/her autonomy. For instance, a participant stated; "I give myself 80 cents if it is one hundred cents". These teachers were judged positive in self-comment on their autonomy.

If the participant's self-comment was unclear or ambiguous, an 'o' was marked. For instance, some teachers said: "I don't know", "I am not sure", or "I am autonomous and not autonomous at the same time". Their self-comments on autonomy were considered unclear.

Finally, if the participant commented his/her autonomy with explicit negative words or expression, a '-' was used. Several participants commented that they regarded themselves to be autonomous in teaching, but not in research. In this situation, only the comment on their autonomy in teaching was taken into consideration because their research was not within the scope of this research investigation. Though their research fruits or publications were considered as a critical part of professional development, it was beyond the reach of the researcher to collect all participants' publications and to prove the relationship between these publications and their autonomy. Furthermore, this study focused more on the relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher classroom practice rather than teacher research. Thus, all participants' attitudes toward teacher autonomy are demonstrated in Table 5.5:

Table 5. 5 Participants' attitudes toward teacher autonomy

	Donna	Grace	Lisa	Mary	Sam	Sarah	Ruth	Helen	Betty	Linda	Nancy	Susan	Mark	Eliza
On TA	-	+	+	-	o	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+

Table 5.5 shows most participants gave a positive self-comment on their autonomy. To be specific, eight teachers commented that they saw themselves as autonomous teachers in teaching at least. There were also five teachers who did not think themselves to be autonomous teachers, and only one had no clear idea about whether he was autonomous or not. Details on their self-comment are presented in Section 5.4.2.

5.4.1 Teachers' interpretation of teacher autonomy

Fourteen participants' perceptions of teacher autonomy covered the three dimensions reviewed in Chapter 2, including freedom, capability, and professional development. More than one-third of participants believed that teacher autonomy referred to their freedom to teach or to organise their class with more discretion. Mark said it like this:

> **Excerpt 5.38 Mark (interview)**
>
> That is to say the teacher can organise his own class and pedagogy according to his own characteristics, personalities, and hobbies. This should be counted as a kind of autonomy, from the perspective of teaching.

Mark understood the concept primarily from the perspective of classroom teaching. He believed that it was a kind of autonomy to integrate personal elements into classroom teaching. This consideration is reasonable and in line with administrative proposals to enrich teachers' classroom practices and to make classroom teaching practices attractive to students. Ruth expressed a similar understanding, but in a very weak and uncertain manner, when she revealed that she regarded teacher autonomy as teachers' autonomous decision on choosing a textbook and teaching contents during the semester. What she revealed was a meaningful part in teacher autonomy. However, it is less likely to be realised under the current CE policies (e.g. textbook regulations in the case university in Section 4.2.1) on mass education (as detected in her uncertainty) and the nation-wide CET4 and CET6 examination.

Lisa also gave a very comprehensive understanding on the concept. Lisa's understanding of teacher autonomy is shown in the following extract:

> **Excerpt 5.39 Lisa (interview)**
>
> My understanding is rather superficial. I feel it is a teacher's degree of freedom. That is to say, a teacher can arrange, control or plan his/her classes, arrangements, and

> professional plans. I feel like this. In other words, to do something purposefully, with a clear goal … I feel this is just like learner autonomy, which means the learner learns things autonomously. When it comes to the teacher, the teacher should autonomously plan his/her teaching, research, and profession.

Although Lisa modestly described her interpretation as 'superficial', her definition of teacher autonomy covered all three dimensions reviewed in Chapter 2: freedom, classroom teaching capability, and professional development. She also compared teacher autonomy with learner autonomy. However, this comparison returned us to Aoki (2002) on teacher autonomy and autonomy-supportive teaching. Therefore, whether Lisa's saying in Excerpt 5.39 that her act to "autonomously plan her teaching, research, profession" supported learner autonomy remained unknown. Lisa did not give further explanation.

Other participants interpreted teacher autonomy from a general 'work' or 'course' perspective. For example, Sarah and Susan said:

> **Excerpt 5.40 Sarah (interview)**
>
> That is to say, you can autonomously choose your work content and direction.
>
> **Excerpt 5.41 Susan (interview)**
>
> I feel that teacher autonomy is… it should be that a teacher can decide to open a course by himself/herself. If s/he opens a course, s/he can decide the curriculum, and the teaching pace. For an implementer, s/he should be able to decide how to give the lecture, or how to arrange the lesson, yeah … it should be like this.

As a novice teacher, Sarah's perception of teacher autonomy was simple and clear. She only focused on two factors, namely "work content and direction". This coincided with her status and consideration in this stage. However, as an experienced teacher, Susan's understanding included not only complementing the class at hand, but also opening a new course all by herself.

Susan implied in Excerpt 5.41 that she wanted to have more say on the course curriculum design, pace, and style. This would challenge the capabilities of a language teacher. Nevertheless, it was natural to see such a big decision by an experienced teacher rather than a novice one.

One teacher also placed most emphasis on the element of freedom in her interpretation of teacher autonomy. Elisa said:

> **Excerpt 5.42 Elisa (interview)**
>
> To tell the truth, this is the first time that I have heard about teacher autonomy. I have only heard of learner autonomy. I feel that teacher autonomy means a teacher can freely fulfil his/her teaching tasks without complying with the rigid regulations and that s/he can decide what approach is adopted in teaching and how long his teaching needs. I think all these should be done freely by teachers without any rigid stipulations.

Elisa's interpretation of teacher autonomy mentioned clearly a conflict with school regulations. She indirectly expressed an attitude to be against strict institutional regulations on classroom teaching. On the contrary, she expressed a strong and explicit desire for freedom of discretion in many detailed aspects of classroom teaching such as "contents", "style", "time", etc. Echoing Lisa, Elisa also related teacher autonomy to learner autonomy, which seems a rather natural way of thinking, that is, to relate a new concept to a relevant concept.

In sum, the participants' understandings of teacher autonomy revealed two pieces of important information. For one thing, the participants autonomously connected teacher autonomy with their work in the classroom or the course subject. This reflected their loyalty and commitment to the profession. For the other thing, the understandings expressed the teachers' desires to gain more freedom in their classroom practices. Though the teachers had neither freedom to set the

final goal for the class, nor liberty to choose the textbook, they still desired more freedom in selecting the contents, setting the pace, and allocating the time when implementing learning activities. More freedom for teacher-learner interactions and communications is desirable for language classes.

From the opposite perspective, the participants' responses reflected the strong influence of external constraints on the participants. What is more, the external constraints seriously influenced teachers' discretion in their daily classroom practices. This indicates that the school accountability-oriented management approach in this case exerts a deep-rooted influence on the flexibility and autonomy of the participants' language teaching practices.

Professional development is the second most emphasised element to emerge from the participants' understandings of the concept of teacher autonomy. Some participants gave a rather systematic and reasonable explanation on it as follows:

Excerpt 5.43 Mary (interview)

I almost regard it as equivalent to teacher professional development. When it comes to teacher autonomy, first, I think you should improve yourself, in particular your professional knowledge. Second, as for class management, you should promote it purposefully. These two aspects are what I can think of… In terms of teaching, teacher autonomy involves a big proportion of teaching, which is similar to learner autonomy in my opinion. First, a teacher should have a plan on the course s/he teaches, including every procedure, just now I said teaching objective, means, methodology, and teaching assessment. He should have an assessment of himself/herself. Then, if there is something else, I think it is to further study the problem found in the teaching process, and then reflect on it or apply the research findings back to your teaching.

Mary revealed a systematic and thorough understanding on teacher autonomy in that she covered two key teacher commitments, i.e., teaching and researching. Her first impression of the concept was an equivalent to "professional development". This correlation was closely related to her rich experience in teacher education. However, her purpose of professional development finally turned back to practice in pedagogy. Therefore, this mindset reflects a complete circle to promote learner-centred teaching practices. She also relates the concept to learner autonomy and mentioned self-assessment in the process of autonomous teaching. This represents a mind that reflects critically on the teaching concept. Grace expressed a similar understanding of the concept to Mary during the interview, though not as systematic. Therefore, Grace's interpretation was not listed. During interview, Nancy stated:

Excerpt 5.44 Nancy (interview)

In my previous feeling, teacher autonomy means knowing how to develop yourself as a teacher. That is self-development. When it comes to teacher autonomy, I think it falls into several aspects. First, it is on the teacher's part. Whatever subjects a teacher teaches, s/he should develop herself /himself professionally. Second, a teacher should know the latest forefront knowledge on the theory and practice of the course s/he teaches. These are correlated to self-development.

Nancy referred to the notion of "self-development" when pointing out that it was the teacher's responsibility to be an autonomous teacher. In her dichotomous understanding of teacher autonomy: one being the teacher, and the other being the latest knowledge on the subject, she emphasised teacher learning as the way to achieve self-development.

What is more, the following extracts reveal that several participants simply described teacher autonomy as teacher learning, which is also a critical component in teacher professional development:

Excerpt 5.45 Linda (interview)

I just feel that teacher autonomy means you should keep learning in a life time no matter what your major, your interpersonal relationship, and your social status are. That is, as a member in the society, you should actively learn all kinds of knowledge in your life time.

Excerpt 5.46 Helen (interview)

I just feel that teacher autonomy is more about self-regulation, depending on teachers themselves. First of all, you should know yourself. That is, a teacher should accept his profession and then have his own plan, and know how to carry out his plan.

Excerpts 5.45 and 5.46 reveal both participants put much emphasis on the "self" or teacher learning. Linda saw teacher autonomy as life-long learning, whereas Helen took it as "self-regulation" and to finally identify with one's profession. In comparison, Linda's view was broad in its inclusion of social factors, something similar to an academic community. In all, both teachers confirmed that one should learn a lot to be an autonomous teacher, either through life experiences, or through self-directed learning. Their understandings were rather universal, but nonetheless reasonable.

In the minority were Donna and Betty, who inexplicitly and explicitly, respectively referred to teacher autonomy to be a right. In Betty's words:

Excerpt 5.47 Betty (interview)

Teacher autonomy, literally, is that teachers have the right to be autonomous.

Betty then added that she felt this right should be applied in the classroom. The attitudes of Betty and Donna reflected their desire for more rights, and they were also clearly confining this right to the classroom. They were not ambitious to broaden their right to school operations or other areas.

Finally, Sam failed to provide an explanation of the term. He told the interviewer:

Excerpt 5.48 Sam (interview)

Ayah, this is not, this is not easy to reply, nor to understand. Maybe, I have never taken teacher autonomy into consideration, because I have been guided by others on how to do my work.

Sam's interpretation confirmed his ignorant and passive attitude towards autonomy, and implies the need to promote teachers' awareness of the autonomy to be creative agents in their classroom teaching. If a teacher gets used to being "guided by others on how to do" as Sam said in Excerpt 5.48, it is hard for the teacher to teach his students to be autonomous learners according to Little (1995).

5.4.2 Self-comment

All participants provided an objective comment on their own autonomy. Most commented that they regarded themselves to be autonomous to some extent. Most participants however believed that they were autonomous in their classroom, as shown in the summary in Table 5.5. They commented on their autonomy in the following ways:

Excerpt 5.49 Elisa (interview)

I think my class should be hosted by myself, and it is useless for administrators to complain about my teaching. As an English teacher, I think that I have absolute autonomy, and it is useless to complain about me.

Excerpt 5.50 Mark (interview)

Should be, try my best. To my upmost, I will complete my lesson in my understanding according to my style.

Setting aside the bluntness of Elisa's expression of "absolute autonomy", it should only be taken as confidence in her autonomy in classroom teaching. Given the CE policies and the

School micro-management system (see Chapter 4), CE teachers may have limited teacher autonomy, let alone "absolute autonomy". Because she was confident about her ability to teach autonomously, she was dismissive of students' complaints, which is a key consideration in the current teacher assessment system. Such complaints are therefore considered by many other teachers as a threatening and external constraint. For fear of students' complaint, many teachers dared not teach anything other than the textbook or examination contents. Elisa's confidence created a space for her autonomous teaching. However, it is suggested that an autonomous teacher would be able to welcome students', including administrator's, feedback of different kinds on teacher and unit. In comparison, Mark was rather modest in expression, but he also stressed to teach in his understanding or according to his style. These expressions implied that he had his "understanding" and "style".

Some participants were not confident in their ability to undertake academic research. As an inescapable duty of a faculty member, this deficiency seriously and negatively influenced their self-comment on autonomy. The lack of confidence is expressed in the following extract:

Excerpt 5.51 Lisa (interview)

I think I am autonomous in teaching. I feel that I basically have a clear goal, and then I can plan the lesson. Maybe I am weak in doing research, and I am also a little bit weak in professional development. I am just not very clear about these two aspects.

Nevertheless, the comment on one's autonomy was a rather subjective demand of the participants. Because there is not a consensus on the definition of teacher autonomy, teachers' self-comments on their autonomy can only be used as a reference. If this data could be used as a critical reference in the final judgement, more triangulation of teachers' attitudes on their autonomy is needed because many participants may blame themselves or hide their pride or confidence behind their modesty. At the same time, others may advocate his/her autonomy without actually performing autonomous acts in their teaching. This is also the main reason for

the researcher to conduct classroom observations and to report findings on the teachers' classroom practices. In other words, classroom observation was set as a critical tool for triangulation with the participants' self-comments on autonomy.

5.5 Three types of teachers according to their attitudes

As a summary of the 14 semi-structured interviews in this study, all participants' attitudes toward their professional identity, learner autonomy, professional development, and teacher autonomy are illustrated in Table 5.6. The Table is a combination and adaptation of the earlier Tables 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5, on the participants' key words in their interpretation of the concept, 'teacher autonomy'. Table 5.2 is not included because it is only a subsection on teachers' attitudes toward their professional identity, specifically, a subsection on the emotional element. Table 5.1 takes the place of Table 5.2 as a summary of teachers' attitudes toward professional identity and takes into account Table 5.6 to give equal weight to the four concepts. Generally speaking, if the participant indicated a positive attitude toward the concept, a '+' was used. A '-' was used to indicate a negative attitude, and an 'o' indicated an unclear attitude.

Table 5. 6 Summary of participants' attitudes toward autonomy and three categories of teachers

	On PI	On LA	On TPD	On TA	Self-comment TA	Total
Betty	o	o	-	Rights in classroom	-	Less autonomous
Donna	o	-	-	Power (in classroom) & capability	-	
Sam	o	o	-	No idea	o	
Eliza	o	+	-	Freedom, rights	+	Moderately autonomous
Grace	o	o	-	TPD	+	
Helen	o	o	+	Know himself, have a clear goal, and accept the professional identity	+	
Linda	+	o	+	Freedom/A prosperous academic community/ a research team	-	
Mark	-	+	-	Rights	+	
Mary	o	+	+	TPD	-	
Ruth	+	-	-	Free	-	
Lisa	+	+	-	Freedom/ TPD	+	More autonomous
Nancy	+	+	+	Self-development	+	
Sarah	+	o	+	Free	+	
Susan	o	+	+	Capability	+	

Note: '+' = positive; 'o' = unclear; '-' = negative

PI=professional identity; LA=learner autonomy; TPD=teacher professional development; TA=teacher autonomy

Further analysis found that the 14 participants could be categorised into three groups according to the degree of their positive attitudes toward the four concepts under investigation. The three groups were designated as: Less Autonomous Group, Moderately Autonomous Group, and More Autonomous Group. Participants were allocated into one of the three groups according the following three principles:

1. If a participant had three or four '+' in total for the four concepts under investigation, he/she was judged to be a more autonomous teacher and allocated to this group because he/she kept generally positive attitudes toward the four concepts.
2. If a participant had at least one '+' or two '+' marks for the four concepts under investigation, he/she was judged to be a moderately autonomous teacher and allocated to this group because he/she kept a positive attitude towards at least one or two items in the four concepts.
3. If a participant had no '+' marks he/she was judged to be a less autonomous teacher and allocated to less this group because he/she kept totally unclear or negative attitudes on all items.

Finally, according to the principles of allocation, 14 participants were categorised into three groups (the 'Total' column in Table 5.6). Four participants were allocated into the More Autonomous Group, namely Lisa, Nancy, Sarah, and Susan. Two points should be noted on Sarah's 'o' for learner autonomy and Susan's 'o' for professional identity. Sarah showed a degree of theoretical understanding on learner autonomy, but she did not explicitly express a positive or negative attitude toward her students' autonomy. She mentioned some general good acts by a language teacher, but not her own acts or opinion on learner autonomy. According to the criteria, she was therefore counted as having an 'unclear' attitude. In terms of Susan's attitude toward her professional identity, she identified herself only as an English teacher, and thus lacked the institutional attribute which was set as one of the two critical standards for a

positive attitude on professional identity. She further explained that she saw no difference among language teachers. For this reason, she was categorised as having an unclear attitude towards professional identity.

Second, seven participants were categorised into the Moderately Autonomous Group, namely Eliza, Grace, Helen, Linda, Mark, Mary, and Ruth. Finally, three participants were categorised into the Less Autonomous Group, namely Betty, Donna and Sam. Generally, the 14 participants in this study approximated a normal distribution into the three groups. In other words, the Moderately Autonomous Group occupied the largest proportion of teachers among the three groups.

As explained in Section 5.4.2, all information in Table 5.6 was based on the data reported by the participants themselves. If the subjectively reported data are to be adopted as a critical reference in the final judgement of the teachers' autonomy, more triangulation of their attitudes towards their autonomy is needed. The reason is self-evident: participants' subjective attitudes may be changeable and subject to many emotional and external influences. What they advocated in the interview may reflect the reality of their teaching practices. Vice versa, what the teacher practiced in the classroom may not be consciously understood. So, in chapters 6 through 8 I report the findings from classroom observations and the SRIs of the participants in each group. For easy understanding of the structure of the three chapters, and to achieve uniformity, the same construct is employed to scaffold the chapter structure. In each of the three chapters, I first describe the characteristics of the participants in the group. This is followed by narrative of the participants' classroom practices and his/her account of the act. Finally, I sum up the findings in each chapter.

Chapter 6

Group one: Less autonomous teachers

Chapters 6 to 8 report the teachers' classroom practices. Each chapter covers one of the groups identified in Chapter 5. After establishing the teaching context in Chapter 4 and the teachers' attitudes toward autonomy in Chapter 5, answers to RQ 1 on teachers' attitudes toward autonomy can be found. To answer RQ 2 on CE teachers' practices in the classroom, it is critical to report the findings related to the participants' classroom practices. Comparing the teachers' attitudes (Chapter 5) and practices (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) also helps to answer RQ 3 on whether the participants' teaching practices aligned with their attitudes toward autonomy. Finally, the comparison between teaching context and teachers' practices helps to redefine teacher autonomy in specific contexts (RQ 4).

The four themes emerged from classroom observations and SRIs. Pedagogical orientation, flexibility, interaction patterns, and resource utilisation are respectively reported in Chapters 6 through 8. Therefore, these are organised in a similar structure. This systematic structure is convenient for making comparisons between groups. In each of the chapters, there is a detailed introduction on the characteristics of the teachers' attitudes, followed by a report on the features of their classroom practices relevant to the above-mentioned four themes. Finally, each chapter concludes with a summary which highlights these features.

Chapter 6 reports the less autonomous teachers' practices in the classroom (see Appendix I for all excerpts in original Chinese). Firstly, a general description of the characteristics of the less autonomous teachers' attitudes is illustrated (6.1). Then, their classroom practices are reported based on the features of their pedagogy (6.2). Finally, a summary of the teachers' classroom practices (6.3) is provided.

6.1 Characteristics of less autonomous teachers' attitudes

The analysis of teachers' attitudes toward autonomy in Chapter 5 showed Betty, Donna, and Sam belonged to the less autonomous group. Generally speaking, they held negative or unclear attitudes toward all concepts under investigation. To be specific, their common characteristics are as follows:

1. They held an unclear attitude toward their professional identity.
2. They doubted that their students had the capabilities to conduct autonomous learning.
3. None of them had a plan to develop their professionalism due to personal reasons.
4. They tended to lack confidence in their own autonomy.

Firstly, the less autonomous teachers' love for the job depended on many external factors such as student cooperation, work pressure, or teaching contents. That is, if the external factors were satisfactory, they would like the job. Alternatively, they tended to complain about aspects of the job or to become emotional.

Secondly, less autonomous teachers in this study complained a great deal about their students. Donna thought that her students did not take English learning seriously and were not determined to learn the language. Sam also complained about his students' poor learning attitude.

Thirdly, the low autonomous teachers all held a negative attitude toward their professional development. Betty said that she just wanted to finish the basic work arrangement and that was all. Donna and Sam both expressed their desire to do something for their professional development, but their good intentions seemed to be constrained for personal reasons including family commitments and health condition. For example, Sam said:

Excerpt 6.1 Sam (interview)

I want to say that I have been encumbered by my family in recent years. Second. I'm a little inert … Maybe this is one of the reasons. My child is too young, and my mother is too old, and if she lives alone, how do I deal with her. Therefore, it is hard for me to take good care of my family while developing my profession.

Sam gave two reasons for not developing his professionalism in recent years. One was family burden and the other was his personal inertia. Because his child was "too young" and his mother was "too old", he had difficulty balancing family responsibility and professional development.

Finally, these teachers all lacked confidence in their own autonomy. Typically, they did not believe that they could make a difference. As Sam stated, he got used to "being guided by others on how to do" (see Excerpt 5.48). Betty also identified herself directly as not being autonomous because she just did what she was asked to do, without contributing any extra ideas at all.

6.2 Features of less autonomous teachers' classroom practices

In Section 6.2, less autonomous teachers' classroom practices are reported based on the features of their pedagogy, namely teacher centeredness, a lack of flexibility, a single pattern of interaction with students, and low-level resource usage. Because teacher talk usually dominated the class as evidenced in the classroom observation, only few classroom activities were observed. Therefore, their SRIs were extracted as the main supporting evidence for claims of their teaching practices.

6.2.1 Pedagogical orientation

Teacher-centeredness is a common characteristic of less autonomous teachers' pedagogical orientation in this study. This feature is embodied in the specific way their pedagogy puts 'I' at the heart of their pedagogical consideration. That is, they put their personal need ahead of the students' needs. Supporting evidence for this point can be found in all three participants' classes. To provide a general view of their classes, a list of classroom observation notes is presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6. 1 Summary of classroom observation notes in Betty's, Donna's and Sam's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Betty	25 students English test class (top)	CET6	Strip down to bare happiness	Introduction & Language points	T->S T->SS	1. Listening comprehension 2.Individual students lead group reading of new words 3. Teacher explains text
Donna	31 Repeat students' class (poor)	CET4	Technology and happiness	Introduction & Language points	T->S T->SS	1. A general report of students' CET4 results in the last semester 2. A warmup question 3. Students read aloud collectively 4. Teacher explains text
Sam	20 Repeat students' class (poor)	CET4	Unit exercises	Vocabulary & translations	T->S T->SS	1. Teacher explains exercises

Table 6.1 shows teacher explanation was the main activity in the three teachers' classrooms, regardless of student type or the theme of the text. Among them, Sam's class was the most typical. It comprised 20 repeat students, several of whom had skipped the second session of the class according to the observation. 'Repeat students' means that the students were required to re-take the course due to not passing the national exam CET4 in the previous semester. Sam entered the classroom, greeted his students in a rushed manner and immediately hurried into an introduction of the main content, exercises in the unit. A general sense of hurriedness was the impression made by the observer.

During the process to explain the exercises, Sam invited students to do the textbook exercise before or after his explanation. The observer soon identified a special phenomenon in Sam's exercise explanations, namely that he showed a preference for some students to answer his questions rather than others. This is revealed in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 6.2 Sam (SRI)

1 R: When you ask the students to answer your questions, do you always invite the students like this?

2 T: Basically, I will invite every one of them. Because if I focus on some of the students, they will feel bored. It is also unfair to other students. Regardless of the student's English proficiency, he attends class as an individual, and should be given equal opportunities in the classroom activities to feel a sense of inclusion.

(…)

3 R: Oh, as far as I can see, you did ask many students to answer your questions. You kept asking them questions, and sometimes just focused on some of the students.

4 S: But I need to, I need to maintain my face, too. Look, the student, standing there, I asked him questions more frequently than others because he is more careful, and his attendance rate is the highest. He is good enough to score 425 points in the CET 4, which is the lowest score allowed to pass the test. Therefore, I asked him questions a little bit more frequently. Anyway, since the lecture was being recorded, if the students I called upon couldn't answer the question, then I would lose face.

In Excerpt 6.2, Sam revealed that ‘face’ was a critical consideration in his selection of student to answer the question. In other words, only if he believed that the student could answer the question would he give the student a chance to do it. As a starting point, Sam expressed some beliefs in language teaching. For example, in Turn 2, he expressed a desire to give an “equal chance” to every student and he encouraged their attendance. However, he did act in a way that was opposite to this. When asked why his turn-allocations were evidently focused on several of the better students, he explained that is was for the purpose of maintaining his “face” (Turn 4). Hence, he saw it as losing of face if his students could not provide the correct answers, because the researcher was observing his lesson. In essence, Sam considered saving ‘face’ to be of more importance than providing his students with genuine English language learning experiences.

Therefore, there was an ‘observer paradox’ in Sam’s classroom observation (see also Section 3.3.2). I wanted to observe Sam’s teaching in person, but I did not mean to influence his teaching practices with my presence. However, it was evident that his teaching was affected by my observation and his consciousness of self/face was aroused unwittingly by my recording the lesson. This paradox is worthy of my reflection and should be avoided in future research.

A similar teacher-centred pedagogical orientation was observed in Betty’s class. Hers was an English Test (ET) class in which the students were trained to participate in all kinds of English tests and to achieve honour for the school. Such classes were creative and experimental in nature within the CE subject area. Because only the top 10 to 15% of students were selected to participate in the ET classes—among the 2000 to 3000 students in that cohort—those selected were undoubtedly the top students in English.

Throughout the whole session, Betty implemented only one activity following a listening comprehension exercise she conducted as a warmup activity (see item 2 in the ‘Main activity’

column of Table 6.1). Betty appointed three students to lead the whole-class reading of the vocabulary list after allowing them two minutes to pre-read the new words by themselves. She organised the activity according to the following sequence. Firstly, she went around the classroom and gestured to divide the students into three groups according to the areas where they were sitting. Then she asked for a volunteer to be the first group leader, but she received no response from the students. Next, Betty signalled to a girl to step forward and to lead the reading in front of the class. She was followed by another girl and a boy who also lead the reading in turn. The whole process was guided by the teacher. Betty explained her thinking process for this activity in the SRI as detailed in Excerpt 6.3:

Excerpt 6.3 Betty (SRI)

1 R: Why did you adopt such a form? What did you think at that moment? Did the three students have better language proficiency, beautiful pronunciation, or anything else?

2 T: At that moment, the class needed the three students. Later on, the class naturally divided into three groups, one on the left, one in the middle, and one on the right.

3 R: Yes.

4 T: The first student was good at pronunciation. It was a girl who I believe had good pronunciation. The student in the middle group was invited because she was seated right in the middle. Finally, because I invited two girls already, then I invited a boy.

5 R: That is to say, you selected the students randomly.

6 T: Randomly, but the first one I knew to be better at pronunciation.

The organisation of this activity was teacher-centred for two reasons. Firstly, the selection of students was made according to the teacher's preferences. Betty revealed explicitly that she appointed the three students mainly at random in Turn 6, except for the first girl. Given the purpose of the activity was to improve student pronunciation, the selection of group leaders should depend on their pronunciation. However, the second girl was chosen on the basis of where she was sitting, that is, because "she was sitting right in the middle" as Betty said in Turn 4. The last student was selected because of his gender, as Betty revealed in last sentence of Turn 4: "… because I invited two girls already, then I invited a boy". Therefore, the process to appoint the group leaders lacked an objective standard. In other words, the description of 'randomly' selected leaders in Turn 6 was in fact not random for the students under a pre-set standard, but was the teacher's random preferences.

Secondly, regarding the curriculum task design, the students were supposed to be the task players. That is, task design in a language classroom should give adequate consideration to the students' language proficiencies, opportunities to practice, and the students' needs, etc. However, Betty designed the activity only for the sake of completing her teaching task. She invited and empowered three students to lead the class in the reading of new words. If it were a regular class, the anticipated effect would be good. However, for an ET class of top students with high-level in English proficiency, Betty's task proved to inadequately challenge the students according to the observation. If the task design was too easy, it may not be attractive in the eyes of students with excellent English proficiency.

The teacher-centeredness characteristic was also observed in Donna's class. For example, in Excerpt 6.4, Donna pushed a student to translate an English sentence into Chinese even though the student said explicitly that he did not know how to do it. Donna used three instructions during the implementation of this exercise:

Excerpt 6.4 Donna (Classroom observation)

1 T: Paragraph one, look at the screen. OK, how to translate this sentence? You know every word in this sentence, right? Every word in this sentence. Then, how to translate it into Chinese? You know every word here. How to translate, especially 'fuel'. OK, you can guess, OK, you can guess. Move on, use your head to think about it! OK, [S1].

2 S1: I don't know.

3 T: En? You cannot say you don't know. You have learned every word, so why don't you know?

4 S1: A big what, cut… consumed what… a…

5 T: I want the whole sentence. Sit down, please. Big what? Cut what? … Consumed what? …as far as I think you want to go out… Who knows? Who knows? ... This, all these are basic words, right? There is only one word, 'fuel' which needs a guess, and the rest are very basic words. This is even a problem for you? [S1], you are not allowed to skip my class! You were absent from my class many times last semester..... [S2]

In Excerpt 6.4, Donna instructed the students three times to translate the sentence. The first instruction was to, "Move on, use your head to think about it!" in Turn 1, which implied that she thought her students did not use their heads to think about the translation exercises. In other words, the first instruction revealed a sense of distrust and depreciation on her students.

The second instruction to the students was: "You cannot say you don't know" in Turn 3. This instruction was rather teacher-centred. One student responds by saying "I don't know", which may be the case for a number of reasons: he really may not know the answer; he is not confident about what he thinks is the answer; or it is just an excuse for the student to avoid answering the

question. Whatever the reason, it is impossible to forbid the students from saying "I don't know". However, in this clip, Donna did not accept this response from the student because she thought that he had learnt all the words in the exercise sentence. Evidently, the student had some broken ideas on the Chinese meaning of the sentence, but he was not able to put them into a complete sentence. He did not know the meaning of some key words in the sentence, so he lacked in confidence. Finally, under pressure from Donna, he was forced to articulate his broken translation. This was a rather embarrassing outcome for the student, but Donna nevertheless gave the third instruction and simply cut the student off.

Finally, she told the student directly that: "I want a whole sentence" in Turn 5. This was apparently a requirement that was beyond the capabilities of the student and thus, from the student's perspective, would have been frustrating for him as a low proficiency student. However, from the teacher's perspective, Donna took it for granted that she had the right to make such a demand. In the SRI Excerpt 6.5, Donna's teacher-centred pedagogical orientation was revealed:

Excerpt 6.5 Donna (SRI)

1 R: (…) it seems that you start to explain the translation from here, right? You guided them to do an English to Chinese translation task, followed by a Chinese to English translation task.

2 T: Because I wanted to explain the word 'fuel' here.

3 R: (…) I was not familiar with the textbook, but I found your lecture contents were a little erratic.

4 T: So, I require my students to preview every passage in the textbook and get familiar with it. I said I would not wait for them. Therefore, I am sure that I will skip away according to my plan.

