

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This chapter is composed of three sections. The first presents the theoretical underpinnings that have informed teacher educators and practitioners of the Danyang Project in pursuit of effective FLT classroom instruction. This is followed by the second section, reviewing the literature to date on curriculum innovations. The final section provides a synthesis of the mainstream theories concerning language teacher cognition and practices.

2.1 Effective Teaching in FLT Classrooms: Theory and Research

2.1.1 *Effective Teaching in FLT Classrooms*

The early history of research in second language acquisition and foreign language teaching is infused with studies exploring, verifying, and comparing pedagogies in pursuit of effective teaching methods and techniques (Hedge 2000; Richards & Rodgers 1986, 2001; Ur, 1996). Method-oriented studies made strides in pursuing effective teaching methods in specific aspects of language teaching, including reading, listening, writing, and grammar, or in adopting a broader view by considering the ecological teaching context in which learner, teacher, material, and syllabus factors play mediating roles. One prominent commonality of these studies lies in their research purpose of prescriptively offering effective teaching methods for language teachers to follow.

Though it may sound plausible to give teacher education program teachers or trainees hand-on toolkits, it might be potentially haphazard for them to follow a prescribed teaching agenda without understanding or believing in the underlying theoretical principles. Thus, the construct of ‘method’ should be addressed, before

what it means to be ‘effective’ is examined. Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992) defined ‘method’ as:

A way of teaching language which is based on systematic principles and procedures, i.e., which is an application of view of how a language is beset taught and learned (Platt & Platt, 1992, p. 228).

Ellis (2012) defined ‘method’ as:

A pedagogic construct enshrined in a set of principles and techniques that specify how specific acts of teaching are to be performed (Ellis, 2012, p. 52).

The above definitions, though systematic and specific, are not flawless, as they are built on a relatively isolated domain of teaching beliefs and conceptions. In his seminal work, *Language Teaching Analysis*, Mackey (1965) speculated that method “means so little and so much” (Mackey, 1965, p. 139). Along with the endeavor to seek definite and operational tips for guiding teachers’ practice, there have always been voices reacting against the confinement of methods in language teaching. Two major approaches are eclecticism and principled teaching.

Eclecticism suggests that teachers develop their own ‘method’ in teaching. For example, Harmer (2001, 2007) recognized the difficulty of choosing the optimal approach for a specific teaching situation, and proposed “pragmatic eclecticism” (Harmer, 2001, p. 97) by suggesting alternative models to PPP as coherent frameworks for its operation. He further observed that such learner factors as age and character, combined with a teacher’s own beliefs and preferences, were likely to influence his or her pedagogical decisions. Eclecticism, irrespective of its avoidance of dogmatic adherence to any one enclosed method, is of limited use; as Stern criticized, “eclecticism is still based on the notion of a conceptual distinctiveness of the different methods” (1983, p. 428). Widdowson (1990) also observed that, “if by eclecticism is meant the random and expedient use of whatever technique comes mostly readily to hand, then it has no merit whatever” (1990, p. 50). Thus, despite its important ability to shift teachers from being passive recipients in transmission-based teacher development models, to constructive actors forming their own methods through intuitive, contextualized decisions, eclecticism has been criticized for being too vague to follow, mainly due to its underlying conception of clear boundaries between methods.

Other approaches opposed to the notion of ‘method’ that could be included in this broad category include the post-method approach and principled teaching, which share a common discontent with the construct of ‘method.’

2.1.2 Post-method Approach

This subsection does not exclusively examine “post-method pedagogy” (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001, 2003, 2006); instead, it attempts to depict broadly the era characterized by the notion of informed, enlightened, and dynamic teaching,

including such widely-recognized and -accepted concepts as communicative language teaching (CLT) (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Savignon, 2002; Yalden, 1981; among others) and task-based language teaching (TBLT), which shows strong characteristics of CLT (Ellis, 2003, 2009, 2012).

Kumaravadivelu (2001, 2003, 2006) conceptualized post-method pedagogy as a three-dimensional system, consisting of three fundamental parameters—particularity, practicality, and possibility. In addition, a macrostrategic framework is formulated with macro and micro strategies. The macrostrategies are listed here:

- (1) Maximize learning opportunities;
- (2) Facilitate negotiated interaction;
- (3) Minimize perceptual mismatches;
- (4) Activate intuitive heuristics;
- (5) Foster language awareness;
- (6) Contextualize linguistic input;
- (7) Integrate language skills;
- (8) Promote learner autonomy;
- (9) Ensure social relevance; and
- (10) Raise cultural consciousness.

(Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 201)

The framework formulates a general guideline for teachers to implement in their own specific teaching contexts. Neither communicative language teaching (CLT) nor task-based language teaching (TBLT) are considered methods, only approaches derived from theoretical, empirical, and experiential knowledge from L2 teaching and learning. CLT and TBLT both formulate broad principles for language teachers and acknowledge various meaning-oriented classroom practices, which are departures from traditional methods of language teaching. Brown noted seven inter-related characteristics of CLT:

- (1) Overall goals. CLT suggests a focus of all the components of communicative competence.
- (2) Relationship of form and function. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes.
- (3) Fluency and accuracy. A focus on students' "flow" if comprehension and production and a focus on the formal accuracy of production are complementary principles underlying communicative techniques.
- (4) Focus on real-world contexts. Students in a communicative class ultimately must use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom.
- (5) Autonomy and strategic involvement. Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through raising their awareness of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for production and comprehension.
- (6) Teacher roles. The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing font of knowledge.
- (7) Student roles. Students in a CLT class are active participants in their own learning process.