In Excerpt 6.5, Donna provided the reason for making the demands on the first student in the way she did and for then transferring to another student to do the exercise. She wanted to explain the word 'fuel' in the exercise sentence (Turn 2). When the researcher expressed implicitly that Donna's sequence in the lecture delivery was "a little erratic" (Turn 3), she shifted the responsibility for this outcome onto her students. That is, she wanted to cover the coherence deficiency in her lesson plan by blaming the students for not previewing the textbook according to her requirement. Finally, she asserted in Turn 4: "I would not wait. Therefore, I am sure that I will skip away according to my plan". Her 'plan' rather than the students' was at the centre of her pedagogy and she thus taught in a teacher-centred or plan-centred way, rather than in a learner-centred way. Moreover, her students' learning output was not a reference for her pedagogical decision. However, Donna seemed to take this for granted.

In Sam's class, the similar teacher-centred or plan-centred approach was observed. Right up until the last minute of the class, Sam persisted with his fast teaching pace and rushed when reading the answers to the translation exercise. However, he read too quickly to be clearly understood by the students, and he had read too much to maintain the students' attention. Furthermore, he ended the class in a rush. The thinking process which underpinned his teaching practices is shown in Excerpt 6.6.

Excerpt 6.6 Sam (SRI)

1 R: With the translation part, how do you usually explain this?

2 T: When it comes to the translation part, I usually read the original Chinese material from head to toe, and ask students to find some hints, such as words that can indicate tense, voice etc. I told my students that they could only get started after they had something in mind. For example, I will ask my students to determine what tense is appropriate based on the contexts.

3 R: But I think that this translation, this piece of material is a little long, comparatively long. Then you read from head to toe, and I found that I could not follow you in the latter part.

4 T: Was I too quick, or did I say too much?

5 R: One is you were too quick. The other is the content was too messy. You read from head to toe, so I felt that my attention could not follow up.

6 T: Were you a little tired?

7 R: A little tired, right!

8 T: Let me have a look, what should I do?

9 R: Maybe you did not have enough time.

10 T: I always feel that I am in a hurry in this class. The schedule is just too tight.

Excerpt 6.6 tells that Sam tends to take charge of his classroom practices in this translation exercise. He outlined how he usually explained the translation exercise in Turn 2: "I usually read the original Chinese material from the head to toe, and ask then to find some hints". If there was enough time, a teaching design such as this would not pose a problem. However, this precondition did not exist in Sam's class. His students then ran out of patience to listen to him reading the answer. Therefore, Sam was supposed to be flexible in his approach to completing the task, but he evidently did not have a plan B for the situation and subsequently did not show his flexibility.

This was not a problem of experience, but was an issue of reflection. Sam had taught CE at the case university for about five years at the time he was interviewed. Nevertheless, prompted by hints from the researcher, Sam began to reflect on his teaching. He asked the researcher in Turn 4: "Was I too quick, or did I say too much?" This reveals that Sam started to reflect on his teaching actions, particularly on the speed and amount of teacher talk. He also started to care

about the researcher's feeling by asking in Turn 6: "Were you a little tired?" In other words, this question emerged from Sam's reflection on the researcher's reaction towards his lecture. Finally, Sam began to reflect on his role as a teacher and on ways to improve his teaching in Turn 8: "Let me have a look, what should I do?" If he can reflect on the problem deeply, it will be good for his teaching professionalism as well as improve his teaching effectiveness. Sam's case reveals the importance of reflective practices in the field of EFL education (Farrell, 2009, 2015).

In sum, the less autonomous teachers in this study tended to be more teacher-centred, highly-controlling, and demanding in their requirements. They stick to their preferences, instructions, or habits in their practical teaching, rather than try to accommodate the students' needs in English learning. On the one hand, this characteristic symbolises their eagerness to achieve quick success and to gain instant benefits. This also implies they lack the necessary skills to motivate students with low English proficiency.

When teaching less motivated students with low English proficiency, the less autonomous teachers in this study tended to go to two extremes. One teacher chose to go through all of the contents by himself rather than have the students do it (e.g., Sam explaining the paragraph translation exercise). In other words, the teacher took total control of the class rather than created autonomous learning opportunities for the students. However, it is easy for students to feel bored in this 'teacher monologue' style class. The other extreme was to push too much, (e.g., Donna's case in Excerpt 6.4). That meant that the teacher had a strong desire to help his/her students to do something, while the students may show little, if any, interest. As a result, the teacher may ignore the students' lack of interest and simply adopt a method that compels the students to accomplish the work according to the teacher's requirement.

6.2.2 Flexibility

Another characteristic of the classroom practices of the less autonomous teachers was that they lacked a sense of flexibility. In other words, their teaching practices tend to align to external factors like the textbook or the contents of the exam. For instance, Donna's class began in an exam-oriented way, even though it was the first class for the semester. From the very beginning she set the tone as an exam-oriented class by giving a general report on students' CET4 exam results for the previous semester. Donna's class comprised 31 repeat students and she informed the researcher during interview that she analysed the students' examination results and the reasons for why they failed the exam, but she did not make any comments on individual performance. She explained her reasons in Excerpt 6.7:

Excerpt 6.7 Donna (SRI)

1 R: (You) analysed their reasons for getting a low mark (in the exam), so you didn't (explain or make comments) on the spot?

2 T: Yes, I felt this was rather personal. Actually, it should be communicated personally.

3 R: Yeah, it is also good to consider the student's face.

4 T: What is more, when the former teacher delayed his class, we were there in the corridor outside the classroom and had already engaged in some communications.

Some characteristics of Donna's class can be elicited from Excerpt 6.7. Firstly, she was anxious to achieve quick success and to get instant benefits. To assist the students to pass the exam was her only expectation from the class. Even though she knew it was "rather personal" (Turn 2), she still decided to start the class with a report on the exam results. Her purpose was to prompt the students to work harder. Instead, the students adopted a gloomy mood according to the

observation. Although Donna tried to save the students from embarrassment by not making comments on individual exam performances, it was ultimately a sensitive, embarrassing, and frustrating topic for most students. In her anxiety, Donna ignored the students' emotional needs and this may signal that she lacks flexibility in how to select warmup material for the first class.

Secondly, Donna did not choose the right time, place, and strategy to introduce the purpose of the course, namely to facilitate her students to pass the exam. Her time pressure was understandable, but her choice of the "corridor" (Turn 4) was not a good place, and the very beginning of the first class was a good time, to raise the topic of the examination. As a key atmosphere-creator, the teacher is supposed to take time and place into pedagogical consideration. Donna sticked to only one goal that the students should pass the exam, which reflected the strength of external influences on Donna's pedagogical priorities. However, this only one goal was too strong for her to take other factors into consideration. It also meant that normal considerations in a language classroom like time, place, emotional needs, etc. were overshadowed by the external constraints and so there was little space left for flexibility among the CE teachers.

The exam-oriented focus not only reduced the space for flexibility, it also dominated the pedagogy whenever conflicts emerged. In other words, wherever there is a conflict in the teaching process the focus on exam questions usually plays a key role in the final decision. Sometimes, there is the appearance of negotiation—at a superficial level—and there was one such negotiation observed in Donna's class on the topic of word dictation. When Donna was reminding the students to remember new words and to prepare for dictation, she related this dictation to another time when she had dictated in Chinese and had asked the students to write down the English words. Therefore, Donna asked her students about their dictation history. Some students answered yes, while others said no because of their different English learning backgrounds. Donna then indicated that the task was supposed to be dictated in Chinese, and

this aroused a heated discussion among students. Some even negotiated with Donna on the spot. Donna then gave her students two reasons as to why she should dictate in English: it helped the students to write down the words according to their pronunciation, and it helped students to get used to the listening comprehension model in the national CET4 exam. Donna expressed her decision as follows:

Excerpt 6.8 Donna (Classroom observation)

1 T: (…) She said, the teacher has a dictation all in Chinese and asks us to take it down in English. Have you done dictation like this since middle school?

2 Ss: Yes/No. (Some students give a positive answer and some students give a negative answer.)

3 T: Therefore, I always dictate in English and ask you to take it down in English and many students do a totally messy job. Should I give dictation in Chinese?

4 Ss: (Students have a heated discussion and negotiate with the teacher)

5 T: I think I should give dictations in English because you can write what I dictate according to my pronunciation. Because our listening comprehension in the exam is in English, not in Chinese, right? I will try to dictate in Chinese for one time, and have a look at your results. Do not let my expectation down!

Excerpt 6.8 shows the negotiation on the dictation exercise in Donna's class. According to the observation, this negotiation was exam-oriented and superficial for two reasons. Firstly, there are questions about the necessity of the negotiation. If Donna was determined to teach in an exam-oriented way, there was no point entering in to negotiations about it. That is, Donna simply pretended to negotiate with her students as she had already made her decision. Secondly,

Donna did not give the students the opportunity to express their opinions publicly and explicitly. The students only echoed her proposal, but did not provide the reasons for their point.

The above evidence reveals that Donna's pedagogy was primarily driven by external factors such as examinations and textbook content. Put another way, Donna taught the textbook contents in an exam-oriented way. The following SRI Excerpt 6.9 outlines Donna's reasons not being more creative in her pedagogy:

Excerpt 6.9 Donna (SRI)

1 R: (…) Then, now you start explaining the text. How many parts do you usually divide it into?

2 T: I usually follow the text structure, one paragraph after another, rather than creatively. First, there should be three warm-up questions, but I didn't have enough time. So, I asked them to answer one of the questions. Then, it is the text explanation. (…) Then it is time to explain the other part of the text, one paragraph after another.

3 R: Why do you think there should not be any creative activities in this classroom?

4 T: Because I have no time. I organised a role play last semester and the semester before that, but the units in this semester have a similar style as this unit. You cannot do role plays. Or you can do some role plays or create some activities for them to do. But first, you watch your time because it is limited. Second, you need some good students to act out the role play. For example, even if you allow them to just read aloud, you need someone to write the drama script.

5 R: Yeah, so I think that even if you can think of some methods to add other teaching activities, though it is not easy to motivate their enthusiasm, I'm not sure whether the effect will be better?

6 T: That is for sure, but the repeat students are very poor, really very poor.

Excerpt 6.9 shows explicitly that Donna's pedagogy was content-oriented. She stated directly in Turn 2 that she preferred to "follow the text structure one paragraph after another, rather than creatively". So, she just followed the textbook from warm up questions to the text passage, one paragraph after another. This meant her class practices were strictly aligned with the textbook contents. That is, they scarcely changed and completely neglected the students' emotional needs.

When Donna was asked to provide the reason for her teaching approach, she answered without hesitation that she had "no time". She mentioned 'time' three times in Turns 2 and 4 for her deduction warm-up questions, and for not including a creative activity in the design of the lesson. Even though she was sure that more teaching activities would help to motivate students and to be more effective (Turn 6). She gave no other reflection on the design of her teaching activity. She identified 'role play' as an example of a creative activity (Turn 4), but denied its application in the class for reasons of text style and students' poor English proficiency. Donna's decisions imply a lack of pedagogical skills and learner-centred attitude. Only when a teacher puts enough time and consideration into the design of the teaching activity can s/he develop suitable learning activities, even for low proficiency English learners. In addition, time is also a double-edged sword. For autonomous teachers, their capabilities to deliver selective contents and to spend time on impressive activities facilitate the students' language learning process. However, for less autonomous teachers, they will never have enough time to deliver all textbook contents.

In sum, these examples show that the teaching style of less autonomous teachers in this study tended to attach most importance to external factors and lacked flexibility. Undoubtedly, practicing in this way is much safer in terms of judgements from outsiders. Exam-oriented teaching is needed to certain degree to meet the expectations and needs of students, as well as the expectations of teachers. However, it was evident that such limited autonomy in practice resulted in the students' emotional needs being ignored.

6.2.3 Patterns of interaction

Evidence also emerged that less autonomous teachers in this study generally interacted with students using a single pattern, that is, the classical Teacher Initiation, Learner Response, and Teacher Follow-up or Feedback (IRF or IRE) pattern identified by Bellack et al. (1966) half a century ago. This interactional pattern has been found to dominate in traditional teacher-controlled language classrooms (van Lier, 1996). For example, Sam interacted with his students in his exercise class using this pattern only. Though he tried to interact with each of the students as many times as possible, he adopted only this pattern of interaction. During the lesson, no other pattern of interaction was observed. As such, the teacher maintained absolute control over the whole class, which tended to make the students feel bored. Excerpt 6.10 provides supporting evidence by showing how Sam explained to the students how to complete a textbook word-filling exercise in a reading-translation pattern, noting that the students were only given the opportunity to fill in the blank word:

Excerpt 6.10 Sam (Classroom observation)

1 T: The third one. To reduce the railway accidents, 'to' means in order to, <u>to reduce the risk of railway accidents, or, it should be the risk</u>. We spend over…, over means 'more than', <u>we spend over</u> 10 million Yuan. <u>Er，that is spending 'one million Yuan' in Chinese</u> on something, on the railway

line, every year. Every year, they spend over one million Yuan, on what, on something on the railway line. Spend some money on something， so undoubtedly, verb –ing form should be used, similar to a verb and object collocation. On the … of the railway line, ah, I want to invite one of you to do it. Uhm, [S1].

2 S1: Maintaining.

3 T: Maintaining. Good. Thank you for filling in maintaining! It is maintaining the railway line. Now, my parents have lived a frugal lifestyle all their life. The first word, frugal, f-r-u-g-a-l, frugal, what's your understanding of this word, frugal? [S2]

4 S2: Economical. (The student provides a Chinese translation of the word.)

5 T： Thrift, or something like … economical, OK.

Excerpt 6.10 demonstrates a typical IRF sequence that Sam used to interact with the whole class. This was the only teacher-student interaction pattern observed in his class. The teacher asked one student to do an exercise, and the student articulated the answer in a word or a phrase and then sat down (Turns 2 and 4). No other pattern of teacher-student interaction was observed, and Sam's talk and explanation dominated the interactions (Turns 1 and 3). There were 16 sentences in this vocabulary blank-filling exercise, and this pattern of exchange lasted for 16 turns or more, in case someone failed to fill in the missing word. One thing was for sure: each student contributed only one word. Sometimes, if the appointed student did not give a correct answer or did not know the answer, Sam turned to another student immediately.

Sam read a part of the exercise sentence, translated it, and then read the following parts. He paraphrased sometimes and also explained the grammar. Sam explained all exercises in the

unit that might be tested in the final exam or CET4 exam, particularly vocabulary and translation exercises. The grammatical structures of the sentences were sometimes analysed, especially when the student could not yield a correct answer. Sam seemed to be talking to himself at times when providing a long explanation.

Donna adopted the typical IRF pattern of interaction too. Excerpt 6.11 outlines how Donna explained a text paragraph. In the explanation, she defined some words and expressions. In the first round of interaction, she asked a student to translate an expression. In the second interaction, a student provided the meaning of a word in Chinese. At the end, Donna provided further explanation of the word in English. In these two turns of interaction, both students had only one chance to contribute one word or expression in Chinese.

Excerpt 6.11 Donna (Classroom observation)

1 T： OK, then, ‘take it for granted’. [S1] What's the meaning?

2 S1： Take something for granted (The student answers in Chinese.)

3 T： OK, good! ‘Take… for granted’. Adds a clause to it and the sentence is complete.

(…)

4 T: ‘Issue’. What's the meaning?

5 S3: Issue. (The student answers in Chinese.)

6 T： Issue, good, good! Do not use ‘problem’, it is too common, too normal, and it is not big enough here, right? We use ‘issue’, OK, high-end! (Students laugh at the hot word, understandingly.) Means ‘very big’, ‘serious’, and ‘carefully-treated’… OK.

Excerpt 6.11 shows two IRF interaction turns observed in Donna's class. The two students were to perform only one task: translation. Requiring students to engage in such a task was actually more an exhibition of memory than a check of whether the students had mastered the usage of the language point. This task was indeed a check on the students' memory of a word's or expression's Chinese meaning. Evidently, this task did not present much of a challenge to the students. However, Donna did not interact with the students further.

In regard to the less autonomous teachers' lack of interaction with the students, Donna went to an extreme. She even avoided interaction with her students by requiring them to complete tasks collectively. In the first task (item 2 in the 'Main activity' column of Table 6.1), Donna allocated 15 minutes for two students to write their answers to a warmup question in their exercise book. However, she only gave feedback publicly to one student after the exercise. As a result, no student was warmed up by the warmup question. Next, Donna, requested the students to read the text paragraph aloud, collectively. She provided no feedback because the students did not preview the text passage before the class. Then, when none of the students would volunteer to do the translation exercise, she asked them to do it in their exercise book. The tasks were really time-consuming and low in efficiency. The students were pushed to do the exercise and without timely feedback, their reluctance increased.

In sum, the above evidence shows that only one pattern of teacher-student interaction was used in both Sam's and Donna's classes: three-part IRF sequence. In this pattern of interaction, the teacher was forever the starter and dominator of the exchange, while the learner's contribution was restricted to the minimum amount. In addition, creativity and variety were rarely found in this pattern of interaction.

6.2.4 Resources utilisation

Less autonomous teachers in this study showed low-level resource usage. They made full use of neither the traditional textbook and blackboard, nor the modern multimedia equipment. Widespread computer technology and other multimedia equipment greatly facilitate English language teaching. In this study, all participants were observed to teach in a multimedia classroom with an overhead projector. This physical context implies a requirement for language teachers to master some basic skills like PowerPoint design, operating visual and audio materials, and utilising multimedia equipment, etc. As a basic, traditional, and cost-effective piece of equipment, the blackboard is still used in all classrooms. The physical setting thus presented other issues for the teachers, that is, the integration of technology into their teaching practices. Some teachers prefer to use the blackboard, while others prefer the PowerPoint programs. Some teachers use these teaching technologies randomly, while others purposefully integrate specific or various technologies into their lesson designs at appropriate times.

As another precondition of the course, the textbook matched a uniformity readymade PowerPoint file. This file was essentially a resource bank with rich background information, warmup questions and keys, listening comprehension materials, new words in the passage and their explanation, passage explanations, exercises and keys. These materials were the default format for all units in the textbook. It saved the teachers much preparation time and energy. However, it was also a double-edged sword in terms of practical usage. If selected carefully and purposefully, it helped to explain the content. Alternatively, if the teacher depended on it totally, it may constrain the teacher's creativity.

Less autonomous teachers' low-level use of teaching resources was demonstrated in regard to two aspects: capability to use, and purpose of use. Generally, none of the less autonomous teachers made their own PowerPoint slides for the lecture, sometimes because they lacked the

ability to design a PowerPoint file. In Excerpt 6.12, Donna admitted that her skills were poor in relation to designing a PowerPoint file:

Excerpt 6.12 Donna (SRI)

1 R: The slides weren't made by you?

2 T: No, they are originally attached to the textbook which includes the keys to the exercises.

3 R: I feel it would be better and easier to see if you can highlight here a little bit, say, you can add in a colour.

4 T: I didn't make slides, specifically. I just use this.

5 R: Why wouldn't you spend time and energy making slides?

6 T: I am not good at doing this.

The researcher asked Donna who made the PowerPoint file for the lesson (Turn 1) because it appeared during the observation that Donna was not familiar with the contents of the PowerPoint file. Donna turned the pages back and forth for the material she wanted to use. After learning the origin of the PowerPoint, the researcher made some suggestions on the PowerPoint design in Turn 3. However, Donna declined the suggestion directly in the next Turn. Finally, she said that she lacked good computer and PowerPoint making skills (Turn 6). This inadequacy may hinder the flow of classroom teaching or constrain her autonomy to meet the students' need in a modern language classroom.

Regarding the teachers' 'purpose' for using teaching technology, all learning-based technologies are typically used by teacher to facilitate student learning. However, the less autonomous teachers in this group showed an external-rule-oriented tendency. As such, the technology was used primarily in response to external factors rather than the promotion of learner-centred teaching. For example, Sam expressed his reasons regarding his use of

PowerPoint slides in class:

Excerpt 6.13 Sam (SRI)

R: Why did you choose to use the over-head projector? Why did you sometimes choose to use the blackboard? How did you arrange them?

T: Using an over-head projector can improve efficiency. You know, my handwriting sometimes is not clear, too big or too small. Secondly, sometimes I write in a circular font. This is my problem, so I am afraid my students can't recognise it. Then, one consideration is for teacher supervision. Because you were video recording my teaching, I also used over-head projectors. Another consideration is the surveillance system, which is located in every classroom. Thirdly, for supervision. The supervisor may ask the students whether or not the teacher uses an over-head projector, or just writes on the blackboard, how much homework the teacher has marked, etc. Therefore, I have to use PowerPoint from this perspective.

In Excerpt 6.13, Sam narrated his reasons for adopting a PowerPoint file in his teaching. Firstly, he indicated that a PowerPoint exhibition was a convenient alternative to his problematic handwriting, which is "sometimes not clear". In addition, he stated he used the PowerPoint presentation technique to meet the requirements set out in the teaching supervision regulations. Sam stressed this reason twice. Moreover, he mentioned the monitor camera in classroom. This was another tool for the supervisor to observe teachers. Therefore, supervision regulations or the school teaching quality guarantee system was an influential external constraint on Sam's purpose for adopting teaching technology. In addition, he included external influences in all of his reason: the supervisor, the monitor camera, and the researcher's classroom observation. This implied his pedagogical decision-making was easily influenced by external factors. In contrast, the notion that the presentation technique could be, or was, used to enhance learner

understanding was not mentioned at all.

6.3 Summary

Chapter 6 reported less autonomous teachers' teaching practices based on classroom observation. Firstly, the characteristics of the teachers in this group were demonstrated in detail. They generally held a negative attitude toward their professional identity and did not have faith in their students' autonomy or their own autonomy. They also typically had no plan for their professional development.

The less autonomous teachers' classroom practices were depicted according to four main features. Firstly, all three members in this group were found to teach in a more teacher-centred way. In other words, the teacher's face, preferences, instructions, and habits were given priority in their pedagogy. This implied that the students' needs might be neglected and their opportunities to practice their language skills might be limited by the dominance of the teacher's talk.

Secondly, the pedagogy of less autonomous teachers in this study tended to lack flexibility. From another perspective, their learning activities were usually attached to external factors such as examinations or textbook contents. Although it can be much safer for the teacher to adopt such a teaching approach in order to comply with external rules, such teaching methods were observed to be ineffective.

The teachers in this group also tended to interact with their students in a single IRF pattern. The pattern was typical in both Sam's and Donna's classes particularly, and was found to be teacher initiated, controlled, and dominated. That is, the teachers interacted with the students in a highly controlling way, while the students' space for autonomy development was limited to a minimum amount.

Finally, the less autonomous teachers' classroom practices demonstrated low-level teaching resource usage, particularly in regard to the use of multimedia resources. Such resource use was either beyond their capability, or they did not consider it important to exhibit the textbook contents in a learner-centred way. As a result, the teaching technology was only used as a convenient alternative to problematic PowerPoint making skills or handwriting.

Chapter 7

Group two: Moderately autonomous teachers

Moderately autonomous teachers comprised the largest of the three groups. Though stories of less autonomous teachers were reported in the previous chapter, there were rich classroom activities observed in the classes of the moderately autonomous teachers' group. Chapter 7 reports the moderately autonomous teachers' classroom practices using the same structure introduced in Chapter 5, and which is applied in Chapters 6 and 8. Because of the variety of teachers in this group, their two key characteristics are highlighted (7.1). This is followed by a detailed discussion of their classroom practices according to four main features: pedagogical orientation (7.2.1), flexibility (7.2.2), patterns of interactions (7.2.3), and using resources (7.2.4). The teachers' accounts of their practices are also interwoven into the discussion (see Appendix J for all excerpts in original Chinese). Finally, a summary of the teachers' practices and accounts is provided (7.3).

7.1 Characteristics of moderately autonomous teachers' attitudes

Teachers in this group vary the most. Firstly, it was hard to find common characteristics for all teachers in this group because it comprised the most members among all three groups. Secondly, the concepts under investigation meant different for each group member. In other words, each member in this group had their own specific characteristics. Therefore, their major tendencies emerged as the key area of focus.

The characteristics of their attitudes toward autonomy mainly lied in three aspects, which were also the main reasons for them being categorised in this group:

1. Most of them held a negative attitude toward professional development.

2. Their attitudes toward professional identity tended to be unclear.
3. Most of them showed confidence in their own autonomy.

To be specific, among the seven members in this group, only three had a plan for their professional development. Others neither had a plan to develop professionally nor the inclination to do so. Table 3.1 shows most of the group members were experienced teachers, except for Helen who had worked for less than five years. Notwithstanding their experience, the teachers were generally very unclear about their sense of identity towards their profession. They tended to harbour complex feelings toward their roles as CE teachers, and showed preferences for particular attributes of their teaching identity. Some would only admit that he/she was a teacher, whereas others accepted the identity of English teacher. As an extreme case, the only male member in the group, Mark, even claimed that he saw no value in the job. Consequently, he would not invest any time or energy in his professional development. Nevertheless, he still counted himself as an autonomous teacher.

On the surface, no evidence was found to show that the moderately autonomous teachers' attitudes to professional development and professional identity influenced their teaching practices. However, in the long run, their attitudes would influence their capacity for sustainable professional development. Because the key standards of promotion, according to the school rules, relied on the teacher's capability to theorise his or her classroom practices, their attitudes may have a negative influence on their practices. The unclear or negative attitudes towards professional development and their teaching identity may even develop into internal obstacles to their development into an autonomous teacher. The following sections present and examine the moderately autonomous teachers' classroom practices to better understand the problem.

7.2 Features of moderately autonomous teachers' classroom practices

To better exhibit the moderately autonomous teachers' classroom practices, Section 7.2 reports these practices according to four major features. Firstly, their pedagogical orientation is general learner-centred teaching. The classes led by Grace, Helen, and Linda were particular examples of a learner-centred pedagogical orientation. Secondly, the classes led by Linda and Mary were examples of improvisational teaching, which showed their flexibility. In addition, Elisa's and Mary's classes were notable for their patterns of interaction that were rich in personalised styles. Finally, two ways to utilise teaching resources were also exhibited in the classes led by Mary and Ruth. Mark's classroom practices are mentioned at the end.

7.2.1 Pedagogical orientation

Learner-centeredness is a primary feature for teachers in the moderately autonomous teachers group. Most group members demonstrated this pedagogical orientation in their classroom practices. For example, Grace showed this feature in her warm-up questions. Although the questions were a fixed module in the textbook, Grace did not use the original questions. She simplified the questions to better match the students' understanding and life experiences.

This was a repeat students' class with about 40 students. Grace was patient in helping the students to understand her questions and explanations. Table 7.1 shows a general view of Grace's class:

Table 7. 1 Summary of classroom observation notes in Grace's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Grace	40 Repeat students' class (poor)	CET4	Work, labour, and play	Introduction & language points	T->S T->SS	1.Warmup & topic discussion 2. Play a video-clip 3. Student pair discussions 4. Teacher explains text

Warmup and topic discussion in 'Main activities' column of Table 7.1 took the opening five minutes in Grace's class. The topic of this new unit was 'Work and Career'. She tried to teach

according to her plan which started from distinguishing the key words in the title of the passage. She asked the students: “What’s the difference between work and career?” However, her warmup question received no student response. At the same time, the flow of the learning activities seemed blocked. It turned out that Grace overestimated her students’ proficiency in her curriculum design. She then tried to relate the new topic to the students’ real-life experiences and set her personal experience as an example. Immediately, she provided more synonyms of the two words ‘work’ and ‘career’ for students to distinguish, and further asked: “If I have taken a part-time job as a shop assistant, can I call it a career?” Gradually, several students gave a response and answered no. Finally, Grace succeeded in getting the students to express their ideal future job, after breaking the ice a little. It was impressive to see the classroom scenario of Excerpt 7.1 on how Grace flexibly and gradually simplified the requirement of her warmup questions to adapt to the students’ levels of acceptance and proficiency. It was also worth seeing how she gently guided her students towards an understanding of the topic from their own perspective.

Excerpt 7.1 Grace (Classroom observation)

1 T: No, why? What does career mean? (Writing the job title on the blackboard at the same time.) What does career mean? OK, everybody, let’s think about your future job, your ideal job. So, what are you going to do after graduation? OK, everybody, just tell me one job, your future job or your ideal job. OK, one minute, I’ll give you just one minute. ...So, what's the first word coming into your mind? When choosing a job, when choosing a career, OK [S1].

2 S1: My future job is to be an electronic engineer.

3 T: Ah, electronic engineer (repeating the job title and writing it on the blackboard). OK, so... class one, my class leader, what's yours? What’s your ideal job? What’s your ideal job? What do you want to do in the future? Or your dream job? What’s your dream job?

4 S2: (No response).

5 T: You just don't know. You never talk about it? OK, sit down please. And [S3], OK.

6 S3: Er, I want to be er, a maths teacher.

7 T: Oh, a maths teacher. We don't know, a maths teacher. Ah, it does anything with your major?

8 S3: Because, er ... Can I speak in Chinese?

9 T: OK.

10 S3: Because I used to, when I was in the summer practicum, I tried to be a maths teacher. So, I feel it is good. Because I had never thought about being a maths teacher, and I felt good after experiencing it.

11 T: Is maths teacher a profession? (Writing the job title on the blackboard at the same time.) Her ideal job is a math teacher. OK, you have your career here. Er, how about the boy? The boy from Class 3. Where is my monitor? ... (Walks back and forth and looks for the student). My monitor, my class leader. Where is my class leader? OK, so tell me, tell me. Yeah, what's your future job? What's your dream job?

12 S4: I want to be a lawyer.

13 T: You want to be a lawyer, wow, good, a lawyer (Writing the job title on the blackboard.) Anything else? Anything else? [S5].

14 S5: My ideal job is an IT, software designer.

15 T: Computer what? Oh, software designer. Software designer, OK. So, from your answer, I can know that maybe, based on your interests, your ability, or your major, you want to choose different jobs in the future.

In Excerpt 7.1, Grace was 'scaffolding' an instructional interaction for her students (Brown, 2015; Harmer, 2015). In this scaffolding process, she repeated and changed her questions several times, based on the students' reactions. In Turn 1, Grace asked her students their thoughts on the meaning of the word 'career' as she wrote the word on the blackboard. However, her students did not give a response to the question. Finally, Grace altered her question to instead ask the students to think about "your future job, your ideal job". She even rephrased the question into a pattern that was much easier for them to understand: "What are

you going to do after graduation?" What is more, she lowered the demand on the students by giving them one minute's preparation time to provide an answer. To that point, Grace compromised four times to simplify her question to match the students' understanding because they seemed to be unaware of the word 'career'. Finally, the students began to react.

There were five students involved in the discussion about their ideal job, and four answers were produced (Turns 2, 6, 12, and 14). The first student responded that he would like "to be an electronic engineer". The second student, the monitor, signalled to the teacher that he had no idea. The third student wanted to be a maths teacher. In addition, Grace had two more interaction turns when she asked the students to provide the reasons for their choices. They negotiated with her to use Chinese to express the reason. Finally, the other two students dreamed of being a lawyer and a software designer, respectively. Immediately after the students expressed their answer, Grace wrote it on the blackboard for an overall review.

However, all the compromises and student involvements were only the tip of the iceberg. The very first question was actually not in the textbook at all. The three warmup questions provided by the textbook were:

1. What do you think work can provide?
2. What factors do you think one should take into account when choosing a career?
3. What kind of job do you think will be suitable for you?

Evidently, these questions demanded rather high-level English proficiency and deep thinking from the students' perspective. They were too difficult for the repeat students to answer. As a result, Grace rejected these questions and started with a very basic question using different vocabulary. In Excerpt 7.2, Grace told the researcher:

Excerpt 7.2 Grace (SRI)

R: You asked a question here what the difference between work and career？ Then my question is why you asked this question, but not the warmup questions provided by the textbook?

T: Because the theme in this unit is ‘work and career’, I think that through these two words, I want to give them a sense of leading-in.

Excerpt 7.2 reveals Grace’s purpose was to distinguish the two words as part of a warmup exercise with the students, but in a comparatively easier way than is provided in the textbook. This approach was the result of her forecast and design before the class, which was not demonstrated during the lesson. This was the hidden part of the iceberg.

In this simplification process, Grace took three factors into consideration: students’ language proficiency, the difficulty of the textbook contents, and students’ real-time reactions. Firstly, Grace evaluated the students’ language proficiency against the level of difficulty of the original warmup questions and found the latter were too demanding. She then proposed the first question to align the terms ‘work’ and ‘career’, which evidently made it much easier for the students to understand. This was followed by a quick judgement and estimation of the students’ spontaneous reactions. She explained her thinking process as follows:

Excerpt 7.3 Grace (SRI)

1 R: Why did you make such a change? What were you thinking?

2 T: I made the change because I noticed from their facial expressions that they didn’t understand. Particularly, they were not clear about the word ‘career’, not clear. I thought to change the word, like ‘job’. Maybe they could figure

out that it is a word related to job. I changed it into a simpler word, and waited for their response.

3 R: So, you adapted your question and word usage?

4 T: Yes, yeah, including later when I mentioned ‘occupation’ and ‘profession’. It seems that they had no reaction to the words at all, no strong reaction like to the word ‘job’. Because these students are repeat students of the CET 4 examination, their language proficiency is maybe a little weak.

Excerpt 7.3 reveals how carefully and tentatively Grace observed her students’ facial expressions (Turn 2), including when using the synonyms of ‘work’ and ‘career’. At the same time, she compared the nuanced differences in their facial reactions. As a result, she concluded that they had a stronger understanding of the word ‘job’ than the other synonyms she provided like ‘career’, ‘occupation’, and ‘profession’ (Turn 4). After this observation and thinking process, she finally adopted a simplification strategy. She applied her discretion quickly to use the word ‘job’ because it received the strongest reaction from the students. This was why Grace changed her question again and again to test students’ understanding and to improve students’ engagement in the warmup question discussion.

Grace’s autonomous responsiveness to student body language is a critical reason for her to see students’ learning difficulty from their facial expressions, and to take further action to scaffold or meet their learning needs (Koole & Elbers, 2014). She did not design all these before class in her teaching plan. She just acted these out autonomously on the spot because learners was in the centre of her teaching. This episode could be a demonstration of her autonomy.

To avoid student embarrassment or consistent compromising to their poor language proficiency, some teachers—as evidenced with Grace—initiate student presentations as the beginning of

the class. In other words, this curriculum design provides students with the opportunities to practice. This is also essentially a learner-centred task. Both Helen and Linda started their classes this way. However, the way they provided feedback on the students' presentation differed greatly.

Firstly, Helen's class started with a student presentation activity to check the students' teamwork results. Helen's class was not a common CE class, but an extra oral English class specifically added for selective students in the Mechanical School of the case university. This meant the students, 25 boys in total, passed the CET4 examination prior to attending Helen's class. The lesson topic was about eating in a restaurant. Table 7.2 shows the general agenda in Helen's class:

Table 7. 2 Summary of classroom observation notes in Helen's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Helen	25 selective students (medium)	Oral	In a Restaurant	Check assignments & restaurant vocabulary and expressions	T->S T->SS T->SG	1. Student presentation and peer commenting 2. Teacher explains vocabulary 3. Group discussion 4. Students watch a video-clip & imitation in role play

Table 7.2 shows in the 'Main activities' column that Helen arranged for a student to represent the group to present at the beginning of the class. After that, she organised peer comments on the presentation, and two students made their comments. The first student commented that the presentation was "too short and there are some mistakes with his gramma". Furthermore, the student pointed out three grammar mistakes in the presentation. At this point, Helen seemed to be a little upset according to the observation.

Helen then asked the second student to comment on the presentation, but the student skipped the class. Finally, Helen invited a third student who was a member of the presentation team on duty to make a comment and he remarked that the presentation was "a terrible result". After

the peer comments, Helen provided systematic feedback on the presentation. Because the presentation team on duty lacked in cooperation and the presenter did an inadequate job, she criticised the group for their carelessness in preparation. Next, Helen further pointed out that the presentation neither provided any useful information for the audience nor met the three-minute time requirement. She also doubted the attitude of the presentation team in relation to their preparation and requested that the team to the presentation again during the next class. Helen's decision impressed the observer in that she presented as a very strict teacher. In Helen's words, a key teaching principle she applied was to be able to "temper justice with mercy". This was also one of her standards for being a good English teacher. However, the observer also appreciated Helen's lesson design to conduct peer comments on the presentation.

In Excerpt 7.4, Helen revealed her purpose in asking for peer comments. She wanted the audience to express their intuitive feelings about the presentation. After the audience pointed out most of the mistakes, she could further follow up to make a more holistic comment. What is more, Helen revealed that it was a teaching paradigm for her to assign students a presentation activity in all her classes. She also claimed that this paradigm was an effective way to get the students to practice oral expression. She told the researcher:

Excerpt 7.4 Helen (SRI)

R: Do you think that this (peer comments) is useful for the presenter?

T: There should be some effects. What is more, in one of my classes in 2014 I realised that you can observe their performance as a team… they are four to five persons per group. In the end, I don't have to say anything to the last few groups. They just do it well and I think their presentations are done. Because they were in their freshman year at that time, I felt they were good enough as freshman students to design their PowerPoint slides like this, and to give their presentation like this.

Helen's narration of, and reflection on, her student presentation lesson design in Excerpt 7.4 shows that she had developed this teaching technique as a result of successful experiences. She noted that the students varied in their capabilities to make a PowerPoint presentation and to provide comments. She also noted the differences in the students' abilities to comment between classes in different cohorts. If she can reflect more deeply and further optimise and theorise her design, it will be good for her professional practice development and also benefit the students. In all, Helen's lesson included various learner-centred activities (Table 7.1), although she was also observed to be strict at times. During the learning activities, her students had many chances to present, comment, discuss, and role-play. Nevertheless, these activities can also be accounted for by the type of lesson she was teaching, namely an oral language skills class.

In comparison to Helen's direct approach to make explicit the students' mistakes in their presentations, Linda showed more mercy in her approach to addressing the technical mistakes made by the students. Linda's was teaching a class of 66 freshman students all crowded into one classroom. The topic of the lesson was mother and daughter relationships. Table 7.3 presents a whole view on Linda's class:

Table 7. 3 Summary of classroom observation notes in Linda's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Linda	66 Freshman students (medium)	Reading, Writing & Translation	Mother & Daughter relationships	Introduction & Language points	T->S T->SS T->SG	1.Student presentation 2. Watch a video-clip 3. Teacher explains text

Table 7.3 shows that Linda, like Helen, designed her lesson to begin with 'student presentations'. Linda invited two teams of students to present their study on a famous school logo assigned to them as homework during the previous lesson. However, the performances of the two teams did not satisfy Linda. The first team showed a comparatively low level of

PowerPoint-making capability. They illogically embedded too many words into the PowerPoint slides, and it was hard for the audience to follow their key points. The second team experienced difficulties with the PowerPoint file, namely the presenter—to his surprise and embarrassment—did not copy the contents of his PowerPoint presentation and so arrived with an empty file. The whole class burst into laughter and rather than reprimand the students for their carelessness, Linda comforted them and gave the team a second chance to present during the next lesson.

During the entire 90-minute session, the observer was very impressed with several aspects of Linda's teaching practices. Firstly, she kept a gentle simile on her face right from the beginning of the class, even when her students made a mistake. When she was asking the students a question, collectively, her smile was also bright. When the researcher noticed this, and doubted whether Linda could remember the names of her students, she accounted for this habit in a quite impressive way:

Excerpt 7.5 Linda (SRI)

R: (…) I noticed that when you are asking a question, you basically face the whole class most of the time and ask for their feedback or answer. Maybe because you just start this class, a class of freshmen, you do not remember their names or because of something else?

T: I do this because I want to run my eyes over the whole class and to feel that I encourage every one of them. This is my thought and is why I face them (to ask the question). If I really need someone to answer the question, I am sure I will invite a particular person to answer it.

Excerpt 7.5 shows that Linda embedded her encouragement of the students in her eyes and smiles. Most importantly, she did it on purpose. That is, she purposefully conveyed her

encouragement through her eye contact with students in order to meet her students' emotional needs.

Linda was also patient with the students to give them every opportunity to progress with their learning. When comparing Linda's approach with the quick comments and decision on students' performances made by other teachers, she spared no effort to create chances for students to improve themselves. As she remarked, one of her habits in the classroom is to open her excel file (a grade recorder) and fill in empty grade categories or replace unsatisfying student grades. She told her students explicitly that: "I am giving you every chance to form long-lasting learning habits". Accordingly, her treatment of the students' failure to produce the PowerPoint file was totally different to Helen's direct and stern approach. She also described herself as a responsible teacher. Linda accounted her actions in the video clip during her stimulated recall interview by making the comments presented in Excerpt 7.6:

Excerpt 7.6 Linda (SRI)

1 R: The fifth team could not make it because of their PowerPoint problem. What do you usually do when this kind of things happen?

2 T: My approach is to give them several minutes to do the presentation again just before the next class. They already made it, so I surely would not let them down. Of course, I will allow them to make it up, because this will not waste too much time.

3 R: You decided on the spot to allow them to do it during the next lesson?

4 T: Yes, I allowed them to make it up in the next class because it contributes to their course work grade.

5 R: So, your students put emphasis on it, and you will also arrange time for it?

6 T: I try my best to let my students feel that the teacher takes their effort seriously.

Excerpt 7.6 shows that Linda made every effort to provide emotional support to her students during the English learning process. In her own words: “I surely would not let them down” (Turn 2). This implied her understanding that students’ feelings and their need to be encouraged and respected could help to empower them in the language learning process. In accordance with this belief, her pedagogical practices were conducted in a learner-friendly and learner-centred way. According to the observation notes, she conveyed thee message to her students that they were taken seriously as she indicated in Turn 6.

Finally, Linda demonstrated her knowledge, imagination, and passion during the teaching session. She revealed during interview that she was interested in reading, writing and translation. She read a wide range of books and revealed that she always related what she read to her teaching. When she introduced the topic of the unit, she cited many famous sayings on the chosen theme. Regarding the title of the lesson, she not only discussed the Chinese translation of the title, she also explained rhetorical devices such as simile and metaphor in the title. In addition, she explained the whole passage according to its outline in a ‘problem-solution-(evaluation)’ structure. During the process, Linda remarked that it was out of her love for writing that she came up with such a syllabus design.

7.2.2 Flexibility

Flexible improvisations were observed as the second critical feature for teachers in this group. In fact, Grace and Linda had demonstrated their flexibility when their teaching practices were set as examples of learner-centred teaching. Grace demonstrated her flexibility by simplifying her warmup questions in response to the students’ reactions. Similarly, Linda demonstrated

flexibility in the way she responded to the students' presentation file preparation error. This shows how a language teacher's learner-centeredness and flexibility may interconnect with each other.

There was further evidence of Linda's flexibility in teaching during her lesson. One attraction aspect of her teaching method was her ability to acknowledge and follow up on her students' ideas in a sensitive and timely manner. For instance, when she was explaining the textbook exercise related to the way children show love towards their parents, she conducted a survey on one student and further expanded the topic to the student's knowledge on his parents' hobby. This practice successfully led the students to relate to the touching and warm nature of parental love. In Excerpt 7.7, an interesting discussion unfolded on the student's parents' hobbies:

Excerpt 7.7 Linda (Classroom observation)

1 T: The six things describe children's feelings or children's love toward parents. Let's see, (waiting and looking at the screen) … which ones are true for you? Yes, you are away from your hometown, and you probably miss your parents every day. You make phone calls to them every day, and you even cried… during the phone call. OK, [S]. You have many choices among the six statements. Which ones are true for you?

2 S: The first one.

3 T: Hum?

4 S: The first one.

5 T: The first one? Oh, my god! You miss your parents every day?

6 S: And… The fifth and the sixth.

7 T: The fifth one, and… the sixth one. OK, I know about my parents' hobbies. OK, if you don't think it's too private, can you share some hobbies of your parents with us?

8 S: Err, my father likes smoking. (The class burst into a laughter suddenly after hearing the answer.)

9 T: Smoking is a hobby? Others would think it is a bad habit. Oh, do you buy cigarettes for you parents, for your father?

10 S: When I was a younger child, I bought them for my dad.

11 T: Oh, yeah, and how about your mother's hobby? (The teacher waits for the student's answer while the class begin to chat secretly.) What do (es) she love? Maybe this is another, this is also, a little bit… funny.

12 S: Er, my mother likes watching TV.

13 T: Watching TV, this is common for women in our life, watching TV. You know, in another major I asked one student, and he said: “my mother loves to go shopping”. This is also very common for women. OK, yes, good. Sit down please.

Excerpt 7.7 refers to a multiple-choice exercise in Linda’s class. There were six choices for the students on ways to express their love to their parents. The student in this excerpt chose three items (Turns 2, 4, and 6), with the last item being: “I know about my parents' hobbies”. According to the syllabus design, the exercise was supposed to end after the student made his choices. However, Linda further asked: “Can you share some of your parents’ hobbies with us?” (Turn 7). She extended the multiple-choice exercise from the ways children express love toward parents to a discussion of parents’ hobbies. In other words, Linda created an opportunity for the student to practice his oral expression in a multiple-choice exercise. However, the

student made a funny mistake. He answered: “My father likes smoking” as his father’s hobby (Turn 8). Thus, the whole class burst into laughter. Evidently, the student mistook the term ‘hobby’ for ‘habit’. However, Linda did not laugh at the student’s misunderstanding. Neither did she correct the student’s mistake with a serious manner. She simply asked the student two further questions to assist him to understand the difference between a ‘hobby’ and a ‘habit’.

When Linda was asked why she guided the discussion on signs of children's love toward parents to parents’ hobbies, she gave the following reasons as outlined in Excerpt 7.8:

Excerpt 7.8 Linda (SRI)

R: Then you extended the exercise to ask another question, that is, his parents’ hobbies. What was your purpose in asking this question?

T: Actually, at the time I wanted to seize the chance to let the student practice speaking English. The topics, in fact, include some functions that allow for a discussion on the topic of ‘parent and child relationships’. For instance, after I read the topics I took them as a kind of background material. If you do not do it like this, it simply goes away. Then, if I expand on the topic like this, it doesn’t matter how many students take part in it, at least one student went through them all. I believe he will mention ‘parent’s hobbies’, ‘parent’s birthday’, etc. They just showed an intimacy in the relationship.

When Linda was asked about the student’s mistake, she understood his thinking process very well. Linda was sure that her student understood the meaning of ‘hobby’ as something that someone liked to do, but the student may be not very clear about the difference between a good habit and a bad habit implied in this likeness. Linda further explained her understanding on ‘hobby’: an activity that was intrinsically rewarding as usually implied in the word. Even

though the student answered the question in a grammatically correct way, he failed to make the nuance clear between a hobby and a habit.

In Excerpt 7.8, Linda stressed that her genuine purpose was to further discuss the student's parents' hobbies (Turns 7-13 in Excerpt 7.9). She commented that it was not to receive an absolutely correct answer, but to provide the student with the opportunity to practice his oral expression. That is, Linda naturally improvised a multiple-choice exercise into oral expression practice for her students. According to Linda, she took the choices in the exercise as "a kind of background material". To be specific, she used the "background material" to encourage her students to practice and achieve more output in English.

In Linda's class, there were many examples of improvisational conversations like this which made her class interesting, inspiring, and attractive. For instance, after watching a video clip on the spoofing and funny ways of dealing with parent and child conflicts, the related discussion activity in the textbook gave tips on how to deal with the problem. Then, in Excerpt 7.9, Linda again expanded the topic to include various forms of communication that a college student can use to show his/her love to parents. This discussion was closely related to the students' lives because they were freshman students leaving home for the first time to study in a new place far away from their hometown and parents. This was also typical improvisational teaching and it successfully aroused the students' attention and involvement:

Excerpt 7.9 Linda (Classroom observation)

1 T: Apart from communicating with parents face to face, what other forms of communication can you choose? What are they? [S1]. Let's think about other forms of communication with parents we can choose. Maybe your father is a businessman, and he is always busy working. You cannot talk

with him, OK. Then what other way can you choose to share your thoughts with him? Like what?

2 S1: You can call him.

3 T: Yes, you can call him. You can give him a call a day. You can call him, (and) you can fix the time. What else?

4 S1: You can use Wechat.

5 T: What's it? Chat?

6 S1: QQ

7 T: Yes, you can send a QQ message to him or just chat with him online. Yes, very good, good idea. OK, because everybody enjoys the computer, OK. You can send him a QQ message. Good job, sit down please. Any other forms can you think?

8 S2: Write a letter. (S2 voluntarily contributes an answer.)

9 T: Yeah, write a letter. And I also have another idea. If you cannot find time with your father, you can share your idea with your mother and let your mother … send it to your father. Is this a good way? Yes, OK.

In Excerpt 7.9, Linda expanded the discussion from dealing with parent-child conflicts to other forms of communication with parents. Linda's exchange with the first student extended to three rounds of interaction (Turns 1-6), rather than a single IRF. The student listed most forms of communication that he and his classmates usually used in daily life, like making a phone call, Wechat, QQ, and writing a letter. The last answer was volunteered by a student, which means the class was engaged wholeheartedly in the activity. The students responded actively in this theme-relevant extended discussion. At the same time, it provided useful tips for students' lives and as well as materials for writing. Throughout this process, Linda's careful preparation, clear

expectations of each student's oral expression ability, and her patient guidance should be highlighted, though she was modest about her successes with the students. She accounted for her practice in Excerpt 7.10:

Excerpt 7.10 Linda (SRI)

R: (…) Here you made another extension, that is, "different forms of showing your love to your parents". You introduced again, or asked students to introduce, several forms of expression (of showing their love to their parents). I think this is good. Why did you come up this question?

T: I think this procedure happens without extra effort. They can deal with it, so I turn it over to them. If you suddenly throw a topic on how to deal with you and your parents' conflicts, the student could surely not have come up with these expressions. However, the textbook has covered it only to a subtle extent, right. Through what forms (of communication), I think my students can answer it based on their common sense. Actually, this discussion delivered the outcomes I was seeking and the students told all they could. I feel it was very good.

Excerpt 7.10 reveals that this kind of improvisational extension and relation is a core part of Linda's pedagogical style or practice. As she remarked, it "happens without extra effort". That is, following the textbook rigidly in her class was not a normal pattern because she liked to go a little beyond the original activity and to create an opportunity for her students to develop their language proficiency. This one step further was based on her estimation of, and trust in, her students' capabilities. Consequently, she extends the activities to arouse student interest. From this practice, Linda's commitment to a flexible and improvisational teaching method was embodied fully.

Regarding flexibility, Mary also demonstrated a certain degree of this characteristic in her teaching practices, particularly during the final stage of her class. Mary's class was the first ET class the researcher observed. As explained in Chapter 6, like Betty's ET class, Mary's students were the top students in English. Table 7.4 provides some basic information about Mary's class:

Table 7. 4 Summary of classroom observation notes in Mary's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Mary	33 students, English test class (top)	CET6	Work, labour, and play	Introduction & Language points	T->S T->SS T->SG	1. Comments students' quiz 2.Listening comprehension 2. Students group discussion 3. Teacher explains text

Mary's students sat in small groups comprising five to six members (Figure 4.2). Group discussion played an important role in her pedagogy. For example, for the theme of the new unit, 'work and career', she guided her students towards a group discussion when engaging in a theme-related listening comprehension. She asked the students to discuss and exchange their answers after listening to the material for the first time. She also asked the students to engage in a group discussion to arrive at a reasonable translation for some difficult sentences. According to observation, the students actively participated in the group discussion and the process seemed to help them with their comprehension and expression.

Nearing the end of the lesson, Mary made some improvisational changes imperturbably. She planned to play a video clip and to finish the class with a student group discussion activity. However, she decided to skip this task and assigned her students the task of preparing a job interview role play activity for homework. Though nothing special happened from the perspective of an outsider, Mary revealed her intention and ability to make changes to the lesson design, which in effect demonstrated her capability to deal with contingencies. Excerpt 7.11 presents Mary's final instructions to the students:

Excerpt 7.11 Mary (Classroom observation)

T: Now, the last one is the homework.... There is a video clip, video clip, but we have no time to watch it. .... We just jumping through to the next one. Next time, you can role play this video: How to choose the right career. Your homework, the home work: Job interview. It is the role play. Every group has to play, to do this role play the job interview. Now look at the situation: You are a senior in a university. That is to say you are going to graduate from the university. You applied to (it is should be 'for' here.) a foreign enterprise, a foreign enterprise, and fortunately you got a chance of a job interview. Your group members are the interviewers... This one should be capitalized (the teacher points at the typo on the screen). Your group members are the interviewers, and you have to answer all kinds of their questions. So, clear? For example, this group has five people, right, five people. Now you can choose you two as interviewees and the other three ones as interviewers, OK? The interviewers ask questions, and interviewees answer questions, OK? All kind of questions you can imagine. Every group do you show next time. Next time, I mean, next week, every group, OK! Thank you!

In Excerpt 7.11, Mary explained her reasons for not playing the video and for redesigning the lesson to finish with a role play activity. She then stated the homework requirements in detail. From a learner's perspective, this plan may be better than the original one. Because the video included some tips on how to choose the right job, the final purpose was to help the student to gain experience in attending a job interview. As previously explained, Mary's students had high-level English proficiency. The role play, as a mimic job interview, gave them a chance to practice their oral expression and to improve their communication skills. These are the types of skills that are necessary to perform successfully at a job interview.

Therefore, Mary's flexibility in her use of the video clip was reasonable and suitable for this group of students. The role play homework activity was a theme-relevant task and a practical alternative to video watching in the classroom. Mary reasserted her idea in Excerpt 7.12:

Excerpt 7.12 Mary (SRI)

R: You designed such a requirement to do the interview at that time. What were you thinking?

T: I still wanted to give the student professional skills (training). That are some skills that you should master when you are applying for a job. I once uploaded an article like this in my QQ space which suggested that if you want to be employed in a foreign enterprise then there are 50 classical Q&As to consider. Basically, if the students in ET class are in my friends' circle then they can see the article. Every time, there are 200 to 300 browse amounts. At that time, I thought about the article and I wanted them to read it again. I directed two or three group members to play the interviewers, and others to be the interviewees. It allows them to practice. Yes, this was just the purpose.

When asked about her thoughts in relation to the task design, Mary restated her purposes in Excerpt 7.12. First, she wanted to give the students skills training for the profession. Students at different English proficiency levels need different tasks. Low level students may not know what to say in such an activity, so less challenging tasks may be more appropriate. For example, in Excerpt 7.1, Grace simplified her requirement for repeat students again and again. However, the top-level students in Mary's class need the space to improve their speaking skills. For top students, the more practical, purposeful, and challenging the task design, the more suitable it is. This desire from the top students to extend their knowledge and skills was evidenced in the number of students who browsed the material Mary made available online. As Mary said in

Excerpt 7.12, her students browsed considerably the 50 classical Q&As for a job interview she uploaded. Consequently, Mary's lesson design which included a job interview role play was intended to give the students the chance to exhibit their capabilities more fully.

What is more, she mentioned another role she played in her students' language learning, namely the resource bank. QQ space is a mainstream social network in China and Mary developed it into an online resource bank. She made use of the online friends' circle format to upload and accumulate English language learning materials. Her online resources and classroom contents were then connected to the role play activity. This was a legitimate teaching practice as well as a way to check on students' independent learning actions outside of the classroom.

7.2.3 Patterns of interaction

Eliza used the same text passage on 'mother and daughter' relations that Linda used with her class, but a totally different observation was made of the way she delivered the textbook knowledge. If Linda was observed to position her students as the core consideration in every aspect of her practice, Elisa primarily reversed her teaching paradigm into a learner-centred one. Table 7.5 illustrates a general picture of Elisa's class:

Table 7. 5 Summary of classroom observation notes in Elisa's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Elisa	71 Freshman students (medium)	Reading, Writing & Translation	Mother & Daughter relationships	Introduction & Language points	S->T T->SS T->S	1. Watch a video-clip 2. Students question & teacher explains

At a first glance, Table 7.5 does not reveal any big difference between Elisa's class and the other teachers' classes. It was an extra-large class with 71 freshman students. After introducing the topic and conducting a warmup activity with the students using a video clip, Elisa reversed the learning activity sequence, which was a highlight in her lesson. In this reversed way of

teaching, Elisa invited her students to propose questions to which she would provide answers. The students' questions were related to the points of the text that they found difficulty to understand. In the student-question and teacher-answer process, Elisa played the role of respondent, rather than simply transferring knowledge via teacher monologue. This format also meant that her students were not simply the passive recipients of her knowledge. Moreover, this format implied students' independent learning before class which was evidently encouraged by Elisa.

For the students to accomplish this task effectively, they had to prepare for the class according to Elisa's requirements. If the students were well prepared, they could understand most of the textbook text and would therefore have fewer problems to be solved during the lesson. The activity was supposed to target the students more effectively because the questions emerged from their own thinking. As a result, the effectiveness of the class activity would be enhanced greatly. Furthermore, if the students were not well prepared, his/her achievements during the lesson would be limited. For example, in Excerpt 7.13, one student proposed a confusing sentence for discussion. Elisa did not tell him the answer directly, but pointed out the difficult language points and asked the whole class for help. At the same time, she illustrated the word using body language. Finally, her inspiring questions along with her gesture resonated with the whole class and the problem was solved, collectively. The other language point was explained in a similar way:

Excerpt 7.13 Elisa (Classroom observation)

1 T: Ok, now, any question about paragraph one, class? Any question about paragraph one?

2 S: I watch her back her new truck out of the driveway. (A student reads a sentence from the passage.)

3 T: 'I watch her back her new truck out of the driveway'. You don't know the (usage of the word) 'back', right? So, what's the meaning of 'back'? Back! 'Back' here. (The teacher walks back and writes the word on the blackboard.) What is the meaning of 'back'? Do you know 'back'? This is back, right? Back, what is the back? This is back, for example, back, back, back, back, right? This is back, right? (Actions driving a car backwards while providing the explanation.)

4 Ss: Yes.

5 T: So, what the meaning of 'back'? 'I watch her back her new truck', do you know what the meaning is? To drive the car forward, we just walk ahead, right? Drive ahead, right? Drive the car back, back, back. What's the meaning of it?

6 Ss: Back. (The student tells the Chinese meaning of ‘back’.)

7 T: Back, right. Here, back is an adverb, right? So, 'I watch her back her new truck out of the driveway. 'Out of the driveway', you know driveway, right? ‘Driveway’, the way for the car, right? The way for the car, not for the people, right.

8 Ss: Driveway. (The student tells the Chinese meaning of ‘driveway’.)

9 T: Driveway, right? Driveway is the way for the car, not for people, right? So, in the first sentence, you may not understand the ‘back’, right?

In Excerpt 7.13, Elisa started to explain the text passage by saying to her students: “any question?” One student proposed a textbook sentence directly. Elisa repeated the sentence and pointed out a difficult language point in the sentence, the word ‘back’. Usage of the word in this way was different from what they had previously learned. However, the teacher did not

provide the answer directly. She turned to the whole class and made a gesture. Evidently, the class understood the word immediately. After confirming her students' understanding twice, in English and in Chinese, she moved on to point out the second language point in the sentence: the word 'driveway'. This word was comparatively easier for the students to understand. Elisa explained it directly and the whole class gave its Chinese meaning cooperatively.

According to the observation, during the whole session one of the most frequently used sentences by Elisa was, 'any question?' If the students did not ask questions about the paragraph, it was the teacher's turn to ask questions in order to check the students' understanding. Therefore, the most impressive part of the class was the students' control over the flow of the lesson. Elisa had to therefore be well prepared for all kinds of questions from her students. This also meant that the teacher should guide the students on how to prepare suitable questions before the class.

The degree of learner-centeredness in this class was highest among the 14 classes the researcher observed. The advantage of this method was high efficiency. She required the least amount time to solve most of the students' language problems and left a deeper impression upon them than other methods because the students had a stronger motivation to listen to the teacher's answers to their questions and to her explanations of the text in the way they preferred. In Excerpt 7.14, Elisa reaffirmed her pedagogical principle:

Excerpt 7.14 Elisa (SRI)

1 R: Starting from here, you basically enter the main body of the text.

2 T: Yes, the question answering stage.

3 R: You adopted a question answering method and you delivered the whole passage in such a way. My question is, why did you adopt such an approach?

4 T: Because I arranged for the students to learn it all by themselves beforehand, and to be honest, this passage is not so difficult. It is a narrative passage that the students should understand. What is more, there are some comparatively difficult sentences that I hope my students can learn from. I asked them to mark down the problem areas and to bring their question to the lesson, which I would then answer. It is not an activity where I remember some language points or several sentences, and then I deliver the language points and sentences all together. This is not the way. Basically, I have taught it like this for many years. I am different from my colleagues, I only answer questions. I have already told them (this principle) during the first lesson, and it is essentially the same for every freshman class each semester. If I am their teacher in the next semester, there is no need to say it again because they already know that this my style: I only answer questions in class!

5 R: Yes.

6 T: If you learn by yourselves, but do not understand, you can come and ask me, or we can discuss it together.

In Excerpt 7.14, there are several points worthy of special attention. Firstly, Elisa understood her teaching style well. She asserted again and again that her principle was to only answer questions in her class, either in the class to her student, or in the interview to the researcher (Turn 4). Elisa is like Linda, who also had a good understanding of her teaching style.

Secondly, different teachers dealt with the same passage from totally different angles. Linda saw it from the perspective of writing structure, whereas Elisa looked at it from a narrative perspective. The diverse readings set primarily different tones for facilitating student comprehension of the text passage. Linda's view of the passage from a writing structure

perspective focused on writing skills and on scaffolding the way of thinking about the structure. However, Elisa's narrative perspective focused on the story line and the development of the plot because pure explanation on language points in the passage were only a very basic part in the pedagogy, if at all.

Finally, it redefines the teacher's role in learner-centred language teaching. Evidently, in Excerpt 7.14, Elisa considered herself as a consultant more than a knowledge deliverer. She told her students explicitly and repeatedly that they were the main agents of learning, and her role was to help them by answering their questions. This self-definition or self-identification was the closest to learner-centred teaching. What is more, it tended to encourage her students' capability of learning independently and making use of the teacher as a resource of learning. Just as Elisa stated in Turn 6 of Excerpt 7.14: "If you learn by yourselves, but do not understand, you can come and ask me, or we can discuss it together." This means Elisa encouraged students' independent learning explicitly. This teaching principle flipped the language learners' thinking from 'the teacher asked me to learn the language' to 'I have a question about the language to ask the teacher'. Therefore, the effect of this teaching principle was to arouse the students' curiosity and motivation in language learning. Better learning outcomes and confidence in using the target language can also be found in flipped classes, such as Elisa's class (Webb & Doman, 2016).