(Brown, 2007, p. 46–47)

Ellis (2009) summarized five characteristics of the main approaches of TBLT, as follows:

- (1) the provision of opportunities for natural language use;
- (2) learner-centeredness;
- (3) focus-on-form;
- (4) the kind of task; and
- (5) the rejection of traditional approaches to language teaching.

(Ellis, 2009, pp. 224–225)

2.1.3 Teaching by Principles

Brown (2001, 2007) noted language teachers' choices should be based on grounded principles—that is, what we know for certain about second language acquisition and teaching, despite the unknown mysteries in the field. He maintained that teachers are more likely to undertake “enlightened” teaching when associating teaching decisions and practice with principles derived from research. In this way, teaching is a more confident process, as teachers are aware of the rationales for employing a classroom technique, and know how to evaluate its utility after using it (2001, p. 15; 2007, p. 63). In the 3rd edition of his book, *Teaching by Principles*, Brown (2007) enumerated 12 principles for learner autonomy and willingness to communicate, including two items changed from his previous set of principles (Brown, 2001), as synthesized in Table 2.1.

2.1.4 Principles of Effective Teaching

Based on research findings to date, Ellis (2005) formulated the following 10 widely-quoted principles for language instruction on second language acquisition and language teaching:

- Principle 1. Instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence.
- Principle 2. Instruction needs to ensure that learner focus predominantly on meaning.
- Principle 3. Instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form.
- Principle 4. Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge.
- Principle 5. Instruction needs to consider the learner's ‘built-in syllabus.’
- Principle 6. Successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input.
- Principle 7. Successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output.
- Principle 8. The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency.
- Principle 9. Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners.
- Principle 10. In assessing learners' L2 proficiency it is important to examine free as well as controlled production.

(Ellis, 2005, pp. 210–221)

Table 2.1 Principles of language learning and teaching (Based on Brown, 2007, pp. 62–81)

Category	Principles	Statements of the principles
Cognitive principles	1. Automaticity	Efficient second language learning involves a timely movement of the control of a few language forms into the automatic, fluent processing of a relatively unlimited number of language forms. Overanalyzing language, thinking too much about its forms, and consciously lingering on rules of language all tend to impede this graduation to automaticity
	2. Meaningful learning	The process of making meaningful associations between existing knowledge/experience and new material will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning of material in isolated pieces
	3. The anticipation of reward	Human beings are universally driven to act, or “behave,” by the anticipation of some sort of reward—tangible or intangible, short-term or long-term—that will ensue as a result of the behavior
	4. Intrinsic motivation	The most powerful rewards are those that are intrinsically motivated within the learner. Because the behavior stems from needs, wants, or desires within oneself, the behavior itself is self-rewarding; therefore, not externally administered reward is necessary
	5. Strategic investment	Successful mastery of the second language will be due to a large extent to a learner’s own personal “investment” of time, effort, and attention to the second language in the form of an individualized battery of strategies for comprehending and producing the language
	6. Autonomy	Successful mastery of a foreign language will depend to a great extent on learners’ autonomous ability both to take initiative in the classroom and to continue their journey to success beyond the classroom and the teacher.
Socioaffective principles	7. Language ego	As human beings learn to use a second language, they also develop a new mode of thinking, feeling, and acting—a second identity. The new “language ego,” intertwined with the second language, can easily create within the learner a sense of fragility, a defensiveness, and a raising of inhibitions
	8. Willingness to communicate	Successful language learners generally believe in themselves and in their capacity to accomplish communicative tasks, and are therefore willing risk takers in their attempts to produce and interpret language that is a bit beyond their absolute certainty. Their willingness to communicate results in the generation of both output (from the learner) and input (to the learner)

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

Category	Principles	Statements of the principles
	9. The language-culture connection	Whenever you teach a language, you also teach a complex system of cultural customs, values, and ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Especially in <i>second</i> (as opposed to <i>foreign</i>) language-learning contexts, the success with which learners adapt to a new cultural milieu will affect their language acquisition success, and vice versa, in some possibly significant ways
Linguistic principles	10. The native language effect	The native language of learners exerts a strong influence on the acquisition of the target language system. While that native system will exercise both facilitating and interfering effects on the production and comprehension of the new language, the interfering effects are likely to be the most salient
	11. Interlanguage	Second language learners tend to go through a systematic or quasi-systematic developmental process as they progress to full competence in the target language. Successful interlanguage development is partially a result of utilizing feedback from others
	12. Communicative competence	Given that communicative competence is the goal of a language classroom, instruction needs to point toward all its components: organizational, strategic, and psychomotor. Communicative goals are best achieved by giving due attention to language use and not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy, to authentic language and context, and to students' eventual need to apply classroom learning to previously unrehearsed contexts in the real world.

Later, McIntyre et al. (2009) proposed a six-principle model of effective language teaching for diversified language learners. Grounded in the Vygotskian teaching-learning framework, the principles include: Joint productive activity; Language learning across the curriculum; Contextualization; Rigorous curriculum; Instructional conversation; and Family involvement. The last principle is “a way to help students connect their prior experience and knowledge with academic content” (McIntyre et al., 2009, p. x).