In addition to Elisa's inverted way of interacting with her students, another special pattern of interaction was revealed in Mary's teaching practices, namely interactions with student groups. According to Mary, she was not only an active organiser and guide for her students' group work in the classroom, she was also a photographer when they were engaged in teamwork. After the lesson, Mary uploaded pictures of the students' group work for them to discuss online. She was also usually an active participant in the online discussion. In other words, Mary

connected traditional classroom learning with online learning. The special pattern was revealed in Excerpt 7.15:

Excerpt 7.15 Mary (SRI)

R：It seems that you also make use of the QQ space by arranging for the students to discuss some learning materials.

T: I sometimes take pictures of their group work in classroom which feature each group member. Then I post the pictures onto my social space online, and I comment and discuss the pictures together with the students. I hope my students will think: 'Ooh, my teacher has paid much attention to me. I want to learn harder'. Then he or she may perform better next time. Anyway, this can shorten the distance between me and the students, and scaffold our emotional link too.

Excerpt 7.15 shows that as a 'photographer' and online friend, Mary's adopts a personalised pattern of interaction with her students and outlines her purpose for doing so. Firstly, she took pictures of students' group work in classroom. With the widespread use of smartphones, taking pictures of things and events is a part of people's daily lives. Mary integrated this habit into her teaching practices to facilitate the students' English learning process. Secondly, she posted the pictures online. In the internet era, people tend to communicate through online space and all kinds of social networks. So, Mary's posts reflected her students' life styles. Finally, her purpose for doing so was to impress her students by paying more attention to them in a way that was familiar to them, though in a way that would be regarded as irregular in traditional classroom teaching practices. In other words, it can also be interpreted as an emotional investment. In Mary's words, she was shortening the distance between she and her students

and scaffolding their emotional link. In sum, Mary's pattern of interaction also made full use of time, space, and modern technology.

7.2.4 Resources utilisation

Two directions were observed in integrating internet resources into language education among this group of teachers. Mary stood for one direction: making use of the online space to broaden her students' knowledge bank and to facilitate discussion. This direction implies a critical tendency in language education and points towards the use of at information technology and the internet to reshape language teaching classroom practices not found in traditional classrooms.

Ruth represented the other pedagogical direction of introducing online materials into the traditional classroom. In Ruth's class, an attractive PowerPoint she made with many interesting examples was observed. To clarify, Ruth's examples were buzz words, pictures, and video clips downloaded from internet. When she was asked why she selected these examples, she explained her preferences as follows in Excerpt 7.16:

Excerpt 7.16 Ruth (SRI)

R：You are good at making use of these extracurricular materials.

T: The critical point is that I have an interest too, and this does not waste much time at all because there are these kinds of news stories in every portal website, in English.

Ruth showed a strong sense of time and purposefulness in her selection of teaching examples. She preferred to focus on key words in news items of current political events posted on mainstream websites. Therefore, her examples were full of a sense of time. According to the observation, Ruth selected examples of interesting, typical, classical, or strongly contrastive

texts form online resources. Consequently, her examples were purposeful and impressive. The forms of exhibition were diverse. It may be a word, a picture, or a video clip cut by herself. Ruth's approach could be linked to her journalism major studies as part of her postgraduate education. Thus, it revealed that her style was attributed to her education background.

Though both directions posed demands on the teacher's information technology skills, such skills and online resource use in language classes should serve the pedagogy for learner autonomy. In comparison, Mary's direction was more directed towards developing learner autonomy. The types of out of classroom online resources that Mary provided for her students in the QQ space can be very useful and effective to facilitate learner autonomy, if guided correctly by the teacher. In contrast, even though Ruth's skills and capabilities in PowerPoint making and organising online materials were preferred, these eye-attracting exhibitions should be strictly controlled by the teacher if they are to develop students' communicative competence. The online content may arouse students' interests to a certain degree if used properly. However, more space should be created for the students to have a say in the content used and to try to generate the content by themselves. This means the overuse of the technology and online resources in classroom teaching should be carefully guarded against.

In contrast, some teachers did not use any technology at all. For example, Excerpt 7.17 reveals Mark's opinion on integrating PowerPoint exhibition technology into his teaching:

Excerpt 7.17 Mark (SRI)

R：I notice that you did not use PowerPoint in this class. Why didn't you use it, and what were you thinking? When do you use it, if at all?

T：Sometimes I use technology, sometimes not. Primarily, it depends on the style of the class. For example, this class aims to develop the students' understanding of the passage. In terms of understanding, I feel it is more

important to read the passage than to glare at the PowerPoint screen. So, I did not use PowerPoint, and primarily asked them to read the passage. However, in the next class, when I explain exercises or review the word usages, I will use PowerPoint slides more.

Excerpt 7.17 shows that Mark's utilisation of resources served his pedagogical plan according to the different styles class. Mark had a systematic opinion on whether to use PowerPoint. His words implied that he believed that to read a textbook passage was better for facilitating student understanding than to "glare at the PowerPoint screen". This opinion reflects his independent and depth of thinking on the issue, rather than simply following others or some external rules. Table 7.6 presents some basic information of Mark's class. It was a CE class which focused on reading, writing and translation: a new type of CE class to emerge from the latest CE reform (Table 4.1). According to Mark's plan, he first reviewed the knowledge gained by the students during the previous lesson and then he introduced the new text. Taking the class aim into consideration, he organised three main activities: speed reading, peer discussion, and teacher explanation. As a result, he adopted a traditional face to face style without any technology use, and he interacted with his students using the typical IRF pattern.

Table 7. 6 Summary of classroom observation notes in Mark's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Mark	67 Freshmen students (medium)	Reading, Writing & Translation	Mother & Daughter relationships	Review & New text explanation	T->S T->SS	1. Students speed reading 2. Students peer discussion 3. Teacher corrects students' pronunciation & explains text

7.3 Summary

Chapter 7 focuses on moderately autonomous teachers' classroom practices. They were categorised in this group primarily for their attitudes toward the key concepts under

investigation. Two characteristics in their attitudes toward the concepts were captured in Section 7.1. One was their negative attitude toward professional development, and the other was their unclear attitude toward the professional identity. An extreme case of Mark was also explained.

Next, their classroom practices were reported according to four main characteristics. Firstly, many teachers in this group showed a learner-centred teaching approach, particularly Grace, Helen, Linda, and Elisa. Grace simplified her warm-up questions again and again to adapt to the students' level of understanding. Her careful observation of the students' facial expressions supported her flexible and learner-centred way of teaching. In addition, though both Helen and Linda started their class with student group presentation, their ways of providing feedback differed greatly when similar incidents occurred to their respective classes. In contrast to Helen's severity, Linda showed mercy, patience, tolerance, and an encouraging smile towards her students. However, both Helen and Linda were learner-centred teachers because their diverse treatments of similar situations implied their divergent beliefs and considerations for the students' language acquisition. Linda met the students' emotional needs, while Helen met the students' knowledge and developmental needs. Elisa's class demonstrated learner-centeredness in her inverted way of interacting with the students, namely by requiring the students to actively ask the teacher questions to improve their understanding. In this model, the degree of learner-centeredness was promoted to a rather high level. Mary's learner-centeredness was embodied in her use of resources and by adapting her teaching approach to reflect the students' lifestyles. Thus, learner-centred pedagogy tended to be a strong indicator for teacher autonomy. However, this learner-centred teaching was not observed in Mark's or Ruth's classes.

Secondly, Linda and Mary showed flexibility in the creation of spaces for student English language learning. Linda created greater space for her students to practice oral expression in

when engaging in textbook exercises. This flexible way of teaching seemed to be a habit in her professional act because she expressed it naturally. Mary's flexibility was exhibited in her treatment of contingencies. Under time pressure, she adjusted skilfully the classroom activity into a role play homework activity. Though careful preparation and experience can help in this process, it was evident that Mary's autonomy gave her the confidence to be flexible.

This was followed by a discussion of the teachers' personalised patterns of interaction with the students. Elisa's flipped class was introduced in detail because her pattern of interaction was utilised more as learner-centred pedagogy. Another unique pattern of interaction was demonstrated by Mary. She interacted with the student groups in the role of photographer and as a friend online. It was found to be a creative way for Mary to connect a traditional classroom group activity with an online discussion activity.

Finally, two modes of integrating online resources into CE classroom were represented in the teaching practices of Mary and Ruth. Ruth integrated online resources (buzz words, pictures, and videos) into her class as teaching examples, whereas Mary guided her students to role play online resources in the classroom. Both modes had their advantages and adaptabilities. Introducing online resources into the classroom can arouse the students' interests in learning. Guiding students to make use of online resources in classroom activities can also develop learner autonomy. However, the ways of utilising the resources poses the challenge for language teachers to improve their skills in both modes. Notably, no other resource was observed to be adopted by Mark during his lesson and he accounted for this decision by suggesting they reflected his personal beliefs. Mark's case implied his independent thinking on the issue. In all, personality, beliefs, and variety were demonstrated fully in the moderately autonomous teachers group.

Chapter 8

Group three: More autonomous teachers

Chapter 8 reports the findings on the more autonomous teachers' practices in their classroom. The 'more autonomous teachers' group includes Lisa, Nancy, Sarah, and Susan. These teachers demonstrated the highest level of autonomy among the three groups. Chapter 8 is constructed in an identical way to Chapters 6 and 7 where less autonomous teachers' classroom practices and moderately autonomous teachers' stories in classroom were told, respectively. Hence, this chapter firstly outlines the characteristics of the more autonomous teachers (8.1). The four features of their classroom practices are then reported with clips of their classroom observation video extracted as supporting evidence (8.2). In addition, relevant SRI data related to the teachers' classroom practices are added to explain their thoughts on their practice. All classroom observation and SRI excerpts in original Chinese are listed in Appendix K. The classroom practices of Nancy and Susan are discussed in relation to a learner-centred pedagogical orientation (8.2.1). The classroom practice of Lisa are then discussed as an example of flexibility in teaching practice (8.2.2). This is followed by a discussion of the creative pattern of interaction found in both Nancy's and Susan's classes (8.2.3). In the last section, excerpts from Lisa's and Nancy's classes are provided to explore the features that demonstrate their uses of teaching resources (8.2.4). This chapter concludes with a summary of the main features of the more autonomous teachers' practices in the classroom (8.3).

8.1 Characteristics of more autonomous teachers' attitudes

Following the analysis of the teachers' attitudes toward the key concepts under investigation, Lisa, Nancy, Sarah, and Susan were categorised into the 'more autonomous teachers' group.

Generally, these teachers held positive attitudes toward most of the four concepts, namely professional identity, learner autonomy, professional development, and teacher autonomy. To elaborate, they had the following characteristics in common:

1. Most accepted their identity as a CE teacher. Some of them even expressed that they were proud of their identification.
2. Most showed in-depth understanding of, and a strong belief in, learner autonomy, and even kept applying it in their practice.
3. Most had a clear plan on their professional development. Even some had a detailed short term and long-term plan for action to develop their profession.
4. All commented that they saw themselves as an autonomous teacher.

In other words, the more autonomous teachers were the best and most effective practitioners, as well as the most confident teachers in this study. In terms of the four concepts, these teachers showed the most determined and positive attitudes. Classroom observation data and SRI responses provide definitive evidence to show the ways in which the above characteristics were applied in their teaching practices.

Nancy was outstanding among all members in this group because she held positive attitudes toward all four concepts in the analysis. Indeed, Nancy was supposed to be a representative for teachers in this group. She has ten years of work experience and obtained her Master's degree on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in America before she entered the field. That meant that she absorbed sufficient theoretical knowledge of the concepts of focus in this study in her education. Nancy's answers to the relevant interview questions were systematic and reasonable, and based on her own perceptions. This tended to symbolise her near expert competence. Nancy's attitudes were considered as reliable and representative of her education background and practical work experience. Consequently, Nancy's practices included most characteristics as discussed in Section 8.2.

Regarding the other members of the group, Susan's attitudes were positive toward learner autonomy, and professional development and autonomy, but not towards professional identity. It was evident that she did not give her professional identity adequate thinking. For her, there was no significant differences between teaching English to students of different proficiency levels. To a certain degree, this attitude implied her confidence in her ability and experience to teach different learners. Apart from this attitude, there were many similarities in the teaching practices of Susan and Nancy.

As for Lisa, she alone showed a negative attitude toward her professional development. This meant that she had no plan to develop as a professional. This type of attitude toward professional development was quite common among teachers and internal reasons always accounted for this phenomenon. Lisa, as a young mother with a five-year-old son, was under huge pressure to manage her child caring and family affairs. For instance, her interview had to be conducted in two stages because she had to pick up her son from the kindergarten in-between. He was then present in the second interview as a cooperative audience. Though Lisa gave a negative answer to the question about her professional development plan during interview, she was observed to insist on reading academic papers in the faculty meeting room. Lisa's diligent learning attitude reflected her autonomy from an out-of-class learning perspective.

Sarah was the novice teacher in the more autonomous teachers' group, as well as among all participants in this case study. At first glance, she looked like an average college student herself. Soon after she obtained her Master's degree on TESOL in America, she began to work in the case university. As a result, her professional training and practical experience were rather limited. Nevertheless, her overseas education background suggested her advanced knowledge on the theories and concepts under investigation in this study. In fact, this was one of the main reasons that she gave rather positive and systematic answers in the semi-structured interview

on her attitudes towards the key concepts. All information in her resume suggests she had great potential to be a competent language teacher.

Sarah only reported an unclear attitude toward learner autonomy. She revealed in her interview that this unclear attitude came from her failure to effectively guide low proficiency students in her class. She lamented that the students just did not follow her instruction and that she was frustrated by the experience and started to doubt her students' autonomy. She also revealed that she felt it was difficult for her to handle large classes and to manage her time in class. Therefore, her unclear attitude to learner autonomy did not transfer from her students, but implied her lack of practical classroom management skills.

8.2 Features of more autonomous teachers' classroom practices

This section reports the findings pertaining to the more autonomous teachers' classroom practices from the perspective of the four main features addressed in this study. Firstly, the pedagogical orientation of more autonomous teachers tended to be learner-centred in every detailed consideration. The classes taught by Nancy and Susan class provide examples (8.2.1) to support this claim. Secondly, Lisa's teaching practices provide a good example of improvisational teaching and showed her flexibility in encouraging low proficiency and less motivated students to develop their language skills (8.2.2). In addition, a creative and autonomy-supportive pattern of interaction was found in the teaching practices of both Nancy and Susan (8.2.3). Finally, Nancy and Lisa were found to use the available teaching resources in similar ways (8.2.4).

8.2.1 Pedagogical orientation

As a representative of more autonomous teachers, Nancy's stories of learner-centeredness in her pedagogical orientation were the most impressive among the teachers in this group. She

taught a class of 32 freshman students, and it an exercise class was observed in this study. Table 8.1 provides some basic information about Nancy's class:

Table 8. 1 Summary of classroom observation notes in Nancy's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Nancy	32 Freshman students' class (medium)	Reading, Writing & Translation	New words & Unit exercises	Introduction & exercises	T->S T->SS T->SC	1. Dictation & Exercise in a chain 2. Teacher corrects students' pronunciation & explains text 3. Students watch a video-clip and discuss contents

Table 8.1 shows that almost all exercises in Nancy's class focused on vocabulary. However, Nancy made the exercises interesting by designing various learner-centred activities. For the first activity, dictation, she invited two pairs of students to dictate eight words respectively, and to explain the usages of some key words when dictating. She invited two students to dictate on the blackboard, and then she empowered the two students to nominate the next pair to follow on with the dictation. This approach represented a small chain-like pattern of interaction. In the second activity, which meant engaging with a new passage, Nancy selected only 12 new words for pronunciation and usage exercises. She first explained the meaning of each of the 12 words and then interacted with the students to check their pronunciation and understanding of each word. In Excerpt 8.1, Nancy reveals that all her pedagogical discretions considered the needs of the students, which is particularly embodied in her purposefulness and selectiveness in vocabulary instruction.

Excerpt 8.1 Nancy (SRI)

1 R: The latter part is a dozen words. Are these words selected by you or taken from the teacher's handbook?

2 T: I selected them myself. Usually, when I explain new words, I will refer to the words in the teacher's handbook. But I think the handbook lacks of

selective analysis. It just provides explanation for all words with one or two example sentences. I think it's hard for students to totally understand. Maybe this is because I heard that students are only able to learn 8 words in one lecture.

3 R: Ah, whom did you hear this from?

4 T: I don't remember which teacher told me about the detailed usage of this rule, but I did hear about it. However, I tend to explain 12 words in one lecture even though I heard that students were only able to learn 8 words.

5 R: What is your selective criterion when you choose new words to explain? For example, why did you choose the 12 words in this lecture? Why didn't you choose any other words?

6 T: Yes, this was also my concern. I think my judgement comes from my teaching experience, which has accumulated over many years.

7 R: So far you have taught for about 10 years?

(…)

8 T: Yes. Maybe, it is a kind of subconsciousness based on my work experience and my accumulated CET4 & CET6 vocabularies. I guess that every teacher may select different words as important ones to explain to his/her students. Some teachers may choose more words, but some may only choose what they believe are important. Anyway, I think I just rely on my accumulated teaching experience.

Nancy's recall in Excerpt 8.1 shows that autonomy and experience together played a critical role when she took several factors into consideration when deciding upon the lecture contents. Every teacher has a reference book on the language points to match the textbook, which they

are free to use. Most teachers may go through the contents of the reference book selectively, while some may do it literally. There are also some teachers who add content to compensate for the inadequacies of the teachers' reference book. As Nancy said in Turn 8: "Every teacher may select different words as important ones to explain to his/her students".

It is evident from Excerpt 8.1 that Nancy took two factors into consideration when she chose 12 words from the long vocabulary list in the teacher's reference book. Firstly, she primarily considered the students' capabilities to cope with the words. She said: "I heard that students are only able to learn 8 words in one lecture" (Turn 2). Hence, she believed that it was useless to try to explain too many words as the teacher may go beyond the students' abilities to absorb the new knowledge. However, the students were required to manage a much heavier workload than 'eight words' in a class according to the standard collective curriculum design. When considering this factor, Nancy's autonomy played a role in helping her to reach a compromise between her belief in the students' maximum acceptance zone and the desire to include a long vocabulary list in her teaching task. Her decision was to select 12 words for use in one lesson (Turn 4).

Secondly, Nancy also took exam vocabulary into consideration as this was also one of the priority concerns of her students. She accumulated good resources on high-frequency exam vocabulary through her years of work experience. Learning these words was a must if her students were to pass the exam. In terms of teachers autonomy to decide on the contents of the lecture, Nancy's other critical consideration was her students' main learning goal, that is, to pass the exam. However, when she was asked where this belief came from (Turn 3), Nancy could not give the exact origin of the belief. She explained with uncertainty that it was the result of her work experience accumulation and 'subconsciousness' (Turns 6 & 8). Therefore, her experience was assumed to be another source of influence in her decision making.

The learner-centeredness of Nancy's lesson reached a climax in the final stage of the class. The activity involved video-clip watching and discussion in which the student were given the opportunity to practice their language. Here, learner autonomy was at its maximum. Nancy purposefully designed her video discussion questions to match her students' proficiency levels and gave most of students the opportunity to comment on the video material. She created a flexible space for the students to express their opinions on the theme-related video clip. Nancy was asked during her SRI how she set the video discussion task, and her explanation is provided in Excerpt 8.2:

Excerpt 8.2 Nancy (SRI)

R: Let's discuss the video clip. How did you design the tasks when your students were watching the video? After watching, they were required to discuss the video. How to discuss?

T: I usually choose a video based on its content. First, the content of the video should be relevant to the text topic so that my students will have some ideas to carry out the discussion. I think this video is a good choice because its content is relevant to the text topic and it is also very close to my students' daily-life experiences. In this case, my students will resonate with the contents of the video so that they can express their own ideas about the current theme of this unit. Therefore, I designed two tasks. The first one is to repeat the main ideas of the video. My feeling is that repetition is probably the best approach to develop students' English listening comprehension and oral expression skills. No matter whether you are a student with high proficiency or a student with low proficiency language skills, the idea of having repetition is just like a literature review of a study. Then, the second task is very easy. Naturally, you agree or do not agree with the main ideas of the video. What are your reasons for your agreement? If not, why? Therefore, my questions

> are comparatively simple, but not too simple. I feel they are relevant to the content of the video, and they are appropriate questions in terms of the students' practical conditions.

From Excerpt 8.2, it is evident that Nancy applied very clear principles in her task design. A primary principle is text theme-related in the content of the video, which lays a foundation for students' discussion. Then, the tasks Nancy designed provided a flexible space for students of different proficiency levels to express their ideas. She set two tasks for her students. The first was to repeat the main ideas expressed by the people in the video. The second was to comment on the people's opinions. Nancy thought "repetition was the best method" in a teaching procedure that uses a video clip. Because the video was closely related to the text topic and the students had already mastered certain vocabulary and useful expressions on the topic, the repetition task was not demanding for the students at any proficiency level. If the student was good enough, s/he could organise a considerable amount of language to repeat others' opinions in a high-quality manner. If not, the student could also say something directly from the video and avoid losing face as a result of staying silent. Regarding the second task, low-level students could only reply 'yes' or 'no', whereas better students could express themselves more fully. Finally, the teacher could make a comment or go on to interact with the students. Therefore, this design was rather flexible and learner-supportive in pedagogical orientation. It was also reflective of teacher autonomy and improvisation.

Learner-centred pedagogy was also embodied in Susan's negotiation with and the provision of emotional support to the students in her class. The class comprised 38 freshman students and there had been much less emphasis placed on listening and speaking in the students' EFL learning history because of the EEHE. These students were not used to the native speakers' accents in the listening material and they complained a lot. However, Susan negotiated with,

comforted, and encouraged them to accomplish the exercise. Finally, Susan achieved good results from her learner-centred pedagogy. Table 8.2 presents a general view of Susan's class:

Table 8. 2 Summary of classroom observation notes in Susan's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Susan	38 Freshman students' class (medium)	Listening & Speaking	Traces of the past	Watching video clips & listening exercises	T->S T->SS S->T T->SC	1. Watch & listen to video-clips 2. Negotiate other ways of playing the listening material 3. Students exercise in a chain

According to the classroom observation, negotiation comprised a critical part of Susan's class activities. She negotiated with her students on the listening and speaking activities, particularly when the listening material was difficult and her students started to lose patience. Susan not only negotiated with her students on the play mode of the listening material, she also encouraged them to persist with their skills practice. Excerpt 8.3 presents a scenario of how Susan negotiated with her students on the listening task:

Excerpt 8.3 Susan (Classroom observation)

1 T: (Many students complain a lot about the speakers' accents in the listening material, which still frustrates them after listening to it twice) OK, let's listen again. <u>That is, press the pause button, OK?</u> (The teacher returned to the platform and played the listening material again.)

2 Ss: <u>I cannot understand even when you pause, in Chinese…</u> (The students still complain a lot.)

3 T: So, what do you come up? <u>Let's play it again, right?</u>

4 Ss: <u>Play again, once again, once again!</u> (Most students would like to listen to it again.)

5 T: OK，right, don't give up that easily! Do not give up easily!

The context of the scenario above is the requirement for Susan's students to complete the listening comprehension task after listening to the material twice according to the textbook instruction. However, Susan's students experienced difficulties with the process and started to complain. To comfort the students, Susan proposed that they listen again and pause at each sentence (Turn 1). It seemed that her students were losing patience and they complained again that they would prefer to listen to it "in Chinese" (Turn 2). Susan responded to the students' proposal and suggested that they listen to the material again (Turn 3). The students calmed down and accepted Susan's proposal to listen to it again (Turn 4). Finally, Susan encouraged her students not to "give up easily" (Turn 5). Listening comprehension needs the listener's concentration, particularly when the material is difficult. Susan's students seemed to be influenced by their emotions when dealing with the listening material. If the teacher was not flexible enough to adapt the learning activity according to the students' needs and mood, the potential for teaching effectiveness is diminished. In other words, learner-centred teaching can be achieved by careful design, as Nancy demonstrated in selecting 12 words, and may also be the result of flexible decision making on the spot. Susan's reasons for engaging in negotiations with her students is presented in Excerpt 8.4:

Excerpt 8.4 Susan (SRI)

1 R: Here, it seemed that you negotiated with your students about whether you allowed them to repeat listening to the material.

2 T: Yes.

(…)

3 R: (…) Why did you accept the students' requests like this? Let it pause continuingly.

4 T: I wanted my students to understand the listening material. This was the first reason. The second reason was that I wanted them to understand what

I said. That is, students should learn to use contextual cues in listening comprehension. For example, if they do not understand this person's accent, they can use what others have said with Standard English in the context to make a guess. That is, it is enough to understand just one person's accent in the listening material of the narration of two persons. Did not they agree with me? I said OK, let's listen to it sentence by sentence.

5 R: Yes, I am very impressed that you would like to communicate the issue occurring on the spot with your students. This is not supposed to be one part of your teaching plan. (…)

6 T: No.

7 R: So, this means you have to make many on-the-spot decisions while teaching.

8 T: Generally speaking, I actually make a lot of decisions on the spot.

9 R: Yes.

10 T: Sometimes, you can never imagine that you will teach like this.

Excerpt 8.4 reveals Susan's flexibility as a teacher when she made student understanding the first priority in her teaching practices. In Susan's words, "Generally speaking, I actually make a lot of decisions on the spot" (Turn 8). This suggests that being flexible has become a habit in her teaching. It was hard to separate the teachers' pedagogical orientations with their other characteristics. If the teacher was learner-centred, s/he would like to make any possible and beneficial change for that aim. Sometimes, this change emerges in the form of compromise, sometimes flexibility, sometimes negotiation, sometimes rich patterns of interaction, and sometimes the use of more resources. At the same time, teacher autonomy affords teachers more possibilities in this change.

8.2.2 Flexibility

This section builds on our new knowledge of more autonomous teachers' learner-centred pedagogical orientation by focusing on the teachers' stories of flexibility. Section 8.2.1 mentioned that Susan demonstrated flexibility in her decision to negotiate with and to encourage students in order to support learner-centred teaching practices to meet the learners' emotional and practical needs. Therefore, improvisation was an overall pattern of more autonomous teachers' flexibility characteristics.

Lisa also did a very good job at providing an improvisational question on student campus life to conduct a free discussion task. The lesson topic was 'Work, Labour, and Play', and the class comprised 24 repeat students. Lisa created a warm atmosphere in the classroom with her gentle and soft voice, and her lovely smile. Table 8.3 presents some basic information about Lisa's class:

Table 8. 3 Summary of classroom observation notes in Lisa's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Lisa	24 Repeat students' class (poor)	CET4	Work, labour, and play	Text review & Language points	T->S T->SS	1.Feedback dictation results 2.Teacher explains text 3. Theme relevant free discussion

Table 8.3 shows Lisa's class was conducted in a rather traditional way due to the students' low proficiency level. Most of Lisa's work in activities one and two focused on vocabulary and basic understanding. However, the topic for this lesson was a little bit irrelevant to the students' real-life experiences because only a few students had acquired work experience. This topic placed a burden on the students' understandings and Lisa appeared to find it hard to improve student engagement. At the end of the class, Lisa suddenly proposed a theme-related question for the students to discuss freely. Excerpt 8.5 shows how Lisa broke the ice using an improvisational question: "Do you think that you have more leisure time than before?"

Excerpt 8.5 Lisa (Classroom observation)

1 T: Do you think that you have more leisure time than before? Yes or no?

2 Ss: (Silence)

3 T: Do you think you have more leisure time than before? Yes or no? Than your high school time, yes or no? Do you understand?

4 Ss: (Silence)

5 T: Free time, more free time. Do you think you have more free time now than that in your high school, yes or no?

6 Ss: (Some students answer yes.)

7 T: Yes, yes. Then, what's the result? With so much free time, what's the result? Eh? Would you please use one word to describe your university life? … OK, then let's start from the front rows. How do you think about your university life? You can just sit down, and give me one word. One word, only one word. How do you think about your university life? One word.

8 S1: Lazy.

9 S2: Free.

(…)

10 T: Busy, OK. How about you?

11 S11: Just so so.

12 T: Just so so. OK, come back to our text book.

Evidently, Lisa's question on the differences between high school life and university life was initially met with no response from her students (Turns 2 & 4). She repeated the question three times to gain the students' attention. She then simplified the requirement and decreased the

pressure on the students by encouraging them to answer the question in only "one word" (Turn 7). When introducing improvisation as a teaching strategy, "one word at a time" is one of the typical improvisation activities suggested by Berk and Trieber (2009, p. 40). Finally, Lisa's flexible and improvisational question to the class was accepted by the students. Although the main part of the learning activity was led by the teacher, the improvisation served as an icebreaker for her to achieve the purpose of learner-centred pedagogy. Nevertheless, the teacher's explanation was still needed by some students with weak English language proficiency and learning motivation. Excerpt 8.6 illustrates how Lisa came up with the improvised question and the necessary explanation:

Excerpt 8.6 Lisa (SRI)

1 R: Here, you asked your students a question. I like this question very much: Do you think that you have more time? More free time than your high school?' What were you thinking when you raised this question?

2 T: In fact, this was an improvised question. I didn't prepare for it beforehand.

3 R: That means you didn't set up the question in advance, but came up with it on the spot?

4 T: Yes, it occurred to me out of nowhere. How did I come up with this question? Maybe, I lectured a little bit more before this part because it was on grammar, and my students just kept listening. I feel that I can only adopt this pattern when explaining grammar or new words, however, it is lacking in interaction. (…) There was still some time left and I found I almost finished my teaching task, so I had time to expand my teaching a little. Therefore, I mentioned the issues associated with the results of technology advancements and labour division. I felt this was an abstract issue and my students didn't quite

understand what the connection between technology advancement and time spent on work and leisure. They didn't quite understand this issue.

5 R: Because they have not got a job right now?

6 T: No, they haven't got a job. That's why I could only ask from their perspective, that is, do you have more time in university than in high school? I raised the simple yes-no question. They could simply answer yes or no. If they answer yes, then I could gradually move to a topic that is related to their life. In doing so, I arouse their interest. Following that, I expanded the latter part, hoping they would be interested in my expanded topic.

Lisa revealed in Extract 8. 7 that she took many factors into consideration when proposing the question. She knew clearly when, why and how to use this improvisational teaching skill.

When: I almost finished my teaching task. (Turn 4)

Why: it is lacking in interaction. (Turn 4)

This was an abstract issue and my students didn't quite understand. (Turn 4)

How: I could only ask from their perspective. (Turn 6)

When Lisa had "almost finished" her teaching task, she knew that she "had time to expand a little" to guide the students towards a discussion of some theme-related questions. She also stated that she felt the class was lacking "in interaction". Then she chose a free discussion question to encourage the students to interact and engage in a discussion. She was also consciously aware of monitoring and controlling her talk time: "Maybe, I lectured a little bit more before this part" (Turn 4). Another factor was the students' real-life situations, namely "they haven't got a job" (Turn 6). Taking all these factors into consideration, Lisa tried to create opportunities to involve her students, to complete the teaching task with quality learner

interactions, and to connect “abstract” textbook contents with her students’ real-life situations. Her improvisational question demonstrates an important aspect of what an autonomous teacher does in their classroom practices. It is evidently a complex skill with multiple elements involved in the decision-making process. The ability to improvise via on-the-spot decision making reflects the flexibility in the practices of autonomous teachers.

8.2.3 Patterns of interaction

Rich patterns of interaction were observed to be among the general characteristics of more autonomous teachers. Impressively, Nancy was good at communicating with her students with rich patterns of interaction to support learner-centred teaching. From the beginning of the lesson, Nancy demonstrated a teacher-to-the-whole-class interactive pattern as she patiently responded to her students’ complaints about her use of English in the last lesson. At the same time, she encouraged students to follow her as much as possible. Then she set or explained the class rules—as it was the second lesson of the semester—to further gain the students’ understanding and support. Nancy then gave a general report of the contents of this lesson to the students. In all, she communicated with her students in this pattern to comfort, to manage, to encourage, and to report.

Generally, Nancy’s class was focused on vocabulary exercises (Table 8.1). Nancy designed her lesson carefully to involve her students by weaving words-reading, pronunciation correction, word explanation, reading example sentences, translation, group dictation and word-filling activities into the exercises. These designs reflected her plan to interact with her students using multiple patterns.

The highlight of Nancy’s class was the flexible and well-designed interaction patterns she engaged in with her students during the vocabulary exercises. Firstly, Nancy invited the students to read the new words, and a girl in the first line raised her hand voluntarily. Nancy

opened a Microsoft Word file and asked the student to read the word on the screen to illustrate the new word—not on the textbook—and its usage. But the girl was too shy to read the word aloud, so Nancy encouraged the girl to read it again. The girl did better the second time.

Further, Nancy corrected the girl's pronunciation on specific words. At the same time, other students tried to correct their pronunciation themselves and read it in a low voice. Next, Nancy asked the girl to read the example sentence followed the word. The girl read the sentence, but with some mistakes in the pronunciation of several words. The girl misread 'lose' as 'loose', 'cause' as 'case', and 'fail' as 'fill'. Nancy appraised the girl for her bravery and corrected her errors in pronunciation. After three turns of interactions, Nancy decided to transfer the chance of practice to another student. Excerpt 8.7 shows how Nancy negotiated with the girl and provided an opportunity to another student:

Excerpt 8.7 Nancy (Classroom observation)

1 T: OK, very good! Thank you for your bravery. And here, 'I would rather lose' pay attention to *lose*, 'in the cause', because, cause, right? 'That I know someday would triumph than to triumph in a cause that I know someday would fail'. OK, now you have a chance to ask for a student to translate the sentence. You can choose any of us. <u>You can choose a classmate to translate it! If you think someone looks good, you can invite him/her, invite the classmate to translate the sentence.</u>

2 S1: Can I say a number?

3 T: The number? I trust you. You couldn't know their names, right? <u>Good, she wants to nominate a classmate using a random number, your student number. Let's have a look. What is the lucky number today?</u>

4 S1: Twenty-three.

5 T: Twenty-three, OK. Who is the lucky 23? Let me have a look, 23. 23, twenty-three, [S2] student.

6 Ss: ...（burst into laughter secretly）

7 T: OK, sit down, please. Thank you! OK, could you translate the sentence? You know, she really trusts you, right? Could you translate the sentence?

Excerpt 8.7 shows that Nancy did not nominate a student to do the exercise by herself, but empowered the girl to randomly nominate another classmate to go on to translate the example sentence (the last sentence in Turn 1). Nancy and the girl negotiated on the method of nominating the next exercise doer and the teacher accepted the girl's proposal to base the nomination on the students' school numbers instead of their names because she did not know all of her classmates' names (Turns 2-5).

Up to this point, the second student took the turn naturally. However, the second student was comparatively weak and a little absent minded. The student confirmed his task twice, paused for a while to figure it out, and made several attempts to complete it. When confirming his task, he used only Chinese to negotiate with the teacher. Nevertheless, the student failed to complete the task because of poor vocabulary even with the hint from the teacher and help from other classmates. Finally, Nancy invited the third student to do the exercise and the student accomplished it to the loud applause of his classmates.

In Excerpt 8.7, Nancy had intensive interactions with the student. Actually, she had five turns of exchange with the student. Rather than use the classical IRF model of interaction, it was much more common to see an interaction process like the one Nancy used with the student in an EFL classroom. In contrast to IRF, Nancy's pattern of interaction may be described as 'IRFRF', or more complex compositions. In this type of class, it is easy to imagine that students may be shy, unconfident, or a little absent-minded at times. This requires more patience and

flexible treatment from the teacher. In other words, it may mean that the teacher has to take more turns to complete the task. If the teacher does not open the interaction space and negotiate with students, the latter may become frustrated, bored, or discouraged. In such circumstances, the students' emotional needs cannot be supported. In Excerpt 8.8, Nancy revealed the other purposes behind her actions:

Excerpt 8.8 Nancy (SRI)

R: I also noted that you designed a small activity when you were explaining the new words. (…) Why did you do this?

T: I wanted my students to choose one of their classmates to answer the question. If I asked my students to nominate one of their classmates to answer the question, firstly, this helped me to avoid the embarrassment of not knowing my students' names. My students are surely better at knowing each other. In so doing, there was a sense of suspense, which was also interesting. That is, some students may want to make fun of others, just like what they did in their daily life. However, that was only one concern for the activity. They are already college students, so that was only a minor concern. The main reason was that my students could find out who was able to answer the question. Meanwhile, my students would nominate a classmate randomly, putting pressure on every student. One never knows who will be nominated next. As a result, every student will voluntarily think about how to answer the question.

In Excerpt 8.8, Nancy revealed her purposes for conducting the exercise in a pattern that empowers a student to pass the exercise on to another student. Though there were ups and downs, the interactive activity ultimately achieved good effect which was demonstrated by student nonverbal behaviours, such as group laughter and applause (Turn 6 in Excerpt 8.7).

Indeed, the good teaching effect came from Nancy's purposeful design and flexible on-the-spot discretion. Generally, four purposes can be elicited from Nancy's words in Excerpt 8.8:

1. Avoiding the teacher's embarrassment of not knowing students' name;
2. Adding an entertaining factor to the exercise doer during the process;
3. Empowering student to scaffold the peer learning;
4. Adding stressful and stimulating elements to the whole class in the process.

In other words, Nancy made use of the strategy to achieve a range of purposes while doing the vocabulary exercise. In the above list of her purposes, most were relevant to the emotional needs of both the teacher and the students. Because this was a freshman class, Nancy could not match the students' name with their faces. Some teachers regularly require students use a name card or a sticker. However, Nancy's strategy not only helped her to avoid the embarrassment of not knowing the students' names, but also related the students to the textbook exercise. For the students, this strategy added an element of entertainment to the learning process. At the same time, it also stimulated other students even though they may not have become directly involved in the exercise. Finally, it turned out that Nancy successfully created an entertaining as well as stimulating atmosphere among students in her use of this strategy.

The same strategy of empowering students was also used by Susan during her observed class, but in a more drawn out and robust way. Susan was teaching a CE listening and speaking class to 38 freshman students on the topic, 'Traces of the Past' (Table 8.2). Because it was the second week of the semester, the students were still adapting themselves to campus life. The students complained to Susan because they were not used to English being used for instruction by the teacher during the entire lesson. However, Susan persisted with using the target language to deliver the lecture. As a compromise, she later explained some of her instructions in Chinese.

In terms of the context of Susan's lesson, there were three barriers to classroom interactions. The biggest barrier was provided by the listening materials. They were two authentic materials produced by native speakers of English and her students complained a lot about the speed of the conversations and the accent of the speakers. Consequently, Susan improvised to facilitate student understanding and to encourage the students to overcome the challenges by creating as many opportunities as possible for the students to express themselves and to negotiate on outcomes. For example, she played the first listening text an extra time and showed the subtitles of the second video clip. Susan also used pauses during the final listening to relieve the students' anxiety. She negotiated with her students before most of these practices. Given CE teachers do not have the right to choose the textbook, Susan made use of her autonomy to the upmost.

The second barrier was the class time, which was also beyond the control of teachers. The lesson was conducted in the afternoon when the students were tired and sleepy after four classes throughout the morning. As revealed by Susan in Extract 8. 9: "There are really a lot of students who seem sleepy" (Turn 1). To promote student engagement, Susan organised the activity in such a way as to "wake" them up.

The third barrier was the classroom's physical settings, with the rows of desks and chairs fixed to the floor (4.4). This did not allow the teacher to organise for the students to engage in face to face communication, pair work, or group discussion. Susan's design, however, to use a student-chain during the activity resolved the problem creatively.

The student-chain design also demonstrated that Susan was flexible in using her pedagogical skills to adjust the atmosphere of the class, to create chances for participation, and to motivate her students. She managed to design an exercise in a similar way to that introduced in Nancy's class, namely a student chain-like pattern. In this pattern of interaction, Susan's students had a certain degree of freedom to decide on the flow of the exercise. Excerpt 8.9 shows how Susan

established the rules of the chain-like interactive activity and how she negotiated with her students on the 'game punishment' to help them to concentrate their minds on the textbook exercise.

Excerpt 8.9 Susan (Classroom observation)

1	T:	OK, is that the difficult time? No, let's look at your answers, let's move on. There are really a lot of students who seem sleepy. It is true that many students are sleepy, so we'll find someone to 'punish'. How do we search? How do we search? Listen to my rules. For example, we have [S1]. We have [S1] stand up and read the answers for us. [S1] reads just: When he was born in …， and he stops at a punctuation mark. He just stops here at this punctuation, and then says [S2]. And then [S2] will continue to read. Then [S2] will continue to read and stop at another punctuation. Of course, [S2] can finish this (paragraph exercise) by herself/himself; [S2] can finish this herself/himself, right. The one who fails to find out the word that follows will be punished. The punishment is a passage dictation.
2	Ss：	Ah, listen and take down a piece of something? A passage dictation again! (Many students begin to complain.)
3	T:	Dictate a small paragraph, just a little one, then. One hundred words?
4	Ss	One hundred words! (Students exclaim collectively.)
5	T:	So, if you don't want to have a dictation, pay attention. That's right! If you don't want to be punished, please be careful. With whom should we start? Monitor?
6	Ss	Monitor! (Students answer together.)
7	T:	OK，Monitor，that's right! Read from the very beginning, and stop at any punctuation.
8	S1	Stop at any punctuation?
9	T	Right！

Excerpt 8.9 demonstrates a creative interactive activity design by Susan. It was a paragraph word-fill exercise in a listening comprehension task and although Susan metaphorically

described it as a “punishment” for sleepy students (Turn 1), she set the rules of this exercise into an interactive game. In the game, the players were empowered to nominate the next game player in the paragraph reading. In traditional IRF interactions, students have only one word/phrase contributions to do the exercise. However, Susan opened up the exercise to allow her students to contribute one sentence or more; it was under their control. Next, she negotiated the game punishment with the students from “a passage dictation” to a “one hundred words” dictation (Turns 2-4). She also negotiated with them collectively on the first player, “the monitor” (Turns 5-6). Therefore, the chain can be short or long, which was under the control of the game players, but everyone had to concentrate to listen to the game players because they were all potentially the next game player. Finally, it was a game that effectively aroused the students’ attention and created a chance for them to practice their English language skills.

When returning to the negotiation on ‘game punishment’ before starting the game, it was evident that the ‘punishment’ was not Susan’s ultimate goal. On the surface, the students bargained down the punishment from “a passage dictation” to “a small paragraph”, and finally to “a hundred words” dictation. Susan’s purposes are revealed more explicitly in Excerpt 8.10:

Excerpt 8.10 Susan (SRI)

1 R: What were you thinking when you asked the students to do the exercise like this?

2 T: In fact, I have done it like this since last term, last year even, because it helps them to concentrate on what is going on and it also livens up the class atmosphere. Because, this turns out to be a little, a little stressful to students at that stage of listening...

3 R: It is painstaking to practice listening, anyway.

4 T: Yeah, I think it is necessary to activate the students a little bit. In fact, this approach is very effective for my students. In addition, I don't want my students to stand up, say 'sorry' and sit down because they tend to so before, which is not what I expect. Therefore, my students are required to nominate a helper (another classmate) when they are not able to answer a question.

5 R: I think it is interesting. I felt this was funny.

6 T: Yes, now it is a chain.

Excerpt 8.10 shows that Susan has clear awareness of why, when, and how to use the pedagogical skills required in practice to purpose learner-centred teaching. As she stated:

When: "this listening turned to be a little, a little stressful". (Turn 2)

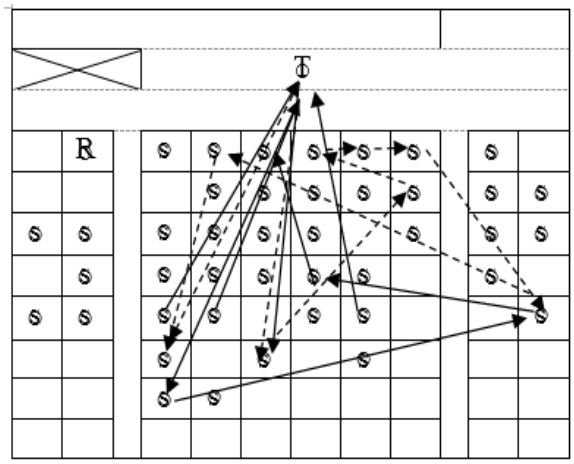
Why: "it is necessary to activate the students". (Turn 4)

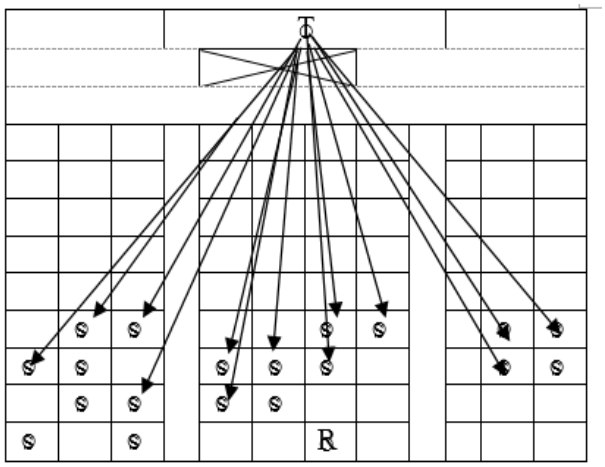
"it helps them to concentrate on what is going on and it also livens up the class atmosphere". (Turn 2)

How: "it is a chain". (Turn 6)

This 'chain-like' pattern of interaction supported learner freedom and autonomy to a certain degree in allowing them to decide the next game player and the flow of the game. This type of half-open-ended pattern of interaction added variety to the classroom interactions and provided a good illustration of teacher autonomy and creativity. It was found that this kind of conversational interaction generated by learners, with "student inviting participation by other students", increases the quantity and quality of students' talking when compared with language use in traditional teacher-dominated classrooms (Long, Adams, McLean, & Castanos, 1976, p. 145) . In sum, Susan demonstrated a degree of autonomy in solving practical teaching problems in a real institutional context.

When Susan's and Sam's turn allocations are compared in the seating charts shown in Figures 8.1 and 8.2 below, a clear contrast is evident between the rich patterns of interaction conducted by a more autonomous teacher and the single pattern of interaction conducted by a less autonomous teacher. Figure 8.1 presents Susan's classroom interaction patterns and Figure 8.2 presents Sam's classroom interaction patterns.





Ⓢ=student Ⓣ=teacher Ⓡ=researcher (observer)

Figure 8.1 Susan's classroom interactions (Left)

Figure 8.2 Sam's classroom interactions (Right)

It is evident when comparing the types of interaction patterns that Susan's interactions with the students are much richer and more complex than Sam's interactions with the students. Figure 8.1 shows three interaction patterns in Susan's class: (1) teacher-student, (2) student-teacher, and (3) teacher-student–chain-teacher. The first two patterns are easy to understand. Pattern (1) is a typical IRF sequence. Pattern (2) involves students voluntarily engaging in class activities or proposing a question. In the third pattern, the teacher affords the students a certain degree of power to nominate another classmate to continue the exercise (Excerpt 8.9). If I had to describe this pattern of interaction using an IRF formula, it would be 'IRRRxF', with 'x' in the formula signifying an unfixed number of student replies.

Susan explained in Excerpt 8.10 that this activity empowered the students to form a chain in the interaction. In this pattern, the attention of the students was always on the flow of the activity because of the possibility of being nominated, even though they were not called by the teacher or other classmates. Consequently, this 'chain' energised student involvement and engagement. Thus, it is evident that an autonomous teacher can empower and facilitate student language learning through rich patterns of interactions. The comparison also shows that the more autonomous a teacher is, the better he or she can manage the time, situation, and context when choosing to use an appropriate pedagogical skill.

In contrast, Sam's lesson included only one pattern: a typical IRF sequence. In this pattern, Sam was always the director and initiator of interactions, and his students could only passively contribute one word or phrase. On the surface, Sam catered to a wider range of student abilities and more textbook contents. However, he was at the centre of all interactions and exercises and thus dominated the process. This is typical teacher-centred teaching. In this pattern, it is easy for students to feel bored, powerless and excluded.

Moreover, there is one other feature worth attention: the distance between the students and the front of the classroom (usually the teacher's domain). Figure 8.1 shows that in Susan's classroom the students sit close to the front of the classroom, whereas Figure 8.2 shows that in Sam's classroom the students sit away from the front of the classroom. This contrast may reflect the enthusiasm of the students for the lesson. Furthermore, it may reflect the teacher's classroom management skills. In response to the reluctance of some students to be involve in the classroom activities, Susan purposefully 'rearranged' the seats in the classroom by setting a rule to start all exercises or activities from the last row of the class. Susan explained this management skill in the following way:

Excerpt 8.11 Susan (SRI)

R: I remember that you said to your students that you would like to ask them to answer questions by starting with the students in the last line. Why do you have this kind of requirement? What's your purpose in doing so?

T: My belief is that many students who sit at the back of the classroom do so due to laziness. I tried my best, because some students in the first row do not really need close monitoring. But if you don't watch the students at the back, then they are not likely to learn. Therefore, I usually require them to sit like this.

Excerpt 8.11 reveals that Susan's beliefs, classroom management skills, and knowledge of her students combined to shape a prosperous learning environment. This meant she was good at creating a positive classroom atmosphere for the students through her management skills, whereas there was little sign of an explicit classroom management strategy being implemented in Sam's class.

8.2.4 Resources utilisation

There were similarities and differences in the utilisation of resources by the teachers. Teachers may choose different resources to explain or exhibit the same learning content. They may also use the same presentation tool for different purposes. For example, Nancy and Lisa both used a Microsoft Word file during their word explanation sessions, but their purposes in doing so, varied.

Both Lisa and Nancy used a Microsoft Word file as an important resource to exhibit the words or sentences they wanted to explain. Lisa's class included 24 repeat students (Table 8.3) and she therefore paid much attention to new and difficult words in the text passage. Particularly, she spent time helping the students to recall and correct the words she dictated during the

previous lesson. The main goal in Lisa's explanation was to present the spelling of the words using the Microsoft Word file. This was because the students' English proficiency and autonomy were not so advanced as to support their free participation in various activities. However, in Nancy's freshman exercise class (Table 8.1), she not only presented new words in the Microsoft Word file, she also provided example sentences. In addition, Nancy organised for the student reading and translation drills to match the presentation on the Microsoft Word file. Lisa and Nancy explained the reasons for the selection of the exhibition tool in Excerpts 8.12 and 8.13, respectively:

Excerpt 8.12 Lisa (SRI)

R: You explained a long and difficult sentence. The sentence had a complex structure, so it was selected and saved in this Word file. (…) I wonder what your idea was when you were doing this.

T: Because the words in the PowerPoint slides were very small, it was two paragraphs when displayed on the screen, but I wanted to explain only one important sentence. There was not enough space for the long sentence. Even though I wrote the sentence on the blackboard, I felt it was difficult for students to see it clearly. In this case, I often use a Microsoft Word file instead of a PowerPoint file. I try to avoid writing on the blackboard because my handwriting is not so good. Essentially, for things which you don't have to repeatedly write and erase such as the text structure, I will write them on the blackboard. However, for things that are for instant demonstration, I will simply type them in a Microsoft Word file.

Excerpt 8.13 Nancy (SRI)

R: Why did you use this form, use a Microsoft Word file rather than a PowerPoint file?

T: Conversely, I feel the Microsoft Word system is more convenient to operate than PowerPoint, so I feel that I don't have to use PowerPoint. In fact, I have got used to a Word file when I explain vocabulary. It is convenient for me because I don't have to transfer it, which is a repeated labour for me. When I explain the text passage, I still use PowerPoint. In short, I only use a Word file when I explain vocabulary to my students.

Lisa and Nancy explained their different reasons for using Microsoft Word as an alternative to Microsoft PowerPoint at times. Excerpt 8.12 reveals that Lisa exhibited some words and sentences on Microsoft Word to achieve a bigger and clearer exhibition 'effect', whereas Excerpt 8.13 shows that Nancy did it for reasons of operational convenience because the information on PowerPoint was pre-set or fixed most of the time. The pursuit of operational convenience also brought efficiency to Nancy's class. The different reasons provided by Lisa and Nancy for the same choice of Microsoft Word file illustrates the teachers' complex considerations in making use of resources. They considered whether to use exhibition technology or not at all. Furthermore, they also thought about which resource among all alternatives was the most suitable.

According to observation, some teachers must consider more than exhibition resources. For example, Sarah's lesson on English writing skills was delivered to 28 students with weak English proficiency. Table 8.4 lists some basic information about Sarah's class:

Table 8. 4 Summary of classroom observation notes in Sarah's class

Teacher	Students & proficiency	Class type	Text theme	Contents	Interaction patterns	Main activities
Sarah	28 sophomore Arts students (poor)	Writing	How to write a body paragraph	Review last class & writing skills	T->S T->SS	1. Student quiz 2. Teacher explains writing skills 3. Student group discussion

Table 8.4 shows that Sarah's class was not a regular CE class, but a writing class for 28 low proficiency students. During interview, she revealed that there was not a textbook for the class available at the beginning of the semester. She had to organise all resources by herself, including the textbook, PowerPoint slides, a recommended reading list, and exhibition resources. Sarah used both PowerPoint slides and the blackboard. In addition, she designed a quiz sheet at the beginning of the class to check student understanding on the contents of the previous lesson. She also allowed adequate time for students to drill into and discuss the points after her explanation. Managing all the resources well with the class challenged Sarah's autonomy because she was only a novice teacher with limited professional training. She also revealed in interview that she communicated her confusion to other experienced teachers in order to learn from them, but that she also had to engage in discretionary decision making all by herself in her specific class. However, the organisation of her classroom activities shows her awareness of how to conduct autonomy-supportive teaching, though her awareness was insufficient and immature in many details.

The participants' attitudes toward the adoption of resources varied greatly. Some stuck to using the blackboard; some used PowerPoint only; and some employed two or three of the techniques mentioned above. The more autonomous teachers in this group were generally good at choosing the most appropriate technique to exhibit the content they wanted to show. The standard for this appropriateness should also be seen from the learners' perspective. In other words, their choice of exhibition technique depended on the contents as well as the learners. Lisa and Nancy skilfully adopted at least two exhibition techniques in their classes, and Sarah also introduced a self-designed quiz as a resource to facilitate student drilling. That is, more autonomous teachers in this study did not depend on the resources they were used to, but made the resources serve learner-centred teaching goals in their pursuit of the best teaching effect.

8.3 Summary

Chapter 8 first summarised the characteristics of the more autonomous teachers in this study in terms of their attitudes toward autonomy in their work. Nancy, Lisa, Sarah, and Susan were identified as more autonomous teachers by their positive attitudes toward the four key concepts: professional identity, learner autonomy, professional development, and teacher autonomy as revealed in the semi-structured interviews reported in Chapter 5. Specifically, most of them explicitly identified themselves as CE teachers. They were also had confidence in their students' autonomy and their own autonomy. In addition, they generally had a clear plan for their professional development.

The main body of Chapter 8 then focused on what more autonomous teachers do in the classroom. It was found that they tended to be learner-centred in pedagogical orientation; flexible and improvisational; rich, creative and autonomy-supportive in patterns of interaction; and purposeful and skilful in adopting exhibition technology. Firstly, Nancy's and Susan's classroom stories were narrated to illustrate their pedagogical orientation towards learner-centeredness. Lisa's classroom practice was then discussed as a good example of improvisational teaching and her ability to be flexible in her teaching was highlighted. Furthermore, both Nancy and Susan showed how more autonomous teachers in this study interacted with their students in rich and creative patterns. This feature was identified as a strong point of teachers in this group. Following this, Lisa's and Nancy's considerations on the choice of exhibition techniques were compared, and Sarah's resource utilisation story was discussed in relation to the challenge it posed for her autonomy.

Finally, this study found that the most outstanding features of more autonomous teachers were their learner-centred teaching approaches and their rich learner-supportive interactions in practice. These outcomes were achieved primarily through the careful design of their class activities, but their awareness of learner-centeredness and flexibility in dealing with

contingencies also demonstrated their capabilities for autonomy. This capability was also embodied in their purposeful and skilful choices on the most suitable resources to use with the students.

Chapter 9

Discussion

Chapter 9 discusses the findings reported in Chapters 4 to 8 and provides answers to the research questions in this study. Firstly, the teachers' attitudes toward autonomy across the three groups are compared and discussed (9.1) to answer RQ 1. Next, the participants' teaching practices are compared and discussed (9.2) to answer RQ 2. The teachers' attitudes toward autonomy and their classroom practices are then compared (9.3) to answer RQ 3. Finally, further discussion is provided in relation to the way teachers adapt their practices to the teaching context and the constraints of their autonomy (9.4). When comparing and discussing these four sections, the relevant literature reviewed in Chapter 2 is revisited.

9.1 RQ 1: Teachers' attitudes to autonomy

RQ 1: What are Chinese CE teachers' attitudes toward learner autonomy and teacher autonomy in their work? The answer of this question helps to understand learner autonomy and teacher autonomy from the teachers' perspectives. This answer also lays a foundation for a primary categorisation of participants' autonomy according to their attitudes because it covers all three dimensions of teacher autonomy reviewed in Chapter 2 (2.1). Finally, the answer to this question is a critical step in triangulating teachers' attitudes with their practices.

To answer RQ 1, data in Chapter 5 shows that CE teachers' attitudes toward autonomy are multi-levelled, and that some are autonomous according to the criteria set in this study. The more positive the attitude toward learner and teacher autonomy in their work, the higher the level of autonomy is supposed to be. Based on the participants' attitudes toward the four critical concepts related to their autonomy: professional identity, learner autonomy, professional

development, and teacher autonomy, 14 participants were designated into three autonomous groups representing three levels of autonomy. The three groups are Less Autonomous Teachers, Moderately Autonomous Teachers, and More Autonomous Teachers (5.5). Teachers attitudes toward autonomy are more complex in reality than the description of genuinely successful teachers in Little (1995) and Tort-Moloney (1997). That is, when judged from the teachers' attitudes toward autonomy, the practical situation is far from ideal. Some teachers may be aware of critical factors in autonomy, but others may not be aware. Moreover, many teachers lack confidence in their students' autonomy and/or their own autonomy.

The less autonomous teachers' attitudes toward autonomy differed from both the moderately autonomous teachers' attitudes and the more autonomous teachers' attitudes in their overall negativity towards all autonomy-relevant concepts. Less autonomous teachers showed negative or unclear attitudes toward all concepts and subsequently depended on external rules more, and demonstrated less personal understanding or emotional investment in their attitudes. Neither did they believe that they could be autonomous teachers. In contrast, moderately autonomous teachers had a certain degree of personal understanding of the key concepts, and they tended to believe that they were autonomous. More autonomous teacher showed generally positive attitudes toward all autonomy-relevant concepts.

The biggest difference between the attitudes of moderately autonomous teachers and more autonomous teachers was related to professional development. To be specific, moderately autonomous teachers' attitudes toward their professional development was not as positive as teachers in more autonomous group. By contrast, teachers in the more autonomous group generally had their own plan to develop their professionalism, excepting Lisa. Their personal plans on professional development included: to be a visiting scholar, to pursue a further education program, or to publish more papers. This difference implies the critical role the teacher's willingness for teacher professional development plays in fostering teacher autonomy.

According to the data in this study, many factors influence teachers' attitudes toward their own and their students' autonomy including learner language proficiency, learner cooperation to pedagogy (4.3.2), teacher professional identity from an emotional perspective (5.1.2), teacher bias (5.2.1), teacher practical pedagogical skills, and teacher research ability (5.4.2). If learners are poor in proficiency, low in motivation, and not cooperative in class, it was difficult to open up space for learner autonomy development. However, the teacher often took advantage of their autonomy as demonstrated by Grace in her class observed (7.2.1). Moreover, the weak research ability of teachers made them lack confidence in their own autonomy (5.4.2). This finding confirms the importance of academic research not only in professional identity construction as suggested by Xu (2014), but also in terms of the teacher's confidence in his or her own autonomy.

As for teacher attitudes toward professional identity, this study found that three of 14 participants did not identify themselves cognitively as CE teachers, but their love of the job empowered them to perform their duties (5.1). This finding supported the complex construct of professional identity advanced by Day and Kington (2008), particularly in cognitive identity and emotional identity. According to the authors, "there is an unavoidable interrelationship between cognitive and emotional identities" (Day & Kington, 2008, p. 8). However, they did not identify the details of this 'interrelationship'.

The finding in this study indicates that there is a discrepancy between cognitive and emotional identities. This discrepancy emphasises the significance of emotion in language teacher identity construction, which is consistent with an earlier finding by Song (2016). However, Song (2016) focused on South Korean English teachers' emotional 'vulnerability', while this study found evidence of Chinese English teachers' emotional strength.

The cognitive and emotional identities are the multiple dimensions of teacher identity, or "sub-identities" as described by Mishler (1999, p. 8). Except for cognitive and emotional identities, the participants' demographic data shows that most were young mothers. In other words, they played the dual role of mother and CE teacher in life. The controversy between these 'sub-identities' has implications for further research in line with Xu's (2014) study of teachers' research practices and their professional identity construction.

In terms of teacher attitudes toward professional development, this study identified the possibility for teachers to develop their autonomy by changing their attitudes toward professional development. This change in attitude ideally starts with the teachers themselves, as proposed by Little (1995) and Smith (2000). Similarly, McGrath (2000) also proposed self-directed professional development as a critical dimension in teacher autonomy. Particularly, reflecting and research into teachers' own actions is proposed by researchers (Bustingorry, 2008; Dikilitas & Griffiths, 2017). However, this study found that most participants lacked awareness of, or a clear goal for, their professional development, and that there were many personal obstacles to overcome to develop their professionalism. This was identified as a serious problem by Bailey et al. (2001) because they took self as a critical source in pursuing professional development. This insufficiency also suggests the need for institutional plan at University and School levels to help CE teachers undertake and achieve professional development.

Change in teachers' attitudes toward autonomy can also be initiated by institutional professional development programs as in Dymoke and Harrison (2006) and Bentham et al. (2015). Nevertheless, professional development programs in this case university were not satisfactory and individualised enough for the participants in this study. This may be due to the fact that the case university has only recently set up a Professional Development Office (5.3.3). Moreover, as Smith (2003) observed, it also reflects the idea that teacher professional

development or education for teacher autonomy is a dimension that does not receive the attention it deserves.

This study also found that several participants mentioned a desire to be a 'visiting scholar' as their plan to develop their professionalism (5.3.1). Such a desire was seldom mentioned in books on language teacher professional development strategies such as Richards and Farrell (2005). The teachers also mentioned that the ideal destination was a top university in an English-speaking country. The desire for a preferred context for professional development aligns with Villegas-Reimers (2003). However, this strategy differed from developing the profession via action research, which emerged as one of the most popular approaches proposed by scholars (Banegas et al., 2013; Burns, 1999, 2010; Bustingorry, 2008; Castro Garcés & Martínez Granada, 2016). It may be the case that studying in a foreign context was more likely to arouse reflection on one's own action, and then to lead to inspiration on action research. Therefore, this finding reminds us of the importance of context in our understanding of language teacher professional development.