More recently, Richards and Bohlke (2011) proposed the following eight principles for effective language classroom instruction:

- (1) Your lesson reflects high professional standards.
- (2) Your lesson reflects sound principles of language teaching.
- (3) Your lesson addresses meaningful learning outcomes.
- (4) Your lesson provides opportunities for your learners to take part in extended practice with using language in a meaningful way.
- (5) Your lesson is effectively managed.

- (6) Your lesson is a coherent sequence of learning activities that link together to form a whole.
- (7) Your lesson creates a motivation to learn and provides opportunities for success.
- (8) The lesson reflects your personal philosophy of teaching.

(Richards & Bohlke, 2011, pp. 1–14)

To summarize, these above sets of principles draw on research findings in education, second language acquisition, and language teaching to extract factors that could be manipulated to improve the effectiveness of language classroom instruction, including curriculum issues, classroom climate, teachers' pedagogical expertise, learners' individual attributes, etc. Informative as these principles are, they arguably have limited implications for improving FLT instruction effectiveness in Chinese classrooms, given the idiosyncratic attributes of Chinese learners and teachers, and the realities of Chinese educational settings. Hence, it is necessary to associate general principals with context-specific factors in Chinese classrooms.

2.1.5 Studies on Effective Language Teaching in China

Recognizing the contributions made by mainstream studies on effective language teaching worldwide, studies in Chinese contexts attend more to the peculiarities of FLT classrooms in China. In pursuit of systematic principles for effective foreign language classroom teaching in Chinese contexts, as well as their implications for informing teacher development, SFLEP¹ has been hosting the National College English Teaching Contests since 2010, and has made continual efforts addressing this essential issue (Shu, 2010, 2011, 2012c, 2013b; Yang, 2011; Wang & An, 2012; Zhu, 2013). Commenting on a selected contestant's teaching scenario in the 1st SFLEP Cup National College English Teaching Contest, Yang noted:

[This teacher] has a quite good command of English, with satisfactory accuracy, native-like pronunciation, and intonation. He has well maintained the balance between input and output in lesson planning. In addition, he has acquired a solid foundation of linguistics and applied linguistics, and has capacity of classroom organizations as well. Apparently, this teaching scenario is an illustrative example of effective foreign language teaching.

(Yang, 2011, p. 15)

Also, reflecting on some problems in the national teaching contest mentioned above, Shu pointed out that “organization, content and effect” were three essential indicators for evaluating foreign language classroom instruction (Shu, 2010, p. 30), emphasizing that “the key issue is effect, more specifically, to what extent have the pedagogical objectives been fulfilled” (*ibid*).

¹SFLEP, Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, is one of the leading publishing houses specializing in foreign language education in China.

Zhu's (2013) study, in pursuit of a theoretical framework against which to evaluate an outstanding classroom teaching episode in the 3rd SFLEP National Foreign Language Teaching Contest, proposes a framework containing seven essential factors contributing to the effectiveness of foreign language classroom teaching:

- (1) appropriate teaching objectives;
- (2) feasible lesson planning;
- (3) various teaching materials;
- (4) adaptive teaching skills;
- (5) harmonious classroom climate;
- (6) effective classroom assessment;
- (7) in-depth reflection on teaching

(Zhu, 2013, p. 50)

The studies to date have formed a large bulk of research exploring the principles contributing to the effectiveness of FLT classroom instruction in China, and have been recognized as a substantive move towards “developing a set of FLT theories with Chinese characteristics” (Shu, 2005, p. 2). Nevertheless, most of these studies are notably general in nature, drawing primarily on arguments rather than empirical research findings, thus generating disappointingly few implications for classroom practitioners. Therefore, formulating a micro-framework for effective classroom instruction in Chinese FLT contexts would fill an existing research gap, and was a substantial goal of the author in the Danyang Project.

2.2 The Rationale for the Framework of Effective Teaching that Informs the DP

Overall, the construct of teaching effectiveness could be formulated using either a theory-laden or data-driven approach. As the latter normally draws on longitudinal process-product research, which is beyond the scope of this study, the present study adopted a theory-laden approach, by examining and synthesizing extant research on aspects of L2 classroom instruction. As noted by Ellis (2012), “at one level, ‘teaching’ is discourse” (p. 75), to unfold the complexity of classroom instruction, this study takes a discourse perspective to view classroom instruction.

Classroom discourse is “the type of language used in classroom situations” (Richards et al., 2000, pp. 64–65). It has idiosyncratic forms and functions, in comparison with languages used in interactions in other situations. To some extent, the quality of classroom discourse is a decisive indicator of teaching effectiveness; however, it has been universally recognized that classroom interaction per se is a highly complex process (Walsh, 2011), as evidenced by the proliferation of classroom-based research in the field, and the on-going controversies over certain critical issues. Despite existing ambiguities that motivate classroom-based research, this study draws on what has been found so far based on empirical evidence to

guide, calibrate, and evaluate PTs’ classroom behaviors, to construct a theoretical framework to bolster the DP teacher training program. The purpose of this effective teaching framework is two-fold—to provide a set of objectives for teacher training programs, and to establish criteria for observing and evaluating concrete changes in PTs’ teaching behaviors. As student’s contributions are an indispensable part of classroom discourse, this framework also encompasses aspects pertaining to learner behaviors.

2.2.1 *Socio-Cultural Theory of Language Learning*

In the realm of second language acquisition research, there have long existed two mainstream theoretical perspectives (interactionist-cognitive and socio-cultural) on the fundamental questions of what is language learning, and how learning takes place. According to socio-cultural theory, language learning is both an interpsychological and intrapsychological process (Vygotsky, 1981) taking place through the mediation of social interaction. From a socio-cultural perspective, language learning is perceived as a process rather than a product, and, more specifically, a process of development rather than acquisition; “development does not proceed as the unfolding of inborn capacities, but as the transformation of innate capacities once they intertwine with socio-culturally constructed mediation means” (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995, p. 109). Hence successful language learning involves a developmental process of shifting from ‘other-regulated’ activity to ‘self-regulated’ activity (see Table 2.2). In this sense, socio-cultural theory has blurred the distinction between “language learning and language using” (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995, p. 116). As Sfard (1998) put it, there is not a clear boundary between ‘acquisition’ and ‘participation’.

An important construct in socio-cultural theory of language learning is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is defined by Vygotsky as:

Table 2.2 Types of ‘development’ in sociocultural theory (Ellis, 2012, p. 239)

1	The learner is unable to produce a specific target form even with assistance.
2	The learner demonstrates that with substantial assistance he/she can use a specific linguistic feature (x), which previously he/she could not use
3	The learner demonstrates that subsequently he/she can use x in the same or similar context but now requires less assistance than on the previous occasion
4	The learner subsequently demonstrates that he/she can now use x in the same or very similar context in which he/she had used it previously without any assistance
5	The learner is now able to employ x on different occasions in new contexts and with different interlocutors without any assistance (i.e., ‘transfer of learning’ has taken place)

...the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

(Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

This definition was later fine-tuned by Ohta (2001, p. 9) to better suit FLT contexts:

For the L2 learner, the ZPD is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by individual linguistic production, and the level of potential development as determined through language produced collaboratively with a peer or teacher.

(Ohta, 2001, p. 9)

It is evident from both definitions above that learning involving ZPD entails learners' participation in collaborative activities with others (teacher, peers, tutor, etc.). An essential question herein is how a socio-cultural viewpoint on language learning informs FLT classroom instruction; accordingly, the present study examines operational aspects of classroom instruction that have been informed by socio-cultural theory.

2.3 Defining Terms of Discourse Units

The present framework is largely informed by the findings of a series of seminal studies on classroom discourse (for example, Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Spada & Fröhlich, 1995; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Wells, 1996). Before elaborating on the framework, it is necessary to define a hierarchy of discourse units. In this study, the smallest component of discourse is *move*, which is “the minimal contribution a speaker can make to an exchange” (Ellis 2012, p. 87). *Exchanges*, which combine “reciprocally-related moves” (Wells, 1996, p. 78), in turn comprise a *sequence*. An exchange consists of obligatory *initiation* move and *response* move, and probably a *follow-up* move, constituting the IR(F) pattern (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) or ‘triadic dialogue’ (Lemke, 1990).

According to Wells (1996), there are two types of exchanges: *nuclear exchanges* and *bound exchanges*. Nuclear exchanges independently contribute “new content to the discourse” (*ibid*, p. 78), while bound exchanges, as the name suggests, are affiliated with nuclear exchanges in some way. Bound exchanges in turn are classified into three categories. The first is *preparatory exchange*, which signals the beginning of a new sequence, such as the bid-nomination exchanges in classroom discourse. The second category is *dependent exchange*, which deals with certain aspect of nuclear changes by means of exemplification, expansion, and justification. The third is *embedded exchange*, which deals with problems in the on-going exchange.

The unit at the next higher level to exchange is *sequence*, which comprises at least one obligatory nuclear exchange and optional bound exchanges. The largest unit for analyzing classroom discourse is *episode*, which “consists of all the talk

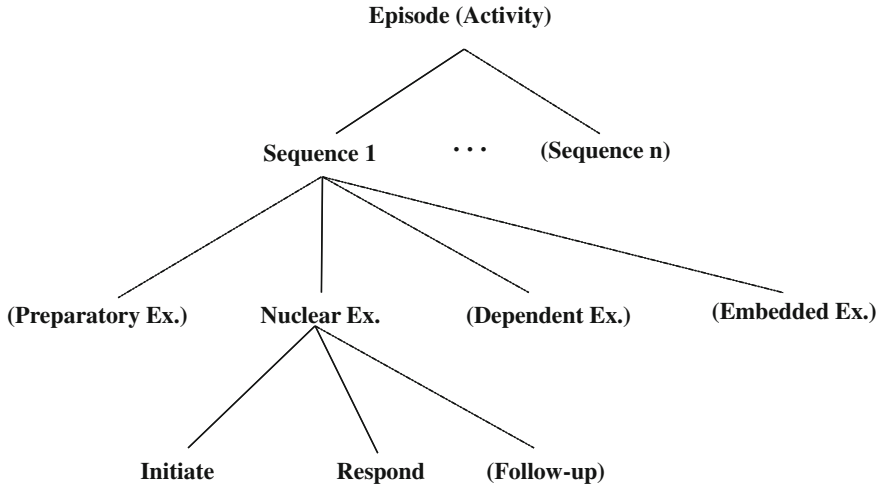


Fig. 2.1 The organization of spoken discourse (Wells, 1996, p. 79)

produced in carrying out a single activity, or one of its constituent tasks” (Wells, 2000, p. 383). The constituent structure of moves, exchanges, sequences, and episode is illustrated in Fig. 2.1.