9.2 RQ 2: Teachers' classroom practices

RQ2 investigates CE teachers' teaching practices. The answer to this question provides first-hand evidence to support the notion that teacher autonomy works in EFL classrooms. Comparisons of the teaching practices of the three groups of teachers also revealed differences in their levels of autonomy, and thus helps us to understand teachers' practices according to their autonomy. Moreover, the findings emerged from the analysis of the more autonomous teachers' practices help to justify the need for promising pedagogy that supports learner autonomy.

9.2.1 Less autonomous teachers VS moderately and more autonomous teachers

The study shows that every feature of a teacher's classroom practices informs our understanding of the differences between the less autonomous teachers and the two other groups (i.e., the 'moderately' and the 'more' autonomous teacher groups). The practices of less autonomous teachers were more teacher-centred and exam-oriented (6.2.1), lacking in flexibility or improvisation (6.2.2), reliant on a single pattern of interaction (6.2.3), and limited in their uses of resources (6.2.4). It was hard to find any evidence of autonomous practice in less autonomous teachers' classrooms. Primarily, they obeyed the school rules, were sometimes too rigid, or just employed a single IRF pattern of interaction. Moreover, because their teaching tended to give too much weight to examination demands or to the contents of the textbook, other visible contexts like the physical setting, and invisible contexts like the students' emotional needs, were not paid much attention. In all, they minimised their workload to meet basic expectations only. In contrast, the teaching practices of both moderately and more autonomous teachers showed a stronger learner-centred pedagogy (7.2.1 and 8.2.1). They also showed rich styles of flexibility in improvisational teaching, more patterns of interactions, and more resources utilisation than their less autonomous teacher counterparts.

9.2.2 Moderately autonomous teachers VS more autonomous teachers

The classroom practices of more autonomous teachers differed from moderately autonomous teachers in their degree of learner-centeredness. More autonomous teachers made every detailed pedagogical decision in a learner-centred manner (8.2.1), with little sign of their own preferences. This contrasted with the moderately autonomous teachers' practices which often reflected the teachers' personal styles or preferences (7.2). Hence, more autonomous teachers taught for their learners wholeheartedly, but moderately autonomous teachers could not rid themselves of their personal preferences. This contrast is illustrated clearly in the interaction patterns and the resource utilisation practices between the two groups of teachers. For example,

classroom observation revealed that moderately autonomous teachers showed their personal styles explicitly in their patterns of interaction (7.2.3) and resource utilisation (7.2.4), whereas the more autonomous group always set their personal preference aside in favour of a learner-centred approach.

More autonomous teachers also initiated sophisticated patterns of interaction which were creatively designed to motivate students and to adapt to the fixed classroom (8.2.3). In comparison, the ability to improvise in response to individual students' needs were the highlight in the practices of moderately autonomous teachers (7.2.2). More autonomous teachers designed creative patterns of interactions to make their learner-centred pedagogical orientation cover all aspects of their classroom teaching, to maximise learners' main-role status in an EFL classroom, and to adapt to the fixed classroom. Many moderately autonomous teachers were also flexible in their interaction patterns and improvisational teaching to create learning opportunities for students. However, it was evident that more autonomous teachers champion a higher degree of autonomy-supportiveness in the creative design of their interactive activity.

9.2.3 The importance of learner-centred teaching

According to the description from Little (1995) and Tort-Moloney (1997), more autonomous teachers represent more successful language teachers. Therefore, effective and successful teaching practices are expected from more autonomous teachers. When analysing more autonomous teachers' practices, I found it was difficult to draw a clear line between their learner-centred pedagogical orientation and the other three practice features. In other words, learner-centred pedagogical orientation was at the core of their improvisations, rich patterns of learner-supportive interaction, and learner-friendly resources utilisation.

To answer RQ 2 in terms of more autonomous teachers' classroom practices, the findings of the study suggest that the highlight of the more autonomous teachers' practices is the detailed consideration given to learner-centred practices. That is, teacher autonomy in pedagogy is not a teacher-centred way of teaching, but rather a self-controlled, reflective, self-monitoring (in terms of teacher talk time) and learner-centred way of teaching. Whatever decision the teacher makes, the decision should be learner-centred rather than merely content-centred, exam-oriented, or teacher-centred. Even in terms of their choices on the integration of resource, more autonomous teachers adopted multiple techniques to cater to the students' multiple needs, rather than to satisfy their own preference as moderately autonomous teachers did, or for the sake of external reasons as less autonomous teachers did. All autonomous teachers resemble each other in their learner-centred teaching, while the teachers in the other groups have their own problems. Thus, learner-centred pedagogical orientation is a key standard for teacher autonomy. This finding generally echoes Little (1995) in that learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy.

This study also found that the learner-centred pedagogical orientation allows adequate space for learner autonomy. This is a significant point missing in Nunan (1988), who regarded EFL education only as a series of procedures from planning, through complementation, to assessment, rather than an autonomy-supportive pedagogy. Benson (2003) outlines five principles for autonomy-supportive teaching (2.3.1), and the learner-centred teaching practices demonstrated by the more autonomous teachers in this study aligned with most of these principles. The more autonomous teachers were actively involved in their students' learning and therefore provided more chances for negotiation such as in Nancy's (8.2.1) and Susan's classes (8.2.3). They or their patterns of interaction provided options, choices, opportunities, and resources to the students. They also supported students academically and emotionally. The

more autonomous teachers did not however appear to give the students the opportunity for reflection, which is not in line with Benson's (2003) last principle.

As for autonomy-supportive pedagogy, this is increasingly proposed in language classrooms (Feryok, 2013; Jiménez Raya, 2009, 2011, 2013; Reinders, 2010; Vásquez, 2015; Vieira, 1999, 2009) and the practices observed in the more autonomous teachers' classrooms were worthy of more attention. Moreover, their practices should be fostered and enhanced to make autonomy-supportive pedagogy feasible in more language classrooms, as Jiménez Raya (2011) did in a multimedia DVD package for a teacher development program.

To be specific, more autonomous teachers tended to be flexible and improvisational at critical times in response to student performance to sustain their learner-centred approach. However, the improvisational questioning skill used by Lisa is regarded as 'automatic and routine' by Tsui (2003, p. 31). Tsui (2003) notes that expert teachers adopt such routines in their teaching to facilitate student learning and to reduce the teacher's decision-making load. The author also claims that "they (the routines) are by no means thoughtless" (Tsui, 2003, p. 37). A supporting evidence, my findings suggest that these 'routines' demonstrate the teacher's belief in the best way to learn the language, namely via learner-centred pedagogy. In other words, the underlying conception of the 'routines' reflects an awareness of a teacher to make learner-centred decisions autonomously.

In addition, the 'routines' may be interpreted as one of the good illustrations of teacher autonomy. van Lier (1984) studied turn-taking in teacher-learner interaction patterns during EFL classroom instructions and pointed to some of the pitfalls of traditional discourse analysis. One of the most typical pitfalls is to regards IRF as the basic unit of interaction. In van Lier's (1984) words, "when we carve up interaction in any way, we will always find irregular pieces and leftovers" (p. 165). That is to say, the IRF pattern has its limitations in explaining various

EFL classroom interactions. Jenks and Seedhouse (2015) present similar findings and many complicated patterns of interaction are identified and discussed in their works. However, teacher autonomy may account for these various patterns. For example, Susan set the rules during her lesson to establish a student 'chain' pattern activity. The 'chain' started with collective negotiation on the first game player. This pattern was by no means an IRF sequence. Susan revealed in her SRI that this pedagogical skill was inherited from a successful lesson experience implemented last year. It helped the students to concentrate on the class activity and on the language output of other classmates. At the same time, it also assisted the teacher to activate student engagement. The teacher's purposes were to effectively promote classroom interactions and to avoid the embarrassment of nominating a student without a well-prepared answer. This type of half-open-ended interaction added variety and passion to the classroom interactions. Therefore, this finding echoes van Lier's (1984) and Jenks and Seedhouse's (2015) argument.

9.3 RQ 3: Alignment between teachers' attitudes and their practices

Generally, the answer is 'YES' to the RQ 3: Do their teaching practices align with their attitudes toward autonomy? The alignment between teachers' attitudes and their practices has implications for future research in teacher autonomy. This study found that the attitudes of most participants matched their classroom practices well, and that there is a proportional relationship between teachers' attitudes toward autonomy and their practices in the classroom. Comparisons between participants' attitudes to autonomy and their practices revealed that teachers' attitudes to autonomy predicted their practices most of the time. That is to say, to a large extent, the division into 'less', 'moderately' and 'more' autonomous teachers on the basis of attitudes was confirmed or otherwise triangulated by their actual classroom practices.

To be specific, the attitudes of more autonomous teachers or moderately autonomous teachers tended to be positive (5.5) and so their teaching practices were more autonomy-supportive, improvisational and learner-centred (7.2 and 8.2). By contrast, less autonomous teachers tended to be negative or unclear in their attitudes toward autonomy (5.5), and their teaching practices were usually more teacher-centred and less learner-supportive in interactions (6.2).

However, there were exceptions in this alignment of teachers' attitudes and practices. For instance, Mark was identified as a moderately autonomous teacher because he was confident in his own autonomy and his students' autonomy (5.5). However, observation of Mark's teaching practices found little evidence of autonomy-support interaction or activity (7.2.4). In other words, Mark's positive attitudes toward autonomy were not supported by his practices. This discrepancy between Mark's attitudes toward autonomy and his classroom practices indicates that teacher autonomy should be judged on teachers' practices, though teachers' attitudes can serve as an influential indicator of teacher autonomy. This discrepancy in Mark's case may also be rooted in his extremely negative attitude toward his professional identity. Mark saw no value in his professional identity and his classroom practices therefore devalued his positive attitudes toward autonomy. Mark's case illustrates the claim of Huang and Benson (2013) that teacher "identity formation provides a direction for the development of autonomy" (p. 21). In Mark's case, no autonomous practices were observed during his lesson because he did not identify himself as a CE teacher at all. In other words, no clear professional identity means no direction for the development of autonomy.

What is more, although seven teachers were categorised into the moderately autonomous group, this did not mean they could be simply regarded as 'less effective teachers'. Even less autonomous teachers cannot be simply judged as less effective teachers because they 'played it safe' according to school rules. On the contrary, most moderately autonomous teachers were very good teachers if judged by their classroom practices and the external rules. If teacher

autonomy is to be best judged by teachers' practices, particularly their pedagogical orientation, classroom observation evidence showed that most moderately autonomous teachers practiced learner-centred pedagogy. To be specific, if the teacher teaches in a learner-centred way then s/he can be judged as an autonomous teacher. Their autonomous practices should be taken as the only standard to categorise them into groups of different autonomy levels. However, there were deficiencies in the moderately autonomous teachers' practices, even though they taught in a more learner-centred way than less autonomous teachers. For example, the teaching practices of Grace and Helen reflected a lack of confidence and the proper skills to develop learner autonomy (7.2.1). Grace compromised to the students' poor English proficiency level again and again, while Helen was blunt in her criticism of the students' poor presentation performances in order to develop learner autonomy.

The findings in this study show that moderately autonomous teachers and more autonomous teachers' attitudes differed in relation to professional development particularly, but that their classroom practices were nonetheless aligned is worthy of further discussion. This finding suggests the importance of professional development to the development of teacher autonomy. Without overall positive attitudes to autonomy, moderately autonomous teachers can also teach in a learner-centred pedagogy, but this practice may be difficult to sustain over the long term. The teacher's personal preferences may influence their pedagogical approach. With a positive and active attitude toward professional development, moderately autonomous teachers can develop into genuinely successful teachers.

The findings in this study align with the assertion from Barnard and Li (2016) that learner autonomy is desirable, but its feasibility remains a problem to be dealt with. EFL teachers should take on the responsibility to improve their skills and strategies to increase student engagement and to develop learner autonomy. At the same time, "cultural and contextual constraints" to develop leaner autonomy observed in Zhang (2016), particularly, the contextual

constraints were elaborated in the classroom teaching practices of the participants in this study. However, their practical pedagogical skills seemed to be more useful and influential in developing learner autonomy. In sum, the evidence related to moderately autonomous teachers in this study showed that teacher attitude towards learner autonomy and personal teacher autonomy were decisive factors in the implementation of autonomy-supportive pedagogy.

9.4 RQ 4: Teacher autonomy in the Chinese CE contexts

RQ 4 explores what teacher autonomy means in the context of CE teaching in China. This question was posed in an attempt to redefine teacher autonomy in a specific institutional context. It implies that teacher autonomy is a context-dependent concept and that the differences in the abilities of teachers to adapt to teaching contingencies when working in the same teaching context is due to their different degrees of autonomy.

To answer RQ 4, this study redefines teacher autonomy as the teacher's capability to take control of his or her teaching practices and professional development in adapting to specific institutional context. Although sometimes controversial, the concept of teacher autonomy is not as widespread among frontline EFL teachers as the concept of learner autonomy (Benson & Huang, 2008). However, there is a consensus among researchers that autonomy is a context-dependent concept and manifests in various forms among individual language teachers (Benson, 2011; Nakata, 2011; Sinclair, McGrath, & Lamb, 2000). Because this study found that the specific institutional context exists ubiquitously, it is impossible to discuss the teacher's teaching practice, professional development, and autonomy without taking the specific institutional context into consideration. Therefore, teacher autonomy can only be taken as an interplay between individual teachers and their specific institutional context.

To return to the three dimensions reviewed in literature review (2.1), the definition of teacher autonomy in this study highlights the capability and professional development dimensions, while the freedom dimension is taken as a comparative concept. In this study, freedom in teacher autonomy tends to be a degree that a specific institutional context can provide and an individual teacher's capability can reach. For most participants in this study, their freedom in classroom teaching is subordinated to the teaching context in the case university, although the findings related to more autonomous teachers show that they took explicit control in their teaching practices and professional development. Therefore, the definition of teacher autonomy in this study is adopted to explain the Chinese CE context.

Regarding the more autonomous group, it is evident that these teachers adapt their practices well to their teaching context. In Chapter 4, I identified four levels of CE teaching contexts in the case university: institutional (4.1), systematic (4.2), expectative (4.3) and physical (4.4). The practices of the more autonomous teachers provided a model in this regard. Firstly, the teachers were active supporters and followers of the case university rules. They used the mandated textbook, followed the work norms, and kept a positive attitude toward the quality assurance and assessing system.

Secondly, more autonomous teachers liked to integrate the expectations from all parties into their teaching practices in a skilful manner. As reported in Section 4.3, there were conflicts in the expectations of all stake-holders in the school: school authority, students, and teachers. One common and primary expectation among all three parties was that students pass the national exam. If the teacher focused on this expectation only, she or he could not, and should not, be criticised for doing so. However, the more autonomous teachers tried their best to integrate all stakeholder expectations into their teaching in a skilful manner. Such skills were evident in their ability to use their discretion to select autonomy-supportive teaching methods in response to their students' emotional and practical needs. Such autonomous discretionary decision

making required careful design, purposeful selection, creativity, and improvisation on the teachers' part. Otherwise, it would be an impossible mission to meet all expectation in the limited number of hours allocated to the course. Nancy demonstrated this ability by focusing on 12 key words from the long vocabulary list provided, and through other creative activity designs during the learning exercise (8.2).

Finally, more autonomous teachers creatively adapted to the fixed physical context. Fixed desks and chairs in the classroom hindered convenient communicative activities or peer and group discussions in the language education process (4.3). Nancy and Susan adopted a 'chain-like' activity to empower students' control over the exercise flow, to break physical barriers in classrooms, to add an element of entertainment to the exercise process, and to help students to concentrate their attention on the task (8.2.3). Without such autonomy and flexibility, the physical context was treated more as a constraint to classroom activities. That is, it tended to lead to teacher-centred teaching because the students were fixed by the desks and chairs to face the teacher as leader. In other words, if teachers lack the autonomy to think about ways to adapt the physical context to meet the students' needs, they can only be constrained.

The moderately autonomous teachers generally adapted their teaching practices to respond to the teaching contexts. Primarily, the teachers obeyed school rules. However, the context still constrained their pedagogy to a certain degree which was reflected in their complaints about the context as a constraint. For instance, Grace and Linda from the moderately autonomous group complained about the fixed classroom setting (4.4), and most members in the group complained that they were too stressed to meet high expectations from all stakeholders within the limited teaching time provided (4.2.3). In other words, the physical and the expectation contexts were identified as constraints in the teaching practices of moderately autonomous teachers. In addition, some of them showed their dissatisfaction with the school rules, especially in relation to the quality assurance and assessing system.

Less autonomous teachers were the least adaptive to the contexts among the three groups. They complained a lot about all contexts of the school. Sam felt scared that a teacher supervisor would want to observe his class (4.2.3) and Donna was under great pressure in the teaching quality assurance assessment system (4.2.3). At the same time, they relied heavily on some external elements such as learning activities based on the literal application textbook activities (6.2).

As Chapter 4 reports, these teaching contexts exist in the case university, as do more or less similar contexts in other universities in China. According to Lamb and Simpson (2003), "autonomy in a social context rarely means freedom from constraints" (p. 60). That is, these contexts are an unavoidable reality for EFL teachers and autonomy without constraints does not exist. To a certain degree, these contexts form constraints on teacher autonomy as Benson (2010, 2013) and Sinclair (2009) observe. Findings on moderately autonomous and less autonomous teachers' practices echoed aspects of Benson's and Sinclair's observations, and refined the institutional, systematic, expectative, and physical contexts as the most influential factors. As a result, how to improve teacher autonomy and to help them adapt to contexts emerges as a meaningful issue.

Research into the visible physical context and invisible systematic or expectation context has not been given due importance in traditional language classroom research. As reviewed in Section 2.3.1, teacher talk, learner behaviour, and teacher-learner interaction were most traditional and classical themes in this field as evidenced in the works of Chaudron (1988), Allwright and Bailey (1991), and McKay (2006). However, as the research developed, the context-dependent character was underpinned, echoing the assertions from Kumaravadivelu (2012), Wedell and Malderez (2013), and Molina (2017). Particularly, the findings in this study align with Nind et al. (2016) in advocating further research studies of pedagogy in context.

However, constraints on teacher autonomy can also come from teachers themselves. They are referred to as ‘internal constraints’ by Trebbi (2008) and include teacher attitudes and capabilities. For example, negative attitudes toward learner autonomy (5.2.1) may lead to a teacher-controlled class. Moreover, personal reasons (5.3.2) like health problems, family commitments, and insufficient capability in research (5.4.2) hindered teachers to develop their professionalism and to teach autonomously. These internal constraints were found most evident among less autonomous teachers because they held negative attitudes toward all concepts under investigation. Finally, these negative attitudes formed internal constraints in their teaching practice.

In contrast, cases from the more autonomous teachers group showed that their positive attitudes and high-level autonomy helped them to adapt to the contexts in a more effective way than their counterparts in the other autonomy-level groups. Even though there were gaps between the context and students’ reality, it was possible for autonomous teachers to take a hand in bridging the gap. For example, in Susan’s class, the mandated textbook was a little beyond her students’ capabilities. When confronted with complaints from the students, Susan found the solution via autonomous action. She played the listening materials more times, paused necessarily, slowed down her pace, encouraged her students, used subtitles, and explained the text contents in plain words, etc. Importantly, if the teacher followed the teaching plan rigidly, his or her teaching practices remain legitimate in the systematic context, but the students’ learning outcomes could be discounted dramatically.

Thus, it is crucial to empower teachers to see context factors from a positive perspective and to improve their skills in context adaptation. Reflective and critical thinking on pedagogy may lead to a change in teachers’ attitudes (Cirocki & Farrelly, 2016; Genc, 2010). Action research is proposed by researchers to improve classroom practices (Banegas et al., 2013; Dikilitas & Griffiths, 2017; Mello, Dutra, & Jorge, 2008). Consequently, it is necessary to organise

sustainable professional development, in which programs of reflective and critical thinking on pedagogy, and guidance on action research are included.

9.5 Summary

In sum, findings in this study convey three critical insights on teacher autonomy in general. Firstly, teachers' attitudes toward autonomy reflect their degree of autonomy. The more positive their attitudes are, the higher their level of autonomy. Secondly, autonomous teachers tend to teach students using learner-centred pedagogy, and to make their discretionary decisions in a learner-friendly and autonomy-supportive way. They tend to improvise and interact with students flexibly, and they are eager to integrate multiple resources into their learning activities to make language learning more effective and learner-friendly. Thirdly, teacher identity directs the development of teacher autonomy when there is a discrepancy between the teacher's attitude toward autonomy and his or her classroom practices. Finally, and most importantly, this study shows that teacher autonomy is a context-dependent concept. Teacher's attitudes toward autonomy, their classroom practice, and their autonomy can only be discussed within a specific teaching context. Therefore, teacher autonomy can be understood as an interplay between individual teachers and their specific institutional context.

Chapter 10

Conclusions and implications

This study investigated the autonomy of 14 CE teachers in the case university in China. It pinpointed EFL teachers' autonomous practices in classroom teaching, and linked them to their teaching contexts and attitudes toward autonomy in work. This chapter provides a final summation of the analysis and discussion of the findings presented in Chapter 9. It concludes with an outline of the main contributions (10.1) and the main limitations of the study (10.2), along with the implications for language teachers, institutions, and future research (10.3).

10.1 Contributions

Primarily, this study makes four contributions to the research on teacher autonomy. Firstly, it explores the meaning of teacher autonomy in relation to a specific institutional context (10.1.1). Secondly, it pinpoints how teacher autonomy functions in CE classroom teaching (10.1.2). Thirdly, it explores the link between teacher attitudes toward autonomy and their teaching practices (10.1.3). Fourthly, the case study methodology and empirical evidence on the relationship between attitudes and practices on teacher autonomy contribute to the significance of the study (10.1.4).

10.1.1 Reconceptualising teacher autonomy in EFL education

This reconceptualization of teacher autonomy apparent in this study contributes to the theory of teacher autonomy in the following aspects. Firstly, it provides a multidimensional interpretation of teacher autonomy. To be specific, it demonstrates and clarifies three key components of the concept: capability, professional development, and freedom in institutional context. Moreover, this multidimensional view on teacher autonomy reveals an interplay

between personal (psychological, technical, and emotional) and contextual (institutional or financial) factors. Secondly, the reconceptualization attaches importance to professional development to develop teacher autonomy. The NNST identity (Smith, 2000), means that teachers' self-directed learning and professional development is given greater attention in programs to assure teaching quality. Thirdly, the reconceptualization of teacher autonomy in this study emphasises the contextual factors in the development of teacher autonomy, for example, the specific institutional contexts and constraints in China. Furthermore, this study revisited and discussed how teacher attitudes towards autonomy influence the development of learner autonomy, and argued autonomy-supportive teaching as a manifestation of teacher autonomy.

10.1.2 Pinpointing teacher autonomy in CE classroom teaching

Another major contribution of this study is to pinpoint teacher autonomy in CE classroom teaching. Literally, EFL/ESL classroom research examines everything happening in EFL/ESL classrooms (van Lier, 1989), and during the early stage of research in this field the studies focused on: teacher talk, learner behaviours, and teacher-learner interactions (Chaudron, 1988). Because of the proposal to teach in an autonomy-supportive pedagogy, the role of teacher autonomy in the language classroom is given greater importance. Based on the data collected via classroom observations and SRIs, this study pinpoints teacher autonomy in CE classroom teaching as a learner-centred pedagogy that is flexible in improvisations and rich patterns of interaction, and is learner-friendly in resource utilisation.

10.1.3 Exploring a link between teacher attitudes to autonomy and teaching practices

This study explored the link between teacher attitudes to autonomy and their teaching practices. The study found teachers' attitudes toward autonomy differed from person to person and tended to reflect their level of autonomy. The attitudes of 14 teacher participants toward autonomy were assessed and the outcomes were used to designate each teacher into one of three

autonomous groups: Less Autonomous Teachers, Moderately Autonomous Teachers, and More Autonomous Teachers. In most cases, the teacher's attitude towards autonomy predicted his or her teaching practices in the classroom to a certain degree. To be specific, the more positive the teacher's attitude, the more learner-centred the teaching practices.

The case exception was Mark, as evidenced in the discrepancy between his positive attitude toward autonomy and the limited engagement in autonomous practices in the classroom. The analysis of Mark's results shows teacher identity can provide direction for the development of teacher autonomy, supporting (Huang & Benson, 2013). In addition, this study found a discrepancy between some teacher's cognitive identity and emotional identity. In other words, some participants still fulfilled their duty with the support of their emotional identity when they cognitively did not identify themselves as a CE teacher. This finding aligned with the emphasis placed on emotional factors in general teacher identity in Day and Kington (2008), and in language teacher identity in Song (2016). The finding also suggests that the relationship between the 'sub-identities' (Mishler, 1999) in teacher identity is a complex and unresolved issue in current teacher identity research.

10.1.4 Case study methodology and empirical evidence

A case study research design is appropriate in research on teacher autonomy. The application of qualitative research paradigms in this study generated vivid stories of how teacher autonomy worked in participants' classroom practice, which could not be told by numbers in quantitative research. According to Toohey and Norton (2003), autonomy should be understood "not so much as individualised performance but as socially oriented agency" (p. 58). Case study methodology covers the complexity of a case and its context (Yin, 2014). In other words, case study research is good at generating a narrative on individualised performance and a thick description on the sociocultural context simultaneously. For this reason, Hammersley and Gomm (2000) claim that "the fewer cases investigated, the more information can be collected

about each of them" (p. 2). Consequently, case study methodology enabled this study to narrate individual CE teachers' stories in a way that is not available in quantitative research.

Therefore, a significant contribution of this study to the field is its generation and analysis of rich first-hand extracts from data collected via classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews. The extracts functioned as robust support evidence to pinpoint teacher autonomy in EFL classrooms. Many case studies in applied linguistics claim to adopt a classroom observation method, but provide little evidence from real classroom situations. However, the importance of triangulating participants' attitudes accessed via interview with their actual classroom teaching practices accessed via observation adds value to this study.

10.2 Limitations

Despite its original contributions to teacher autonomy research in Chinese tertiary EFL education contexts, I acknowledge that there are limitations in this study. Three limitations relate to its scope, duration, and subjectivity. There are also questions raised by this study that cannot be answered without further research.

This study employed a case study design and, as such, its scope was limited to only one university as the single case and 14 CE teachers as sub-cases. I acknowledge that every university in China is unique. Therefore, whether the findings of the case university in this study apply or can be generalised to CE teachers in other Chinese universities is worth further investigation. Furthermore, the 14 CE teachers in the case university comprise a small sample when considered in relation to the huge number of CE teachers in China. Although I provided a detailed description of the background, experiences, attitudes, and classroom practices of each teacher, the research scope was comparatively limited. To further survey language teachers' attitudes toward autonomy and autonomous teachers' practices, the findings of this

study could be complemented and further validated by large-scale quantitative research. Finally, this study focused primarily on CE teachers, with some mention of administrators' opinion as support evidence in the report of teaching context. To validate the findings on more autonomous teachers' practices as a manifestation of a learner-centred pedagogy, further studies are suggested to expand the scope to learners' opinions and learning outcomes.

Another limitation of this study relates to the duration of data collection. The policy of the Chinese Scholarship Council—the body who provided me with the funding to conduct this study—allowed for only a limited time period to collect data away from Australia. As a result, data collection at the case university in China lasted only eight weeks from September to October in 2015. This meant that only one round of classroom observation and SRIs was possible with the 14 CE teachers, along with 20 semi-structured interviews (14 CE teachers and 6 administrators). It also limited the researcher's ability to pilot the data collection instruments in the case university. This limitation led to some unstable variables in the comparisons and discussions in Chapter 9 (e.g., differences in participants' class types and differences in students' proficiency levels). Ideally, a longer data collection period would have afforded me more time to collect more robust and convincing evidence to support teachers' autonomous practices in EFL classrooms.

The third limitation lies in the way I categorized 14 participants into 'less', 'moderately' and 'more' autonomous group. I minimized my subjectivity by setting up a three-way coding system to describe the participants' attitudes, but my subjectivity and misinterpreting in the coding process may lead to possible unreliability. Moreover, the grouping system was relying on teachers' self-reported data in interviews, and these teachers' subjectivity and emotional expressions in the interviews can lead to a limitation in the reliability of my decision on the three attitude groups.

In addition, this study also raises some questions that cannot be answered directly. For example, what is the nature of the relationship between teachers' sub-identities and teacher autonomy? Do these sub-identities provide a direction for the development of teacher autonomy? If teacher autonomy is demonstrated by autonomy-supportive teaching or learner-centred pedagogy as observed in this study, are learners aware that they are at the centre in such learner-centred pedagogy, or do learners feel that their autonomy is supported in such kinds of teaching? If teacher autonomy is a context-dependent concept, what kind of context is most suitable for developing teacher autonomy? This study found some teachers introduced out-of-class resource into classroom teaching, while some other teachers led online discussions with students after class. Is there any relation between this kind of resource utilisation and teacher autonomy? In all, it is anticipated that future research will help to answer some of the questions to have been raised by this study.

10.3 Implications for teachers, institutions, and future research

This study investigated 14 CE teachers' attitudes and classroom practices in a case university in China. Although previous studies have stressed that it is the teacher's responsibility to foster learner autonomy (Aoki, 2002; Crabbe, 1993), the findings in this study have implications for EFL teachers regarding the implementation of autonomy-supportive teaching in their specific classrooms. The 14 teachers as subcases provided many positive classroom practices that can be adopted by other EFL teachers, and there were also negative examples for other EFL teachers to avoid when attempting autonomy-supportive pedagogy. At the very least, it is the hope that this study inspires EFL teachers to reflect on their classroom practices. Because autonomous teachers' practices are always described as a successful way of language teaching (Little, 1995; Tort-Moloney, 1997), this study also suggests that language teachers reflect more on their own attitudes towards autonomy and their classroom practices.

This study hopes to gain the attention of administrator and institution because teacher autonomy is also situated in a specific institutional context. It suggests that the teacher's voice should be listened to and that teachers should be empowered to teach autonomously. This study found that many school rules and classroom physical settings were external constraints on teachers with low levels of autonomy. As a result, this study hopes for a more constructive teacher assessment system, a communicative and autonomy-supportive classroom setting, and a more systematic and sustainable teacher professional development program designed to develop teacher autonomy within the institution. Quantifying all teacher assessment indexes is convenient for administration, but it is too stressful and rigid for teachers of liberal arts subjects. Moreover, the quantitative data provide teachers with no constructive feedback on how to develop their professionalism. Therefore, teacher education and professional development are crucial to the success of language education programs (Richards & Farrell, 2005). As such all investments in teachers to develop themselves as professionals will be repaid in the long run.

It was impossible for this case study to cover all areas of research into teacher autonomy, but the findings and limitations in this study recommend further research on this concept. Firstly, further research is suggested to scrutinise teacher autonomy in a large sample of EFL teachers. The findings in this study can be validated if similar teaching practices or different degrees of teacher autonomy can be found in future research. In addition, more autonomous practices would likely be uncovered via more comprehensive research studies of EFL classrooms. If further research includes the students' voices in the investigation of teacher autonomy, more insights can be gleaned on learner-centred or autonomy-supportive pedagogy. Secondly, longitudinal studies of teacher autonomy can track the dynamic processes of autonomy development in individual teachers (e.g. Long (2014)). Thirdly, the findings in this study imply that there are complex interplays between teachers' sub-identities: a young mother identity (5.3.1), cognitive and emotional identities (5.1), a visiting scholar identity (5.3.1), and teacher

autonomy which are worthy of intensive further study. Fourthly, contextual factors also provide some possible direction for further research on teacher autonomy. The optimal context for teacher autonomy development may be recommended, and teacher autonomy in different contexts may be compared. Lastly, teacher learning or resources utilisation in out-of-classroom scenarios and their relation to the development of teacher autonomy also emerge as interesting themes for further research.

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Appendix A Classroom Observation Checklist

Location_____ Number of Students

Picture of classroom ○ picture of teaching ○ teaching video ○

PPt, teaching plan and relevant documents collection ○

Part one: personal information (please tick the corresponding answer)

1. Gender: ○male ○female
2. Age: ○⩽30 ○31-40 ○41-50 ○⩾50
3. Years of teaching experience: ○1-5 ○6-10 ○11-15 ○⩾16
4. Degree：○Bachelor’s ○Master’s ○Doctor’s
5. Title: ○associate lecturer○lecturer○associate professor○professor

Part two: Teaching procedure

Appendix B Stimulated Recall Teacher Interview Instructions

Stimulated recall instructions:

我们现在一起来看视频。我们的研究对你在上课时的想法很感兴趣。我们可以通过视频看到你在做什么，但是我们不知道你（那时）在想什么。所以我希望你做的就是告诉我你当时在想什么，当你在教学时你的脑海中都有些什么。

What we're going to do now is watch the video. We are interested in what you were thinking at the time you were teaching. We can see what you were doing by looking at the video, but we don't know what you were thinking. What I'd like you to do is tell me what you were thinking, what was in your mind at that time while you were teaching.

我现在把笔记本电脑放在这里。如果你有什么想法，你随时可以暂停播放。所以如果你想告诉我任何你当时的想法，你就可以点这个暂停键。如果我对于你当时的想法有任何疑问，我也会点这个暂停键并请你告诉我关于那一段视频中你的想法。

I am going to put the laptop on the table here and you can pause the video any time that you want. So if you want to tell me something about what you were thinking, you can push pause. If I have a question about what you were thinking, then I will push pause and ask you to talk about that part of the video.

Appendix C Semi-structured Teacher Interview Outline

Time _____Location_____Participant Code:_____.

Picture of interview ○ Recording ○

Part one: personal information (please tick the corresponding answer)

1. Gender: 口 male 口 female
2. Age: 口≤30 口 31-40 口 41-50 口≥50
3. Years of teaching experience: 口 1-5 口 6-10 口 11-15 口≥16
4. Degree：口 Bachelor's 口 Master's 口 Doctor's
5. Title: 口 associate lecturer 口 lecturer 口 associate professor 口 professor

Part two: interview questions

1. 你喜欢自己作为大学英语老师的工作吗？

   Do you like your job as a College English teacher?
2. 你对外人会怎么描述自己作为大学英语老师的工作？

   How would you describe your job as a College English teacher to outsiders?
3. 你觉得要成为一个好的英语老师最重要的因素是什么？

   What do you think are the most important qualities of a good College English teacher?
4. 在你的英语教学中最大的困难或压力是什么？能否举例说明？

   What is the biggest difficulty or pressure in your English teaching? Would you please give an example?
5. 在你的课堂上，你觉得自己可以完全按照自己的设想来上英语课吗？为什么？

   Do you think you can give lectures completely according to your design in your class? Why/ why not?
6. 在你的英语课堂教学中有那些是你特别想做又不能做的？为什么？

   In your classroom teaching, is there anything you desire to do but cannot do? Why/ why not?
7. 学校对大学英语课堂教学制定的规定是什么呢？

   What are the conventions for College English classroom teaching made by the school?

8. 你对这些规定的看法是？

   What is your opinion about these?

9. 你是如何评估学生的表现？

   How do you assess students' performance?

10. 你对"学习者自主"这个概念的理解呢？

    What is your understanding of learner autonomy?

11. 你的表现又是如何评估的呢？

    How is your performance assessed?

12. 你对自己的 工作（职业发展）有什么计划吗？

    What is your plan for your professional development?

13. 学校对大学英语老师的 职业发展有什么规定吗？

    What are the rules on CE teachers' professional development made by school?

14. 你对这些规定的看法是？

    What is your opinion about them?

15. 在你看来，你在学校管理中的角色是什么？

    What is your role in school management in your opinion?

16. 你能够对大学英语课程发展作出任何决定吗？

    What decisions can you make on College English curriculum development?

17. 你对"教师自主"这个概念的理解是什么？

    What is your understanding of the term "teacher autonomy"?

18. 你觉得自己是一个自主的老师吗？

    Do you consider yourself as an autonomous teacher?

Appendix D Administrator Interview Outline

Time _____ Location_____.

Picture of interview ○

Recording ○

Part one: personal information (please tick the corresponding answer)

1. Gender: 口 male 口 female
2. Age: 口≤30 口 31-40 口 41-50 口≥50
3. Years of working experience: 口 1-5 口 6-10 口 11-15 口≥16
4. Degree：口 Bachelor's 口 Master's 口 Doctor's
5. Title: 口 Director 口 Vice Dean 口 Dean 口 Deputy Secretary of the Party 口 Secretary of the Party

Part two: interview questions

1. 您对"教师自主"这个概念的理解是什么？

   What is your understanding towards the term "teacher autonomy"?

2. 您对"学习者自主"这个概念的理解呢？

   What is your understanding of learner autonomy?

3. 大学英语老师在他们自己的课堂上可以自由的做哪些决定呢？

   Which decisions can be made freely by CE teachers in their classes?

4. 学校管理层对大学英语课堂教学制定的规定是什么呢？你对这些规定的看法是？

   What are the CE classroom teaching conventions set by the school administration, and what is your opinion about these?

5. 您对大学英语老师们评估学生表现的能力怎么看？

   How do you think about CE teachers' capability of assessing students' performance?

6. 一个大学英语老师的表现又是如何评估的呢？

   How is a CE teachers' performance assessed?

7. 您对大学英语老师的 职业发展有什么建议吗？

   What is your suggestion for CE teachers' professional development?

8. 学校管理层对大学英语老师的 职业发展有什么规定吗？你对这些规定的看法是？

   What are the rules on CE teachers' professional development made by school administration, and what's your opinion about them?

9. 您觉得大学英语老师对学校管理能作出任何决定吗？

   What decisions do you think CE teachers can make on school management?

10. 大学英语老师对课程发展能作出任何决定吗？

    What decisions can CE teachers make on curriculum development?

11. 大学英语老师在教学中最大的障碍是什么？

    What is the biggest obstacle of CE teachers' in teaching?

12. 大学英语老师如何才能以最佳的方式教他们的学生呢？

    How can college English teachers best teach their students?

Appendix E Ethics Approval

MACQUARIE University

LINA QIAN <lina.qian@students.mq.edu.au>

RE: HS Ethics Application - Approved (5201500496)(Con/Met)

3 messages

Fhs Ethics <fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au> Tue, Jul 7, 2015 at 9:37 AM
To: Professor Phil Benson <philip.benson@mq.edu.au>
Cc: Mrs Lina Qian <lina.qian@students.mq.edu.au>

Dear Professor Benson,

Re: "Constraints on College English Teacher Autonomy --- A Case Study of a Chinese University"(5201500496)

Thank you very much for your response. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and approval has been granted, effective 7th July 2015. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Mrs Lina Qian
Professor Phil Benson

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 07/07/2016
Progress Report 2 Due: 07/07/2017
Progress Report 3 Due: 07/07/2018
Progress Report 4 Due: 07/07/2019
Final Report Due: 07/07/2020

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/application_resources

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request

for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/managing_approved_research_projects

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Anthony Miller
Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee

Faculty of Human Sciences - Ethics
Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C
Macquarie University
NSW 2109

Ph: +61 2 9850 4197
Fax: +61 2 9850 4465

Email: fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/

Appendix F Informed Consent Form

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 8740
Fax: +61 (0)2 9850 9199
Email: lingadmin@ mq.edu.au

主研究员 / 导师姓名和头衔: __ Philip Benson_教授_ ___
Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: __Prof Philip Benson_____

参与者知情同意书
Participant Information and Consent Form

项目名称: 大学英语教师自主的制约因素——以一所中国大学为案例的研究
Name of Project: Constraints on College English Teacher Autonomy --- A Case Study of a Chinese University.

我们诚挚地邀请您参加一项关于大学英语教师自主的制约因素的研究。本研究的目的在于通过深入的案例分析探索那些制约大学英语教师自主发展的因素。You are invited sincerely to participate in a study of constraints on College English teacher autonomy. The purpose of the study is to explore elements that constrain College English teacher autonomy through an in-depth case study.

本研究是由钱莉娜女士(lina.qian@students.mq.edu.au)为了完成博士学位论文要求，在 Macquarie 大学语言学系导师 Philip Benson 教授(philip.benson@mq.edu.au)的指导下进行的。The study is being conducted by Mrs Lina Qian (lina.qian@students.mq.edu.au) to meet the requirements of PhD degree thesis under the supervision of Prof Philip Benson (philip.benson@mq.edu.au) of the Department of Linguistics in Macquarie University.

如果您决定参与本研究，研究人员将参与观察您的课堂授课并录像（大约一个半小时），之后就您的课堂教学（有录像作为回忆提示）和其他教师自主相关问题对您进行访谈并录音（大约一个半小时）。只有访谈的内容将作为研究资料保存，而且研究过程中所获取的信息（录像、录音和文本）只会以匿名方式用在本学术研究项目中。本研究跟您的教学评估没有任何关联，不会对您的身心造成任何危险或不适。我们为您准备了 100 元人民币的购物卡作为您参与本研究的酬劳。If you decide to participate, I will observe and video-record your classroom teaching in 2 classes (about 1.5 hours), and then interview and audio-record (about 1.5 hours) on your classroom teaching (with the video record as a stimuli of recall) and teacher autonomy related questions. Only the interview data will be documented as research materials, and all data collected (video, audio and text) will only be used anonymously in this academic research. Because it has no relation to your performance assessment, there will be no risks or any discomforts physically or mentally. I will pay you ¥100 gift card per interview as a reimbursement for your participation.

本研究过程中获取的所有信息和个人资料都将对外保密，除非获得法律的许可其他人才能接触这些资料。本研究的成果的公开发表作品中不会透露任何个人信息。只有相关一些研究人员可以接触这些收集的资料。您可以通过邮件获取您自己提供资料结果的小结。您提供的信息有可能出现在人文研究伦理协会许可的本研究相关的学位论文，会议发言或期刊发表论文中。Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researchers can access to the data collected. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request by email. It is possible that the data may be made available for use

in future thesis writing, conference presentation or journal publications of Human Research Ethics Committee-approved projects.

参与本研究是完全自愿的：你有权力不参与，而如果您决定参加，您也可以随时无条件无任和后果的自由退出。Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

我 _____ 已经阅读并理解以上所有信息，并且我所问的问题也已得到令我满意的答复。我在已知我可以随时无条件终止进一步参与本研究的情况下，同意参与这项研究。我已保留一份该知情同意书。

I,_____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

参与者姓名（正楷体）
Participant's Name:_____
(Block letters)
参与者签名 日期
Participant's Signature: Date:___

研究者姓名（正楷体）
Investigator's Name:_____
(Block letters)
研究者签名 日期
Investigator's Signature:_____Date:__

如果您希望收到您在本研究中接受采访相关的反馈或结果（采访小结或访谈转录稿），您可以在以下"是"栏目前的方框中打勾，并在以下的空格中留下您的电子邮箱。If you wish to receive feedback or results of your interview (summary or transcription), you can tick "yes" and leave your email address in the blank provided below.

口 是，我希望用该邮箱接收我在本研究中接受采访相关的反馈或结果（采访小结或访谈转录稿）Yes, I wish to receive feedback or results of my interview (summary or transcription) in this email address _____.

口 不，我不想接收我在本研究中接受采访相关的反馈或结果（采访小结或访谈转录稿）No, I do not want to receive any feedback or results of my interview (summary or transcription) in this research.

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix G Excerpts in original Chinese versions (Chapter 4)

Excerpt 4.1 Donna (interview)

压力好大！那样子无死角的评价，这个教学是双方面的一个事情，而不是我单方面的事情。这个东西主观性太强了，这种，是不是？

Excerpt 4.2 The Teacher Work Handbook (p. 190)

由 HUT 教学督导委员会，配合教务处开展教师教学质量评价及检查工作。教学督导根据对教师的课堂教学状况进行日常听课、检查的情况作出评价。

Excerpt 4.3 Elisa (interview)

所以我觉得让非专业的老师去听一个专业老师的课，我觉得本身就不合理，再让他给他去打分就更不合理了。

Excerpt 4.4 Sam (interview)

我觉得说经常很多老师跑到课堂里面，第一眼先看一下瞄一下有没有陌生面孔，我觉得这个很恐怖。

Excerpt 4.5 Mark (interview)

他们作为管理者来说，他们是需要数据量化这些东西，这是可以理解的，只是我不认同它这种量化的方式。

Excerpt 4.6 Nancy (interview)

其实真正的应该是，这个评价是需要评价的。因为如果没有评价，就相当于没有反思，你是没有办法去进步的。我觉得但是不能因为这个评价，而去对老师采取什么样的一些极端的一些措施。

Excerpt 4.7 Linda (interview)

我就很佩服我们学校的这些督导，他们是真的想做事的人，他不是在应付。这两个督导我对他们的印象还蛮好的。如果他给了我这样的评价，我是幸福的。我没什么意见。我觉得既然管理层有它需要考评的手段，它发明了这个手段，它肯定总会从一些比较高端的学校、更好的学校 copy 过来的，它多多少少在实施的过程中肯定会走样，肯定

会不完美。但是你要体谅它的话，反正肯定会做的。你再抱怨它也会做的，反正我就是这样的，保持一颗赤子之心吧。不管什么样的评价下来，我只要认认真真讲课，而且我自己的各方面的技能也不差。只是说我可能在这个体系中我不会钻营，我没有体现自己，不能够 stand out，但是我无所谓，我也不会 left behind 我就是这样的心态。

Excerpt 4.8 Susan (interview)

再有的时候可能督导来的时候，我就要把太多的一些活动得收敛一下。

Excerpt 4.9 The Teacher Work Handbook (p. 204)

12. 擅自更改教学计划、教学任务安排或虚报教学任务 II

13. 无教学大纲、或教学进度表、或教案进行教学活动、或者未按照教学大纲要求布置、批改作业等 II

14. 相同教学任务而不实行统一考试 III

15. 教学进度与教学计划相差学时达 6 学时 III

16. 讲课、监考等教学活动中迟到或早退，或中途擅自离开课堂，或从事无关活动 III

17. 在教学活动时间内使用手机接听或者收发信息 III

Excerpt 4.10 XXX 大学英语教学质量提高方案（正式文件）

2011 级大学生英语四级一次性通过率达 75%，累计通过率达 90%；2012 级及以后年级大学生英语四级一次性通过率达 80%，累计通过率达 95%。

Excerpt 4.11 XXX 大学英语教学质量提高方案（正式文件）

(1) 对于大英教学部：四级一次性通过率达到 75%，奖励 15 万元；在此基础上每增加一个百分点，增加奖励 1 万元；未达到 75%，则扣除全部奖金。

(2) 对于大英教师：其所授课班级大学英语四级成绩在全校排名第一的，由学校全额资助赴国外进修一年；连续三次进入排名前三名的，可高聘上一级专业技术职务，符合职称晋升条件的在职称评审过程中直接予以通过；连续两次排名后 10%的，职称评审申报暂缓一年；实行年度考核评先评优 “一票否决制”，所带班级四级通过率低于全校通过率的，其年度考核不得评为学校和学院优秀等次。

Excerpt 4.12 Vice Dean (interview)

被访者：对呀，为什么呢。因为压缩成三学期就只是为了提高四级通过率，好像技能训练的时间就集中了，对吧。但是咱们大学英语课程的教学要求它不一定是这样的。我们最终还是要提高学生的英语应用能力。所以分课型以后呢，读写译咱们还是有点传统，是吧。听说呢，就是他们专门辟一块时间，每周一次的时间来上上听说，增加他英语应用的能力。是吧，特别是他们口头应用表达的能力。

采访者: 现在学生学习的目的性也很强哦。

被访者：就是说两者都要兼顾，是吧。所以就把这个叫做分课型的改革。然后 15 年的就是按照这个来进行。

Excerpt 4.13 Vice Dean (interview)

他认为你就是培养人文素养嘛，是呀，考试对你的能力并不矛盾嘛。他对我们的要求就是既考试要好了，能力也要提高。

Excerpt 4.14 Linda (interview)

学校对我们期望：四级通过率。

Excerpt 4.15 Sam (interview)

那就是必须要你要在现任的时间内去完成教学任务，不管是枯燥也好，不枯燥也好，你要按时完成。否则的话到时候考试的话，没讲到的话，他学生会把责任全部推给老师。我自己觉得也内疚。因为我拿了工资，我教学任务都没完成，这个很不好。

Excerpt 4.16 Ruth (interview)

但是我觉得，说白了，课堂上还是，因为就是说时间有限，关键是时间有限，因为太有限了时间，你又要搞这，又要搞那。我觉得不可能是考虑到每个人的需求跟爱好跟什么不可能了。I set the pace!

Excerpt 4.17 Mary (interview)

有时候的话我和学生都会觉得上这个四六级是比较枯燥的。虽然一方面他们也很渴望能够不断的强化训练能够过级，但是如果整天去搞这些东西就觉得真的是非常枯燥，

上起来，然后他们希望能够穿插一些其他的东西。我在普通班是做不了那么多，但是在 ET 班的话我尝试着改变一下。把时间分配的话，在时间分配上能够倾向于课外拓展的知识多一点，然后四六级的话也同时进行，兼顾着。

Excerpt 4.18 Linda (interview)

学生也抱着一种很 ideal 的那种 expectation 过来的，老师也有这样想法。

Excerpt 4.19 Linda (interview)

所以学校对我们的期望其实并不是你所期望的，就是说现实和理想有差距。

Excerpt 4.20 Grace (interview)

我就想让他们能够就是像那种一般小班上课，然后那个桌子椅子可以移动的那种，是最好了。但达不到，硬件配合不了。

Excerpt 4.21 Linda (interview)

教室里连做这种活动的地方都没有，你做活动得有地方吧，塞得满满当当的，两个人面对面，还要做什么动作，也做不出来。

Appendix H Excerpts in original Chinese versions (Chapter 5)

Excerpt 5.1 Donna (interview)

我首先说我是教英语的，… 然后所以尽量不暴露这一点。

Excerpt 5.2 Grace (interview)

我一般都说老师，好像我也不会特别强调是大学老师。

Excerpt 5.3 Lisa (interview)

我首先还是会说干什么，大学老师，教什么，教英语的。

Excerpt 5.4 Susan (interview)

我就说我是教英语的。

Excerpt 5.5 Mark (interview)

我说我是体育老师。

Excerpt 5.6 Linda (interview)

其实放在整个社会环境里面来说…对它还是有比较好的正面的印象的。我比较尊重自己的职业。

Excerpt 5.7 Nancy (interview)

我说我是教大学的，他们第一反应就都比较年轻，所以一听到这个我还觉得还比较自豪。

Excerpt 5.8 Elisa (interview)

以前不喜欢，现在我觉得还是挺喜欢的。现在我觉得其实当老师挺好的，让我心态很年轻。

Excerpt 5.9 Grace (interview)

除了这个我不知道我还能干吗，真的。

Excerpt 5.10 Lisa (interview)

喜欢。主要是可以跟学生在一起，然后可以不断的感受到年轻人的思想。

Excerpt 5.11 Nancy (interview)

所以你具体要说喜欢不喜欢，可能就是已经成为了你生活当中一个部分了。

Excerpt 5.12 Mary (interview)

第一个这个教师的职业还是比较光荣的，比较体面的…第二个的话，当初家人也是选择专业的时候家里人和我自己也都想从事师范的专业。

Excerpt 5.13 Sam (interview)

如果四级的考试压力不是蛮大的话，我觉得这个工作是蛮好的。

Excerpt 5.14 Donna (interview)

如果是学生挺配合的话，我觉得还挺喜欢的。他如果不配合，有时候也觉得比较郁闷的。

Excerpt 5.15 Linda (interview)

教书育人，我感觉我真还蛮喜欢，如果没有其他额外的那种，让我觉得要晋升，要这测评，那测评的话。

Excerpt 5.16 Mark (interview)

自主学习主要是学生要规划自己的学习，还要对学习进行评估，过一段时间觉得这个方法合不合适，然后再去进行改正。

Excerpt 5.17 Mary (interview)

自主的话我觉得就是，简而言之就是对自己的学习有一个很好的规划。那么包括学习的目标是什么；学习的内容，他自主，就是自己选择；还有学习的方法，借助的手段；各个方面，还有对自己的一个评价。

Excerpt 5.18 Susan (interview)

就是能够规划一下自己的时间，主动地控制自己，对于自己有一个规划，这样的学习者自主。

Excerpt 5.19 Donna (interview)

但是我发现中国的孩子，因为他从小到大都是被老师管着在学的那个状态。你真的让他自主学，他就只是为了在机房里面，达到那个机时。

Excerpt 5.20 Linda (interview)

自主这个东西听起来确实是很好，很理想。但是一个从百分之百有老师控制，有家长督促的那么一个环境下出来的学生，他自己的自主的出路在哪里。

Excerpt 5.21 Grace (interview)

学习者自主，自主学习，就是自我安排学习时间。

Excerpt 5.22 Ruth (interview)

一个老师告诉你自主学习的任务是什么，结合你自己的自身实际，然后合理安排，完成所有的自主学习任务自主学习，不就是自主学习吗？

Excerpt 5.23 Linda (interview)

对学生的自主学习来说，其实我觉得对大一新生最主要的还是老师的一个引导。

Excerpt 5.24 Donna (interview)

那个自主学习的概念就一直都说老师是一个引导者。

Excerpt 5.25 Nancy (interview)

我觉得应该还是一个指导者吧，就是你要指导他怎么去自主。

Excerpt 5.26 Susan (interview)

只能是作为一个领导者，或者是帮助他们提醒、监督，但是其实别的做不了蛮多。

Excerpt 5.27 Elisa (interview)

学习者自主，我觉得就是老师应该只是起到一个监督和帮助的作用。

Excerpt 5.28 Nancy (interview)

我当然知道我现在还是要做事情，所以我现在只能做的是，可能这学期课程比较多，我只是现在先把教学弄好。这是我最短期的，目前的这个学期的一个安排。然后的话，我还是想明年看，参加个访学吧。

Excerpt 5.29 Nancy (interview)

是的，有的时候我们希望得到专业化的指导，但是自己又不知道。

Excerpt 5.30 Elisa (interview)

不是学校没给机会，是因为我自己本身家庭的原因，我也走不开，知道吧，所以近期三五年的，孩子比如说独立之前估计我是没有机会的，或者是短期的学习可以，但是如果就是说要是出去，出远门的那种学习估计有点困难了。

Excerpt 5.31 Mary (interview)

可是我不行，我孩子和老公都在国内，我不能把他们抛开我一个人去上学。

Excerpt 5.32 Elisa (interview)

我觉得像我这种状态的话，觉得 40 多岁了，家里又有孩子的话，现在目前想去进修干什么的，估计不太可能，就是你想有这个计划，也被现实给拖累。

Excerpt 5.33 Linda (interview)

想法很多，但是体力跟不上。

Excerpt 5.34 Donna (interview)

我不是说我不好那些，只不过是因为我个人的原因。比如说你说出国那种，我是觉得蛮心里有点恐惧的感觉。比如说那个坐长途飞机，我晕机。所以我是有一种恐惧的感觉，会加深晕机。

Excerpt 5.35 Mark (interview)

学校其实每一年现在就是老师其实职业的提升的方式还是比较多，比如说你大概隔几年你可以申请个访学。

Excerpt 5.36 Sam (interview)

我是师范专业的啊。我不是师范我怎么能教书呢。所以说他叫我培训，我到了湖工了以后，还要叫我考心理学，考什么教学法。我说我大学都毕业了，都是 80、90 分的优秀学生，为什么还要我考这个东西呢。

Excerpt 5.37 Linda (interview)

所以他对我们职业规划这块没有系统的长远的那种打算，我总体来说还是没有看到。

Excerpt 5.38 Mark (interview)

那就是说老师能够在根据自己的一些特长、个性和爱好呀，去组织自己的课堂，去组织自己的教学，这个应该是算作是一个自主吧，如果从教学上来说的话。

Excerpt 5.39 Lisa (interview)

我理解的很肤浅啊。我感觉就是一个教师的自由度吧。就是能够自由的支配或者控制规划你的课堂啊，你的安排啊，或者是你的职业规划啊，我感觉是这样啊。就是或者是说很有目的性的去，目标很明确的去。我感觉就是跟学生自主一样，就是学生自主是他要他很有自主性的去学习，老师的话就是很自主性的去安排你的教学，你的科研，你的职业规划。

Excerpt 5.40 Sarah (interview)

就是在工作上能够比较自主的选择自己的工作内容和方向。

Excerpt 5.41 Susan (interview)

我觉得教师自主就是应该教师能够自己去决定自己开设的，如果你自己开设课程的话，你就应该可以决定自己开设这门课程的大纲，然后以及进度。然后如果是执行者的话，我们就应该能够自己决定这门课我想怎么上，或者是这一节课我到底怎么安排吧，或者就应该是这样吧。

Excerpt 5.42 Elisa (interview)

教师自主，我觉得教师自主，说句实在话，我第一次听到，我只听到学习者自主，我个人感觉教师自主的话，是不是教师应该可能在课堂上，就是能够比如说不像规定那

么死，应该是能够自由的把这个内容完成，以什么样的方式，多长时间，我觉得说，让老师自由的完成，而不是规定的太死的。

Excerpt 5.43 Mary (interview)

我就是差一点就把它和教师的个人职业发展划等号了。我就认为教师自主的话，那么就是首先要自我提升，专业知识方面自我提升，第二个在班级管理方面的话，也应该有意识的要提高。主要是想到了这两大块吧。… 还有就是可能如果是用在教学上面的话，教师自主有很大一块是教学方面的，那么就跟学生自主的话我觉得也很类似。首先对你所教的课程你要有一个规划，包括各个环节，刚才说了一个教学目标，教学对象，教学内容，手段、方法，还有关于教学评价，你自己要形成一个评价。然后，还有的话，就是我想还能够将教学当中发现的问题，能够进一步的进行研究。然后研究了一些结果的话能够及时的反馈或者应用到教学当中去。

Excerpt 5.44 Nancy (interview)

教师自主在我先前的感觉就是你作为一个教师，你首先要知道自己怎么样去发展，就是自我发展。… 教师自主的话，我觉得也是分几个方面的。你首先一个是自身的，你教哪一门课，你这个专业上的一个自己发展。第二个就是你要知道，你所教的这个专业的理论实践的一些最新的前沿知识是什么。这个都是和自主发展都有一定的关系吧。

Excerpt 5.45 Linda (interview)

我就觉得教师自主无论是你的专业，还是人际，还是社会，就是说你作为一个社会人，作为一个职业者，你都要终身去学习，各个方面的知识主动去学习，终身去学习。

Excerpt 5.46 Helen (interview)

所以我就觉得老师自主的话，更多的是调节自己，在自己这边。应该就是首先，就是你首先要自己知道自己。就是说认可或者说你自己对自己这个基本的，就是你对你这个职业，你有一个就是也要认可吧！然后你自己有一个目标，你知道怎么去。

Excerpt 5.47 Betty (interview)

教师自主，就是从字面意思，教师有自主的权利。

Excerpt 5.48 Sam (interview)

哎呦，这个不好，不好回答也不好理解，可能我从来没考虑到教师自主这个概念，因为我可能一直是别人在引导我怎么走。

Excerpt 5.49 Elisa (interview)

我觉得课堂我的课堂应该我做主，你投诉我也没用，我作为英语老师我觉得我在课堂上有绝对的自主权，投诉我是没有用的。

Excerpt 5.50 Mark (interview)

应该可以，尽量吧。尽量的我会按照我自己的方式，去我完成我理解的课堂。

Excerpt 5.51 Lisa (interview)

在教学这块，我觉得还是可以吧。我觉得基本上就是目标很明确，然后会安排这个课怎么弄。可能在科研上这块弱一些，在这个职业规划上比较弱一点，就是不是那么清楚。

Appendix I Excerpts in original Chinese versions (Chapter 6)

Excerpt 6.1 Sam (interview)

只是说我自己最近几年因为家里面事情，就是说，一个拖累。第二个我现在有点惰性。这一点可以考虑，但是我小孩太小了。我妈年龄太大，然后一个人的话，怎么处理她。

Excerpt 6.2 Sam (SRI)

R：你在点学生回答问题的时候每次都是这样一个一个学生的点吗？

T ：基本上都会点到。因为如果就是说专门点几个人的话，他会点得很疲劳，然后的话这个也不均衡。就是不管他的基础是怎么样，他来了，作为一个个体来的话，我必须要点到他，让他感觉他是存在的。

(…)

R：哦。但是从我来看，你点的学生还是很多的，一直不停的点。有的学生甚至，点了一次又一次。

T：但是我也要，我也要有面子啊。这个同学，就站着这个同学，我点的较多一点，因为相对来说他比较认真，他到课率是最齐的。他的基础也比较接近这个 425 了，所以我会多叫一点。因为不管怎么说，在录像嘛。我叫出来的同学都不会，那我本身也没有面子嘛。

Excerpt 6.3 Betty (SRI)

R：你为什么采取这样一种形式？你当时是怎么想的，那三个学生是基础比较好的学生？发音比较漂亮的学生，还是？

T ：当时正好这一课的话需要三个学生。后来就自然的班上就分成中间一个，左边一个右边一个。

R：对。

T：第一个学生是发音比较好的，第一个那个女生我觉得发音是比较好的。中间的那个学生她正好坐在正中间，所以点她了。因为点了两个女生，后来就点了个男生。

R：就说还是随机安排的。

T：随机的，第一个我觉得还是读的比较好的。

Excerpt 6.4 Donna (Classroom observation)

T: Paragraph one, look at the screen. OK, how to translate this sentence? You know every word in this sentence, right? Every word in this sentence. Then, how to translate it into Chinese? You know every word here. How to translate, especially ‘fuel’. OK, you can guess, OK, you can guess. 动起来啊，脑袋都动起来。OK，[S1].

S1: 不知道。

T：嗯？不可以说不知道。 每个单词你都学过，你干吗不知道啊？

S1：一个巨大的什么，.降低了..消费了什么...啊

T：我要整个句子，Sit down，please. 巨大的什么，降低了什么..消费了什么..我看你要出去啊....who knows? who knows?... 这个，都是很基本的词，好吧。就是这个 fuel 要猜一下，其他都是比较基本的词。你连这都成问题了, [S1] 你这个学期不许给我缺课啊! 你上学期你还那么多缺席。....[S2].