2.3.1 The Framework

(1) Instructional Objectives and Activities

In his pioneering schemata of activity theory (see Fig. 2.2), Engeströme (1999, 2001) noted the “object” predicts the orientation of a certain activity, and springs from the motive for a consequence (Lantolf & Thorne, 2013). In this model, the object means the “raw material” or “problem space” at which the activity is targeted, and which is transformed into “outcomes” through mediating tools (Engeströme, 1993, p. 67). In his later publication, Engeströme maintained that, “the object gains motivating force that gives shape and direction to activity... determines the horizon of possible action” (Engeströme, 1999). To apply this model into FLT classroom instruction, we could say the object is the “problem space,” or instructional objectives that cater to the needs of learners and gains motivating force to give shape and direction to classroom activities.

Three criteria are proposed to address issue relating to instructional objectives and activities, given the significance thereof. First, there should be clear goals set to develop learners’ linguistic, affective, and social competence in classroom instruction, no matter implicitly or explicitly stated. Second, the time allotment for different teaching and learning activities should align with instructional objectives.

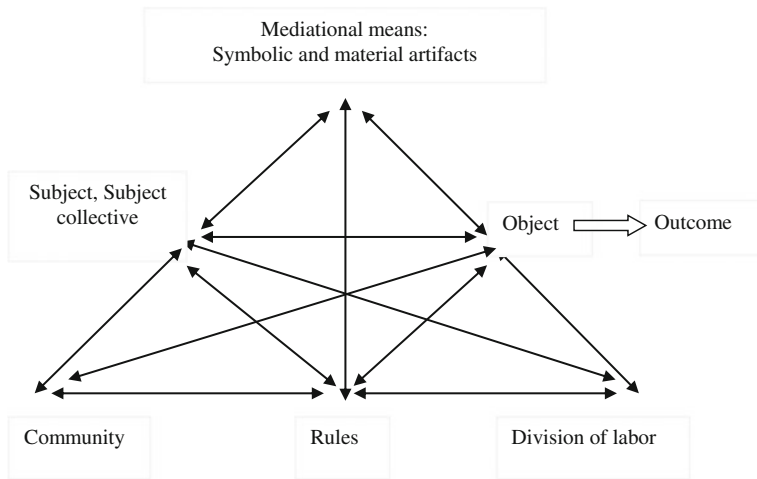


Fig. 2.2 The activity system (based on Engeströme, 1999, 2001)

Third, the sequence of the transition between activities should basically follow a protocol progressing from other-regulated learning towards self-regulated learning.

(2) The Choice of instructional materials

The term “instructional materials” in this study does not exclusively refer to mandated textbooks for Chinese basic education, which are normally prescribed by central or local educational administrations, but to “anything which is used to help language learners to learn” (Tomlinson, 2011, p. viii), including mandated materials and materials adapted from available resources. In the specific constitutional setting of this study, mandated instructional materials contain a set of textbooks and supplementary materials (*jiaofu ziliao*), including PPTs, worksheets, exercise worksheets, etc., collaboratively developed by teachers working in the same TRG.

Per socio-cultural theory, there is an indirect relationship between humans and the world, such that “human thinking is mediated by culturally organized and transmitted symbolic meaning” (Lantolf, 2012, p. 57). Physical and symbolic tools mediate human learning (Vygotsky, 1978), and instructional materials play an important mediating role in FLT classrooms, to regulate learners’ language development. In other words, instructional materials are cultural tools facilitating learning in transforming and reconstructing the resources and practices to which learners are exposed, rather than merely vehicles or conduits for linguistic knowledge.

This redefined role of instructional materials challenges language teachers to rectify their traditional recognition of textbooks as authoritative teaching guides that prescribe what and how to teach. As claimed by Tomlinson (2008), many current ELT materials tend to have divergent influence on language acquisition and

development. Thus, in most pedagogical settings, it is up to language teachers to choose, evaluate, and adapt instructional materials. Overall, the objective of material adaptation is to “maximize the appropriacy of teaching materials in context” (McDonough et al., 2013, p. 67). It takes considerable expertise and capability to accommodate instructional materials to the realities in FLT classrooms; for example, teachers undertake “predictive and retrospective evaluation” (Ellis, 1997, p. 36) of textbooks to make pedagogical decisions, and must test the “suitability and effectiveness” of teaching materials in their teaching practices (Ellis, 2010, p. 52).

Grounded on the rationale elaborated so far, how FLT teachers use instructional materials is considered a prominent indicator of teachers’ professional development. An array of teacher training sessions was incorporated in the DP to facilitate PTs’ learning to effectively choose, adapt, and use instructional materials.

(3) **Teacher talk**

Teacher talk is defined as “that variety of language sometimes used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching” (Richards et al., 2000, p. 471). As Ellis (2012) has put it, “teacher talk is the defining feature of many classrooms” (p. 119). Early studies (for example, Thornbury, 1996; Walsh, 2002) sought general features of teacher talk likely to effect language learning, and applied their findings to teacher training. However, in the socio-cultural perspective, there are hardly any general characteristics of teacher talk that are universally effective, regardless of contextual factors. How much and what a teacher speaks does has no implications for teaching effectiveness, without considering the micro-contextual realities in language classrooms, such as instructional objectives and learner factors.

In this part teacher talk is addressed in a focused sense; how it combines reciprocally with learner talk will be discussed later, within the discussion of discourse structure. This study addresses the quantity and quality, respectively, of teacher talk by examining the duration and length of teacher talk, teacher’s speaking speed, and two types of teacher questions. This study investigates to what extent quantity of teacher talk contributes to classroom discourse at different stages of curriculum innovation.

A widely-adopted taxonomy to describe teacher questions is the distinction between display questions and referential questions (Long & Sato, 1983). A display question is about “whether the addressee has knowledge of a particular fact or can use a particular linguistic item correctly” (Ellis, 1994, p. 700), while a referential question is “genuinely information seeking” (ibid, p. 721). It is a theoretical presupposition in this study that, while teachers’ open-ended referential questions provide more space for communication in language classrooms, close-ended display questions to which the teacher knows the answers are a necessary component of classroom talk. Brock (1986) found learner responses to referential questions were significantly longer and more syntactically complex than were their responses to display questions. The application of this widely accepted notion has been implemented in teacher training programs as well (Cullen, 1997; Thornbury, 1995). However, Wu (1993), in a study of ESL students in Hong Kong, found learners’

responses were restrictive rather than elaborate, regardless of question type, while Long and Crookes (1992) found display questions elicited more student turns; thus, caution should be exercised not to overemphasize the superiority of referential questions over display questions. The display question also plays an indispensable role in classroom discourse; as Lee (2006) suggested, they “are central resources whereby language teachers and students organize their lessons and produce language pedagogy” (p. 691).

A synthesis of the research to date on referential and display questions equips this study with an integrative stance on the use of different question types, justified by the “goals and agenda of the educational institution” (Ho, 2005, p. 297).

(4) Learner talk

In the present study, learner talk is defined as the utterances contributed by learners to classroom discourse. The language a learner uses in classrooms is reciprocally interrelated to teacher talk, and this sub-section mainly addresses how the quantity and quality of learner talk shapes the overall landscape of classroom discourse. Learners’ contributions were examined in terms of time and length to reveal learner participation in classroom discourse. However, quantity of learner talk alone provides only an elaborate description, thus the average length per move was also examined to describe its general feature.

Another aspect of learner talk addressed here is its restrictiveness—i.e., how much of what students is partially or fully repeating what they are exposed to in classroom instruction. As with the different types of teacher questions, the taxonomy of learner talk here does not indicate a rigid bisection between restricted and unrestricted learner talk, but an ecologically sound distribution of two types of learner talk to conduce effective language learning. Restricted learner talk, which is omnipresent in traditional classrooms featuring drill practice, has a facilitative impact on language learning (for example, Roebuck & Wagner, 2004; Shrestha, 2013; Skehan, 1998). However, in her study, Duff (2000) illustrated drill practice activities can also become burdensome to learners. From a socio-cultural perspective, “repetition is seen as a valuable tool for achieving self-regulation” (Ellis, 2012, p. 177).

Unrestricted learner talk, which is more likely to involve learners’ free production, is more likely to resemble authentic interaction, and is conducive to language learning according to the basic tenets of communicative language learning. It is through free production that learners participate in classroom interaction in which language development is achieved from other-regulated to self-regulated learning.

(5) Participatory organization

Participatory organization refers to “the way in which students are organized” (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995, p. 15). In this study, participatory organization is operationalized as different combinations of interlocutors in classroom interaction. So far, an abundance of research has informed the present study with empirical

evidence of the mediating role played by student-centered interaction in language learning. From a socio-cultural perspective, Donato's (1994) study supported that "learners can provide guided support to their peers during collaborative L2 interactions in ways analogous to expert scaffolding" (Donato, 1994, p. 51). Studies also found learner-centered classroom discourse provides more opportunities for negotiation, in comparison with teacher-centered discourse (Antón, 1999). Also, peer-peer collaborative dialogue mediates second language learning; it is essential to inform learners of the justification of peer mediated learning (Swain et al., 2002), and learners are involved in peer assistance through co-construction and prompting (Foster & Ohta, 2005).

This study examines participatory organization in language classrooms by broadly classifying it into two types—teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction. The former is further divided into sub-categories according to how learners participate in interaction with the teacher; specifically, whether a learner speaks in a monologue, spontaneously responds to the teacher with other peers, or speaks in chorus with other students.

(6) Focus on meaning versus forms

Traditional language teaching based on structural syllabi has targeted building linguistic competence by emphasizing grammatical rules, or "focus on forms" (Long, 1991). In focus-on-forms instruction, the target language is treated as an object to be learned, rather than a tool for communication, and language learning as habit formation (Skinner, 1957). When teaching is directed at linguistic forms, activities involving drill repetition and memorization are abundant in language classrooms. Though the linguistic resources learners develop through focus-on-forms instruction play a role in learner's interlanguage development, linguistic competence cannot be fully developed without providing learners opportunities to focus on meaning (Ellis, 2005). However, activities targeted at meaningful communication should not exclude attention to linguistic forms. According to Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990, 1993), second language learning involves learners' conscious mental processes. Focus-on-form instruction targeting mapping meaning and form is also supported by Long's (1985, 1996) interaction hypothesis, which argues that negotiated interaction facilitates language development. Thus, focus-on-form pedagogy informs the basic tenet of curriculum innovation in the DP—that is, the primary focus of classroom instruction is on meaning and attention should also be given to linguistic forms (Ellis, 2005).

When dealing with micro-analyses of classroom interaction in this study, 'meaning-focused' exchanges refer to the reciprocal moves in which information transaction occurs, while 'form-focused' exchanges mainly deal with linguistic features of the target language, including grammatical, phonological, or lexical forms. 'Meaning and form' exchanges comprise those speech acts combining information transaction and elaboration of a linguistic aspect.