Excerpt 6.5 Donna (SRI)

R： (…) 好从这里开始就是讲翻译了，好像是。刚开始你还做了一个英翻汉，后面就全部都是汉翻英。

T ：因为我这里面要讲一个 fuel。

R：对，但我觉得可能你的学生已经习惯了你这样的快节奏的，把这个翻译的练习贯通整个后面的过程。但是我就觉得怎么又碰到这个词了？怎么又这个句子，我觉得跳跃好快啊。可能我没有看过这个课文，我没有上过这个课。所以还不太熟悉这个教材，然后就觉得有点跳跃。

T：所以我是要求你一定要对课文预习要熟，我说我不会管你的，我不会等。我肯定就按我的跳跑了。

Excerpt 6.6 Sam (SRI)

R：翻译的部分。哦，你一般讲翻译是怎么讲？

T ：翻译的话我会把中文从头到尾念一下，叫他们找出一些 indicators，就是能够提示你用什么时态，什么语态的。然后我，因为考试的时候四级不是也有一段翻译吗。然后我说你把整个结构，时态、语态确定好了以后，里面那些词你要脑子里先想一想，就是我该用什么词来表达。有的词是同义词，近义词的话，我说你要挑选一个最合适的。我说脑子里就是要有一个概念以后才能动笔。如果你抢先开始动笔的话，你到时候考试的时候，你擦来擦去，用涂改液啊，用那个什么纸去把它涂掉，我说很费时间。我觉得对你的信心打击很大，因为觉得好象又错了，又去涂改掉，是吧。所以我会跟他们这样讲，先把时态确定好。

R：但是我觉得这个翻译，这个片断还是有点长的，比较长。然后你从头讲到尾，到后面我觉得我的注意力都跟不上了，因为。

T：是讲的太快，还是讲的太长。

R：一个是速度快，第二个是内容庞大，你从头讲到尾，我就觉得有点注意力跟不上。

T：有点疲劳是吧？

R：有点疲劳，对。

T：我看看应该怎么弄法呢。

R：可能是你当时是时间不太多了。

T：我总是觉得上这个课一直在赶时间，就太紧了。

Excerpt 6.7 Donna (SRI)

R：对他们的分数还有原因做过一些了解，所以就没有在课堂上？

T ：对，我觉得这个是一个很私人的事情，其实是应该单独的去交流的。

R：对，也顾及到学生的面子。

T：还有先前那个老师拖堂的时候，我们在走廊上大家都来了嘛，就已经有一些交流了。

Excerpt 6.8 Donna (Classroom observation)

T: (…) 她说，老师报听写全部是说汉语让我们写英语。你们是不是从小也这样？

Ss：对呀，不是（some answer）

T：所以我以前都是报英语让你们写英语，很多人写得一塌糊涂。是不是还是应该变成报中文啊？

Ss： (Heatedly discuss and negotiate with the teacher).

T: 我是认为报英文，你可以根据我的发音去写。因为我们考试的听力不是报汉语，是报英语，对吧？我试一次报汉语，看你们写得怎么样，不要辜负我哦。既然你们从小就是这么练的，不要辜负我哦。

Excerpt 6.9 Donna (SRI)

R：然后呢，现在就是讲课文了，课文你是分成哪几部分呢？

T ：我一般其实就是按部就班的，没有创新的。就是先应该前面的 Get started 的有三个问题，但是我没有时间，只搞了一个问题。然后就是讲课文，讲课文我每一回都很重视那个 title 上面的部分，然后就是按部就班的讲课文，一个部分一个部分的讲。

R：你为什么觉得在这个班课堂上面，就没有一些创新的活动呢？

T：因为没有时间，我上个学期还有上上学期第一年当中还搞那个 role play 呢，但是这学期选的几个单元都是比较像这个 unit two 都是这种类型的，你也没有办法 role play 或者是说你可以搞一些 role play 想一些心思让他去弄。但是你第一个要赶时间第二个你觉得 role play 需要有好的孩子在里面去调剂的。比如说你照着读，你也要有人写剧本的。

R：对。我觉得他们既然这个不太好调动起他们的积极性，如果能够想点办法，增加一些其他的教学活动，会不会效果好一点？

T：那是肯定的，但是现在剩下的孩子是很困难的，真的是很困难的。

Excerpt 6.10 Sam (Classroom observation)

T: The third one. To reduce the railway accidents, 'to' means in order to, 为了减少铁路交通事故的这个风险，或者是，应该是风险. We spend over…, over means 'more than', 我们花了超过 10 million Yuan. 呃，那就是中文是‘一千万元’on something, on the railway line, every year. 每年都要花超过一千万元，花在这个什么，对这个铁路线的什么上面。spend some 钱 to something，所以毫无疑问啊，应该用动词的 ing 形态，相当于动宾搭配。 对这个铁路线进行...，啊，我请同学来做一下，嗯，[S1]

S1: maintaining

T: maintaining, good, thank you for filling maintaining!就是维修保养这个铁路线。now, my parents live a frugal lifestyle all their life. The first word, frugal, f-r-u-g-a-l, frugal, what's your understanding towards this word, frugal? [S2]

S2: 节约的

T：极简的，或者是什么...节约的, Ok.

Excerpt 6.11 Donna (Classroom observation)

T：OK, then, 'take it for granted’, [S1] what's the meaning?

S1：认为什么理所当然。

T：OK， good！‘想当然’后面用一个句子，这句话就完了。

(…)

T: Issue, what's the meaning?

S3: 问题

T：问题，good, good！不要用 problem，太普通了，太平凡了, 而且在这里不够大, 是吧。我们用 issue，OK，高大上！ (Students laugh at the hot word understandingly) 表示是很大的一个，严肃认真对待的一个...OK。

Excerpt 6.12 Donna (SRI)

R：这段 PPT 不是你做的吗？

T ：不是，是它本来就有的答案。

R：我觉得这个地方把它 highlight 一下，搞点颜色可能会更好一点，更容易看的鲜明一点。

T：我没有单独做 PPT。就用它的。

R：为什么你不愿意再花时间精力去单独做 PPT 呢？

T：我这个水平比较差。

Excerpt 6.13 Sam (SRI)

R：你为什么选择用 PPT，为什么选择用黑板，你是怎么安排的？

T: PPt 的话，是这个是可以提高效率。因为我写的字万一，有的字看不清楚，写大了或者写小了。第二个的话，这个我有的时候不小心会写圆字体，这也是我的问题，所以我怕他会不认得。然后这个的话，一个是就是说便于教学检查。因为一个是考虑你在教学录像。在没录像之前，我也是用 PPt 的。第二个是摄像头，学校里面安置的。第三个听课的时候，他那个听课的老师会问学生的，老师有没有 PPt 啊，老师有没有板书啊，老师批改了几次作业，他会问的。所以说我必须从这个角度来讲的话，也要用 PPt。

Appendix J Excerpts in original Chinese versions (Chapter 7)

Excerpt 7.1 Grace (Classroom observation)

T: No, why? What does career mean? (Write the word on the black at the same time) what does career mean? OK, everybody, we, we think about your future job, your ideal job. So, what are you going to do after graduation? OK, everybody, just tell me one job, your future job or your ideal job. OK, one minute, I'll give you just one minute. ...So, what's the first word coming into your mind? When choosing a job, when choosing a career, OK, [S1].

S1: My future job is to be an electronic engineer.

T: Ah, electronic engineer. (Repeat and write it on the blackboard) OK, so... class one.my class leader, what's yours? What's your idea job? What's your idea job? What do you want to do in the future? Or your dream job? What's your dream job?

S2: No response.

T: You just don't know. You never talk about it? OK, sit down please. And [S3], OK.

S3: Er, I want to be er, a Math teacher.

T: Oh, a Math teacher. We don't know, a math teacher. Ah, it does anything with your major?

S3: Because, er...我能用汉语说吗？

T: OK.

S3: 因为我之前，暑假那个在参加活动的时候，当了一个数学老师，所以我觉得挺不错的。因为之前没想过要当老师，后来体验了一下觉得挺好。

T: Is math teacher a profession? (Write it one the blackboard at the same time) her ideal job is a math teacher. Ok, you have your career here. Er, how about the boy. The boy from class 3. Where is my monitor? ... (Walk back and forth and look for the student) my monitor, my class leader. Where is my class leader, OK, so, tell me, tell me? Yeah, what's your future job, what's your dream job?

S4: I want to be a lawyer.

T: You want to be a lawyer, wow, good a lawyer. (Write it on the blackboard) anything else? Anything else? [S5]

S5: My idea job is an IT, software designer.

T: Computer what? Oh, software designer. Software designer, OK. So, from your answer, I can know that maybe, basing on your interest, your ability, or your major, you want to choose different jobs in future.

Excerpt 7.2 Grace (SRI)

R：你这里问了一个问题就是 what the difference between work and career？那我的问题就是，你为什么问这个问题，而不是用课本上本来就提供的这些 warmup questions 呢？

T ：因为这个单元主题就是 work and career，所以我就想，首先通过这两个单词，让他们有一个导入感。

Excerpt 7.3 Grace (SRI)

R：你为什么要做这样的改变，你是怎么想的？

T ：因为我想，可能我看他们脸上的反应啊，特别是对 career 这个词他们不太的清晰，不太清楚。我就想我换一种，比如说 job。可能他们就会想到，哦---可能是跟工作有关的一个词。我就把它转化成了一个比较简单的一个词，让他们来确定的。

R：就是跟学生的反应来调整你问的问题和用词？

T：对，对，包括后来提到的 occupation 和 profession，好像都没有反应，都没有 job 这个词反应大。因为这批学生呢，他们都是四级没过的，可能基础就是稍微的要弱一点。

Excerpt 7.4 Helen (SRI)

R：你觉得这样做对于这个演讲的学生，有作用吗？

T ：应该是有些作用的。而且我带 14 级有一班，就是真的能看到他们表现就是，到最后有差不多就是一个组，他们一个组是四五个人左右。到最后的话，最后几个组我几乎不用再说什么了，他们就是做得很好，我一看觉得已经很成熟了。因为那个时候才

大一嘛，作为大一的学生 PPT 能做这个样子，presentation 英语口语能说到这个样子，我觉得已经很不错了。

Excerpt 7.5 Linda (SRI)

R： (…) 我注意到你提问的时候基本上都是对着，大部分情况下都是对着全班同学，让全班同学进行反馈、进行回答。可能也是因为刚带这个班，新生班，还名字不记得或者怎么样？

T: 因为在这个时候我愿意用我的眼神扫视全班，感觉到我鼓励了每一个人。我应该是这样一个想法，所以我才会对着大家。如果正经需要谁来回答，我肯定会特别点一个人再来回答。

Excerpt 7.6 Linda (SRI)

R：是，好的，往下面看。第五组因为 PPT 的问题，没有能够讲成，一般情况下出现这种状况你会怎么处理？

T ：我的处理就是他下次课之前我会给他抽个几分钟时间把这个再做一个 presentation。他已经做完了，肯定不会让他感觉到失望吧，我肯定会补上来，因为这个占用不了太多的课堂时间。

R：你当时临时就是这样想的决定让他下次课？

T：对，我下次课肯定会让他补一下吧。因为这个涉及到平时成绩的记录。

R：所以学生也很重视，你也要安排？

T：尽量让学生做到说老师重视我的一些努力吧。

Excerpt 7.7 Linda (Classroom observation)

T: The six things describe children's feeling or children's love towards parents. Let’s see. (Wait and look at the screen) .....which ones are true for you? Yes, you are away from your hometown, and probably you may miss your parents every day. You make phone calls to them every day,

even you cried... to them in the phone call. OK, [S]. You have many choices among the six statements. Which ones are true for you?

S: The first one.

T: Hum?

S: The first one.

T: The first one? Oh, my god! You miss your parents every day?

S: And... the fifth and the sixth.

T: The fifth one, and... The sixth one. OK, I know about my parents' hobbies. OK, if you don't think it's your privacy, can you share some hobbies of your parents with us?

S: Er, my father likes smoking. (The class burst into a laughter suddenly after hearing the answer)

T: Smoking is a hobby? Others would think it is a bad habit. Oh, do you buy cigarette to you parents, to your father?

S: When I was a younger child, I have bought for my dad.

T: Oh, yeah, and how about your mother's hobby? (The teacher waits for the student's answer while the class begin to chat secretly) Why does she love? May be, this is another, this is also, a little bit...funny.

S: Er, my mother likes watching TV.

T: Watching TV, this is common for women in our life, watching TV. You know, in another major I asked one student, and he says my mother loves going shopping. This is also very common for women. Ok, yes, good, sit down please.

Excerpt 7.8 Linda (SRI)

R：然后你还问到了一个延伸的问题，也就是他的父母的 hobbies。你当时这么问的目的是什么？

T: 其实这时候趁机相当于说想让学生 practice speaking English。其次就是这些个话题其实对以后谈论这个话题本身，就是 parent and child 的关系，他是有一定的，怎么说呢

有一定的提示作用吧。比如我读完这些之后，我肯定会把它当成一种素材，一种背景素材。因为你这个部分不做的话，他肯定就过去了。然后我现在展示出来，不管我会不会点几个人，或者不点任何人，最起码他都过了一遍，我相信任何他可以提到 parent’s hobbies 啊，parent’s birthday 啊，这些就体现出一种关系上的紧密性吧。

Excerpt 7.9 Linda (Classroom observation)

T: Except communicate with them face to face, you can choose other forms of communication. What are they? [S1]. Let’s think about other forms we can choose to communicate with your parents. Maybe your father is a businessman, and he is always busy out. You cannot talk with him, OK. Then what else you can choose to share your minds with him? Like what?

S1: You can call him.

T: Yes, you can call him. You can give him a call a day. You can call him; you can fix the time. What else?

S1: You can use Wechat.

T: Chat?

S1: QQ

T: Yes, you can send a QQ message to him or just chat with him online. Yes, very good, good idea. OK, because everybody enjoys computers, OK. You can send him a QQ message. Good job, sit down please. And other forms can you think?

S2: Write a letter.

T: Yeah, write a letter. And also I have one idea. If you cannot find time with your father, you can share your idea with your mother and let your mother...send it to your father. Is this a good way? Yes, OK.

Excerpt 7.10 Linda (SRI)

R: (…) 这个地方你又做了一个延伸，就是 different forms of showing your love to your parents。你又简单介绍了让学生回答了几种方式。这个地方我觉得挺好的。为什么会想到能进一步的这样问呢？

T: 因为这一段，我觉得已经水到渠成，他能够应付的了，所以我才放心的交给他们。你突然间凭空讲一个你怎么样来展示你跟你父母之间关系的话，他肯定有点想不出来这些语言表达。但是已经走到那么细致，那么明确的地步了，对吧。通过什么方式，我想根据 common senses 学生都能够想出几个来。其实也不负我所望吧，学生把能讲的都讲出来了。我觉得挺好的。

Excerpt 7.11 Mary (Classroom observation)

T: Now, the last one is the homework.... There is a video clip, video clip, but we have no time to watch it. .... We just jumping through to the next one. Next time, you can role play this video: How to choose the right career. Your homework, the home work: Job interview. It is the role play. Every group has to play, to do this role play the job interview. Now look at the situation: You are a senior in a university. That is to say you are going to graduate from the university. You applied to a foreign enterprise, a foreign enterprise, and fortunately you got a chance of a job interview. Your group members are the interviewers... This one should be capitalized (the teacher points at the typo on the screen). Your group members are the interviewers, and you have to answer all kinds of their questions. So, clear? For example, this group has five people, right, five people. Now you can choose you two as interviewees and the other three ones as interviewers, OK? The interviewers ask questions, and interviewees answer questions, OK? All kind of questions you can imagine. Every group do you show next time. Next time, I mean, next week, every group, OK! Thank you!

Excerpt 7.12 Mary (SRI)

R：那你当时设计这样一个面试的这样一个要求，你是怎么想的呢？

T: 我还是想给他们就是一种职业技能一样的。就是在求职的时候应该掌握一些什么技巧。因为我之前在我的 QQ 空间里面发过一个类似这种文章嘛。就是你如果想要到外

企里面去应聘的话，那么有，那个上面号称是 50 句经典的问答，我就给到空间里面了。基本上 ET 班的学生，加了我的好友他们都看得见，每次浏览都有两三百次吧。然后我就马上想到了那一篇文章，然后我想让他们去把那个文章重新拿出来读一下。让这一组的人有两三个扮演考官，剩下的扮演应聘者，让他们能够操练一下。对，就这个目的。

Excerpt 7. 13 Elisa (Classroom observation)

T: Ok, now, any question about paragraph one, class? Any question about paragraph one?

S: I watch her back her new truck out of the driveway.

T: 'I watch her back her new truck out of the driveway'. You don't know the 'back', right? So, what's the meaning of 'back'? Back! 'Back' here. (Walk back to the stage and write the word on the blackboard). What the meaning of 'back'? Do you know 'back'? This is back, right? Back, what is the back? This is back, for example, back, back, back, back, right? This is back, right? (Act like driving a car backward at the same time of explanation)

Ss: Yes.

T: So, what the meaning of 'back'?'I watch her back her new truck ', do you know what the meaning? To drive the car moving on, we just walk ahead, right? Drive ahead, right? Drive the car back, back, back, what's the meaning of it?

Ss: 倒车。

T：倒车, right. Here, the back means an adverb, right? So, 'I watch her back her new truck out of the driveway. 'Out of the driveway', you know driveway, right? ‘Driveway’, the way for the car, right? The way for the car, not for the people, right.

SS: 车道。

T: 车道, right? Driveway 就是车道，而不是人行道, right? 。所以第一句话,大家可能不理解的就是‘back’, right?

Excerpt 7.14 Elisa (SRI)

R：是的，好的，那我们接着往下面看了。这个地方就开始讨论这个问题了，（视频声）。Any question about paragraph one? 从这个地方开始，你基本说就是进入课文的主要内容。

T：对，答疑的阶段。

R：你采取的是一种答疑的方式，整节课基本上主要的文章就是这么讲的，我想问一下，你为什么采取这种方式？

T：是因为的话，我觉得因为之前我已经布置的让他们自己学了，而且这个文章难度说句实在话，不是很难。叙述性的，故事性的文章，学生是应该能看得懂的。还有一些比如说稍微难一些的句子，我就希望学生学过之后，因为我要求他们做记号，是带着问题进教室的，所以我就会来进行答疑，并不是说我背几个语言点，或者背几个句子我在课堂上就把那个语言点，句子一讲，不是这样的。基本上我不是这一堂课，我基本上这么多年来我都是这样，跟别人不一样的，我只答疑，我已经告诉他们，我第一堂课，基本上每个学期的第一堂课新生。第二学期如果还带他们就不用再说，因为他们已经知道了，这种风格了。课堂上只答疑！

R：对。

T：如果你自己学，学不懂的，你可以来问我，或者我们跟学生一起互相讨论一下。

Excerpt 7.15 Mary (SRI)

R：好像你除了课堂给学生讲课布置一些任务以外，好像用一些 QQ 空间这样一些网上的这样一些东西。

T: 我有时候在课堂上面把他们做的小组活动我都拍下来，每个学生都有一张特写，我都发到我空间里面进行一番评论。这样的话学生自己看到，哦，老师对我还蛮重视的，我要好好学，他下次就会表现得更好一些。反正这样的话，也能够缩短与学生之间的距离，也可以建立感情。

Excerpt 7.16 Ruth (SRI)

R：你非常擅长搞这些课外材料。

T: 反正我自己，关键是我自己也有兴趣呀，而且这个真的是花不了多少时间，因为各大门户网站上都是有新闻，英语的。

Excerpt 7.17 Mark (SRI)

R：这节课我注意到你没有用 PPT。你为什么会不用呢，你是怎么考虑的？你什么时候用，什么时候不用，还是基本上不用？

T：有时候用，有时候不用。主要还是要看课堂的类型吧，比如说这堂课主要是对学生的意思，对文章的理解上面。我认为理解上面，我觉得学生看文章更重要一些，比看 PPT 要更重要一些，所以就没用 PPT，主要让学生看书。但是后来第二堂课讲练习啊，或者复习这课的词组的用法的时候，就 PPT 会用得多一些。

Appendix K Excerpts in original Chinese versions (Chapter 8)

Excerpt 8.1 Nancy (SRI)

R：…后面就是十几个词，这些词是你自己单独挑出来的还是教师手册上面？

T：是我自己挑的。我一般就是说讲单词的时候，我会看一下手册上面的。但是我觉得手册上面它就是没有一个重点。它会把所有单词都给你讲一遍，或者所有的单词都有一两个例句吧。我觉得学生不可能接受那个，可能也是因为我听过，一堂课学生能够接受的词汇只有八个。

R：啊？这是听谁说的啊？

T：具体的用法，我也不知道是听哪个老师说的，确实是这样子的。但是我一般就会倾向于 12 个。我好像听过是 8 个，但是我自己好像又倾向于 12 个，差不多我一堂课有 12 个的左右。

R：那你是依据什么你觉得你这个是要用那个，你的标准是什么呢？为什么是这个 12 个，不是别的，你一个单元的词那么多。

T：对，这也是我之前考虑过的。所以我觉得这可能就是随着教学的年限。

(…)

T：所以可能，这就是一种潜意识里面的，根据我教育的年限，根据我所积累的四、六级的词汇来进行的。我感觉每个老师在词语的选择上都会不一样。有的老师可能同样的一篇课文有那么多单词，但是有的老师真的是选择他们认为重点的词，我反正感觉我就是根据我自己的一些积累吧。这个我觉得有点凭经验了，就是有点凭空了。

Excerpt 8.2 Nancy (SRI)

R: 然后讨论视频，以及这个看视频的任务上面你是怎么设置的？（…）看完视频之后要讨论，让他们怎么讨论？

T: 我一般的话，会根据视频的内容进行选择。首先这个视频的内容就决定了，一，你会有共同点，你会有想表达的一些想法吧。我觉得这个视频因为刚好也和学生蛮接近。

主要这个单元主题，让学生有话可说吧，让学生觉得有些内容是很熟悉的。所以我就一采纳了两个，我就布置了两个任务。第一个就是复述，这个里面有什么观点，你把它复述出来。这是我的感觉，我现在觉得复述是一个最好的方法。无论是学生技术高的，技术差的，复述就像你所说的做研究的一个文献综述的一样的道理。我感觉，可能因为我现在一直在研究视频这一块吧，所以我就觉得第一个，你就是复述。然后第二个，你复述的这些，因为我现在挑的是，你只用复述这几个人的一些观点的提炼。那么第二个就很简单了，自然而然的，你同不同意这个观点。你同意的原因是什么，不同意的是什么原因。所以我的问题也比较简单，也不是很简单吧。我觉得还是比较围绕视频的内容，围绕学生的一个，一个实际情况来进行的一个。

Excerpt 8.3 Susan (Classroom observation)

T: (many students complain a lot about the accent in the listening material which frustrates them after being played twice) Ok, let's listen again. 那就这样吧，那我们就按暂停吧！好吧？按暂停。We do the pause...(The teacher turns back to the stage and begin to play the listening video clip material again)

Ss：暂停也听不懂，中文的… (The students still complain a lot)

T：So，what do you come up? 那就再放一遍，是吧？

Ss：放一遍， 再来一遍，再来一遍 (most students would like to listen to it again)

T：Ok，right, don't give up that easily! Do not give up easily!

Excerpt 8.4 Susan (SRI)

R：这个地方好像你跟学生协商了一下，就是，是不是要在必要的时候暂停一下。

T ：对。

(…)

R： (…) 你为什么当时愿意接受学生这样的要求？让它不停地暂停。

T：我想让他们把这段话听懂，这是第一。然后我想让他们知道我刚刚说的，就是如果你听不懂这个人的说话，前面有一个人，其实他的标准英语说了一遍，他是总结了一下这部分人说话。就是两个人你其实听懂一个就够了，他们不是不同意吗？然后我说行，我们就一个一个来看一下，就按照一句一句来。

R：是，还是，我就印象比较深刻的你愿意跟学生协商，来沟通这个问题。在课堂上现场就沟通这个问题。因为毕竟，这应该不是你教学计划当中安排的一部分吧，让学生这样听一段停一段听一段停一段。

T：对。

R：所以这还是得在临场做很多特别的决定。

T：一般来说临场其实做了很多的决定。

R：对。

T：有的时候你想象不到你会这样搞。

Excerpt 8.5 Lisa (Classroom observation)

T: Do you think that you have more leisure time than before? Yes or no? Yes or no?

S: Silence

T: Do you think you have more leisure time than before? Yes or no? Than your high school time, yes or no? 听懂没？

S: Silence

T: Free time, more free time. Do you think you have more free time than that in your high school, yes or no?

S: Some students answer yes.

T: Yes, yes. Then, what's the result? With so much free time, what's the result? What’s the result? En? Would you please use one word to describe your university life? ...OK, 那我们从前面来。How do you think about your university life? You can just sit down, and give me one word. One word, only one word. How do you think your university life? One word.

S1: Lazy,

S2: Free,

(…)

T: Busy, OK. How about you?

S11: Just so so.

T: Just so so. OK, come back to our text book.

Excerpt 8.6 Lisa (SRI)

R：你问到了学生的一个问题，就是这个地方。我很喜欢这个问题，do you think that you have more time ，more free time than your high school？当你提出这个问题的时候，你是怎么想的？

T ：诶，这其实是一个即兴的问题，之前没想过。

R：就是你事先不是安排这个问题，突然想起来的？

T：对，突然想到的。怎么想到这个问题呢？就是可能前面之前上节课讲语法，就是我讲的比较多，他们在听，就是我讲他们听。我感觉讲语法讲单词好像只能这种形式，互动少一些。这个部分因为是在讲课文的内容了，这应该是第四第五段了，就是文章最后一段。我一直考虑到还有时间，然后我发现我的教学任务基本上已经完成了，所以你就可以去拓展一下。然后就想到因为这里正谈到的问题就是说是科技进步劳动分工带来的结果，就是说大家时间多了。我觉得这是一个很抽象的问题，学生们就是不太能理解这个科技进步什么，劳动时间少了剩余时间多了，他不太能理解这个问题。

R：因为他们现在还没工作？

T：对，他没工作。所以我就只有问，对你们来说你觉得你现在大学和高中比是不是时间多了？这样从简单的问题入手，所以我用的是 do you think，他们回答的也很简单，只要 yes 和 no 就可以了。他们就说 yes。慢慢的就是突然好像可以发现找到一个能够跟他们相关的话题，能够引起他们兴趣。然后再展开后面的，他就会有兴趣。

Excerpt 8.7 Nancy (Classroom observation)

T: OK, very good! Thank you for your bravery. And here, 'I would rather lose' pay attention to 'lose', 'in the cause', because, cause, right? ‘That I know someday would triumph than to triumph in a cause that I know someday would fail'. Ok, now, you have a chance to ask for a student to translate the sentence. You can choose any of us. 你选一位同学来帮我们翻译一下吧！你觉得谁比较符合你的眼缘，你就来点一下。请同学来翻译一下这个句子。

S1：Can I say a number?

T: The number? I trust you. You couldn't know their names, right? 好，她想随机点一个号啊,点大家的那个学号（toward the whole class). 看来，今天是一个什么样的 lucky number.

S1: Twenty-three.

T: Twenty-three, Ok, who is the lucky 23? Let me have a look, 23. 23, 二十三, [S2] 同学。

SS：（burst into a laugh secretly）

T: Ok, sit down, please, thank you! OK, could you translate the sentence? You know, she really trusts you, right? Could you translate the sentence?

Excerpt 8.8 Nancy (SRI)

R：然后我还注意到你在讲单词的时候设计了一个小活动。就是让一个学生读一些单词和例句，然后让这个学生，再挑另外一个学生去接着他来进行练习。你为什么要这样设置呢？

T ：我觉得这样子学生你可以选择你想要谁来回答这个问题。因为如果我让学生去选人回答的首先：一，这就是避免了我对学生的不了解的一个尴尬，因为学生自己肯定就应该比我对学生了解程度要更强一些。这样子学生一也可能隐隐约约有好玩的一个部分吧。有些学生可能想恶作剧一下，就是想着这个学生反正平时或怎么怎么样的。但是其实那个成分，他们已经大学生了，其实应该还是比较少。但是最主要的原因是他可能会觉得这个学生能回答得出来。同时学生也是在随机的点，这样子给每个学生都有点压力吧。因为你还是，不小心要是点到我怎么办？还是会让学生去主动参与一些。

Excerpt 8.9 Susan (Classroom observation)

T: OK, is that the difficult time? No, let's look at your answer, move on to see. There are really a lot of students seem sleepy. 真的有很多同学要打瞌睡的样子哈，所以呢我们要找个同学来惩罚一下！How do we search? 怎么找人呢？听好规矩哈。for example, we have [S1]。我们找[student1's name]起来跟我们读答案。[S1] 呢就读 When he was born in...and he stops at an accupuncture. 他就停在这个标点符号这里，然后他就说...[S2] 。And then [S2] will continue to read. 然后[S2]就继续读，停在标点符号那里。 Of course,[S2] has to finish this himself, [S2]可以把这一段读完，对吧。the one who failed, that's right, to find out the word himself will be punished. 不能够接上来的同学要受惩罚。惩罚的内容是听写一篇文章。

Ss：啊，写一篇东西？又听写文章啊！（many students begin to complain）

T：听写一小段话，这么一点点。那么 One hindered words?

Ss: one hindered words! (Students answer together)

T: So, if you don't want to take a dictation, pay attention. That's right! 如果不想受罚，请认真。那么我们从谁开始呢？ Monitor 吗?

SS: Monitor!

T: OK，Monitor，that's right! 从开始读，停在标点处。

S1：停在标点处?

T：Right！

Excerpt 8.10 Susan (SRI)

R：你当时这样要求是怎么想的呢？

T ：其实我从上学期，去年我就这样做，因为可以稍微让他们精力集中一下啊，或者是稍微活跃一下气氛。因为这个听到后来有点，有一点压抑了，所以。

R：听得是蛮辛苦。

T：对，所以要稍微活跃，其实也是稍微活跃一下气氛。而且我就不希望说你站起来，因为以前总有学生一站起来 Sorry，然后就坐下去。然后我就不想出现这个情况，所以我说如果你不懂，你可以找个人来帮你，然后你看他找谁。

R：我觉得这样挺有意思的。我觉得，我当时觉得蛮好玩的，上课。

T：对，现在就是一串。

Excerpt 8.11 Susan (SRI)

R: 我记得你当时跟学生说，你最喜欢从后面一排点起。那你为什么会有，当时会有这样的要求。然后你这种要求的想法是什么？

T：想法就是，很多人因为出于偷懒的目的坐最后一排，我尽量地，就因为有的学生层次。第一排你真的不用管他们就很认真。但是如果最后一排如果不管一下的话，这个他们就可能不大会学习了。所以一般会这么办。

Excerpt 8.12 Lisa (SRI)

R: 那后来你讲到了一个长难句。句子结构稍微复杂一点，所以你就单独把它提出来，放到这个 WORD 文档里面。然后跟学生进行详细解释。这个地方我觉得你讲的非常仔细、非常好。把句子结构 A or B 直接拿出来让学生很容易明白。然后呢，我的问题就是你当时这么做的想法是什么样的？

T: 因为 PPT 上那个字特别小，PPT 是两段，重点要讲一句。黑板上又写不下。写了我觉得黑板上看不清。我基本是这样的，每次上课都开一个 Word，开一个 PPT。尽量不书写，因为书写效果没那么好。但是重点的像这种结构性的东西，不是写了就擦写了就擦，结构性的东西会写在黑板上。但是那种写了就过的东西，我就尽量的会敲到 Word 上面。

Excerpt 8.13 Nancy (SRI)

R: 你为什么会用这种形式，用一个 Word 文档的形式而不是用 PPT 的形式？

T: 我反而觉得有时候 Word 可能会比 PPT 操作起来会更方便，更便捷一些吧，所以我就觉得我不一定非要。所以我就现在改变，在讲单词的时候我就用 Word。对我来说可能也很方便，因为我就不需要再把它转换一遍。我觉得那些做的也是一个，说实在的，就是一个重复的劳动力吧。在课本的时候，就是讲课文的时候可能还是用 PPT 了。所以我就觉得只要是单词的讲解我就选择用 Word。