(7) Discourse structures

IRF exchange, or the ‘triadic dialogue’ as referred by Lemke (1990), is a three-part exchange structure that is ubiquitous and dominant in all classrooms (Ellis, 2012). As its name suggests, the IRF exchange pattern consists of a teacher-initiation move, a student-response move, and a follow-up move by the teacher. van Lier (1994) listed eight main characteristics of the IRF exchange:

- (1) It is three turn long.
- (2) The first and the third turn are produced by the teacher, and the second one by the student.
- (3) The exchange is started and ended by the teacher.
- (4) The student’s turn is sandwiched between two teacher’s turns, and is often brief and elliptical in nature.
- (5) The first teacher’s turn is designed to elicit some kind of verbal response from a student. The teacher often already knows the answer (is ‘primary knower’).
- (6) The second teacher’s turn (the third turn in the exchange) is some kind of comment on the second turn, or on the ‘fit’ between the second and the first.
- (7) It is often clear from the third turn whether or not the teacher was interested in the message contained in the response, or merely in the form of the answer, or in seeing if the student knew the answer or not.
- (8) If the exchange is part of a series, as is often the case, there is behind the series a plan and a direction determined by the teacher. The teacher ‘leads’ the students.

(van Lier 1994: 73)

While the ubiquity of triadic dialogues or IRF patterns in classroom discourse is widely acknowledged (Lemke, 1990; Waring, 2009; Wells, 1993), how IRF exchanges induce opportunities for language learning remains controversial. Studies (Kasper 2001; Lerner 1995) have reported the IRF pattern has limited effects on learning, given the limited space it provides for learner participation and negotiation. However, other researchers (for example, Gourlay, 2005; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Seedhouse, 1996; Waring, 2009) hold different views, in support of the facilitative contribution of IRF exchanges. Ellis (2012) maintained that “IRF is not a monolithic structure, but, in fact, highly varied” (p. 91). His view is in line with what van Lier’s (2000) proposed ‘IRF continuum’ (p. 94), in which he argued that it is the depth of processing involved that determines its contribution to learning. According to van Lier, the continuum ranges from ‘recitation’ at the bottom, to ‘display’ and ‘recognition’ in the middle, and ‘precision’ at the top.

Motivated by a communicative approach for language learning, the DP adopted an integrative perspective to examine IRF patterns as an indicator of communicativeness in FLT classes. In addition, the initiation and response moves were regarded as operational domains teacher education programs could target to enhance PTs’ professional expertise. Traditional classrooms are infused with an enclosed form of IRF, in which the response moves are restricted in form and normally induce classroom interaction that is not oriented towards the exchange of meaning. In this study, teachers’ making interactive decisions to deploy initiation and follow-up moves to accommodate learners’ level of cognitive processing and provide opportunities for free production with exemplification, expansion, and

verification, is perceived a sign of development (Cullen, 2002). As the constituent structure illustrated in Fig. 2.1 reveals, the IRF pattern's contribution to language learning depends largely on whether and how the teacher manipulates the initiation move and follow-up move in the nuclear exchange to create one or more subsequent dependent exchanges in which extended learner production is elicited, as illustrated in the following two episodes, selected from two classroom discourses the research observed:

Episode 2.1

(1)	T: (Pointing to a picture on PPT a slide) What does this man do?	I	Nuclear exchange
(2)	S: He is a singer.	R	
(3)	T: Right. Sit down, please.	F	

Episode 2.2

(1)	T: (Pointing to a picture on a PPT slide) What does this man do?	I	Nuclear exchange
(2)	S: He is a singer.	R	
(3)	T: Right.	F	
(4)	T: Why do you think he is a singer?	I	Dependent exchange
(5)	S: Because he performs on the stage with fancy costume.	R	
(6)	T: Yes, you're very clever.	F	

In the two episodes shown above, the same question asked by the teacher constituted the initiation move in the nuclear exchange. Obviously, the teacher was the primary knower when asking this question. What distinguishes these two excerpts is the third move. As Episode 2.1 shows, the teacher put an end to communication by giving an evaluative comment on the student's response, whereas in the same move of Episode 2.2, the teacher added another question, to which she was the secondary knower and let the student justify his answer to the first question; this question generated a subsequent dependent exchange in which space was created for language learning to take place.

Another prominent aspect of IRF research focuses on the initiator to examine teacher-led or student-initiated IRF exchanges. Ernst (1994) put forward the talking circle as a communicative activity to generate opportunities for student-led talk. In Johnson's study (1995), she provided examples of student-initiated talk that assimilates adult-child interaction in authentic out-of-class interactions, and is conducive to L1 learning. Ellis (2012) also pointed out "task-based teaching affords opportunities for student-initiated discourse" (p. 92). It can be found from relevant studies that student-initiated talk is more likely to take place when traditional teacher-fronted classrooms are converted into student-centered ones, or in activities featuring communicativeness. In the present study, providing opportunities for student-initiated exchanges was perceived as an indicator of teachers' departure from traditional pedagogy.

To sum up, the framework for effective language teaching that informs the DP highlights building a vibrant classroom community where the teacher makes numerous interactive decisions and maneuvers, to co-construct interaction with learners that contributes to the achievement of instructional goals. As can be shown in the principles above, the notion of effective teaching in the Danyang Project indicates a strong inclination to depart from traditional teacher-fronted teaching pedagogy, which is based on structural syllabus, focuses predominantly on language forms, and draws largely on grammar-translation or PPP methods. Nevertheless, formulation of these principles and framework alone does not guarantee successful implementation, and involves changing teachers' cognitions and practices to implement innovative pedagogy (see for example, Carless, 2003; Fullan, 2001; Kirkgöz, 2008).

2.4 Curriculum Innovation: Theory and Research

2.4.1 *Defining Curriculum Innovation*

Curriculum innovation is defined in various ways, several of which are summarized in Table 2.3, that reveal some general characteristics of curriculum innovations. First, curriculum innovation is targeted at enhancing students' learning and development, and is often managed in a planned manner. Second, curriculum innovation is enacted through the development and implementation of educational products (i.e., instructional materials, methodological skills, etc.) that reflect new values and ideology. Third, curriculum involves possible changes in stakeholders' beliefs and behaviors. Fourth,

Table 2.3 A summary of definitions of curriculum innovation

Researcher	Definition
Rogers (1983, p. 11)	"...the documented infusion of new content or methodology to a course of study to improve or enhance student learning. Curriculum innovation is defined as broad initiatives, and not the nuances or idiosyncratic shifts that occur from teacher to teacher or classroom to classroom."
Markee (1997, p. 46)	"Curriculum innovation is a managed process of development whose principal products are teaching (and/or testing) materials, methodological skills, and pedagogical values that are perceived as new by potential adopters."
Fullan (2001, p. 25)	(1) the possible use of new or revised materials (instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies), (2) the possible use of new teaching approaches (i.e., new teaching strategies or activities), and (3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g., pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programs)."
Marsh (2009, p. 114)	"A working definition of innovation is the planned application of ends or means, new or different from those which exist currently in classroom, school or system, and intended to improve effectiveness for the stakeholders."

curriculum innovation is enacted within a multi-dimensional socio-cultural system encompassing learners, teachers, school administrators, parents, etc.

To a certain extent, it can be argued that the history of foreign language teaching has been spurred by curriculum innovations. From audiolingualism, which stresses habit formation, to the Natural Approach, which features communication in classrooms and meaning-focused teaching, to the communicative approach and task-based language teaching, which emphasize meaning-oriented communication, while still attending to linguistic forms.

Markee (1997) distinguished between “primary innovation,” which consists of the core dimensions of educational change, and “secondary innovations,” which are the organization developments underpinning the primary innovation. He maintained that “the function of secondary innovations is restricted to enabling primary innovations” (1997, p. 53).

According to Ellis (1997), there are two types of innovation—“absolute innovation” and “perceived innovation.” The former contains completely new proposals yet to be testified in practice, while the latter refers to ideas or practices that are new to the specific practitioners (pp. 26–27). Drawing on the scarcity of innovatory pedagogical proposals generated in SLA, Ellis suggested most innovations in this field fall into the second category.

Applying what has been discussed so far to the Danyang Project, it could be found that its underlying notions and implementation process conform to the characteristics of curriculum innovation in general. Apart from those common features, the DP is a perceived innovation implemented in a longitudinal and intensive manner.

2.4.2 Influencing Factors of Implementing Curriculum Innovation

Disappointing or even frustrating as it may sound, numerous studies worldwide have reported that large scale curriculum innovations are seldom implemented in teaching practice in the manner their developers or policy makers expected (for example, Zheng, 2005; Zheng & Davison, 2008; China; Carless, 2001, 2003, 2004; Hong Kong; Li, 1998; South Korea; Curdt-Christiansen & Silver, 2012, 2013; Singapore; Orafi & Borg, 2009; Libya; Tomlinson, 1990; Indonesia). What factors influence the implementation and effectiveness of curriculum innovation? Table 2.4 synthesizes empirical findings addressing this question.

Apart from the influencing factors listed in Table 2.3, Ellis (1997) synthesized four components that could contribute to the implementing effect of curriculum innovation: (1) socio-cultural context; (2) practitioners’ personal traits and expertise; (3) how the method is implemented; and, (4) the attributes of innovation.

In a similar but more elaborated way, Markee (1997) suggested the following general principles to implement a curriculum innovation:

Table 2.4 A synthesis of factors influencing innovation from empirical studies

Studies	Settings	Factors influencing innovation
Carless (2003)	Primary schools in Hong Kong	Teacher beliefs, teacher understandings, the syllabus time available, the textbook and the topic; preparation and the available resources; the language proficiency of the students (2003, p. 485)
Li (1998)	Secondary schools in South Korea	Difficulties caused by the teacher, the students, and the educational system
Curdt-Christiansen and Silver (2012, 2013)	Primary schools in Singapore	Centralized educational structures, examination-oriented systems, and societal cultural frameworks (2013, p. 246)
Orafi and Borg (2009)	Secondary schools in Libya	Teacher training, established practices, assessment, teachers' perceptions of students' abilities
Tomlinson 1990	Indonesian junior and senior high schools	The attitudes and personality of the teacher; rapport between students and teacher; locally appropriate version of the communicative approach (Tomlinson, 1990, p. 36)
Zheng (2005), Zheng and Davison (2008)	A Chinese secondary school	External factors, internal factors and situated forces

Principle 1. Curricular innovation is a complex phenomenon.

Principle 2. The principal job of change agents is to effect desired changes.

Principle 3. Good communication among project participants is a key to successful curricular innovation.

Principle 4. The successful implementation of educational innovations is based on a strategic approach to managing change.

Principle 5. Innovation is an inherently messy, unpredictable business.

Principle 6. It always takes longer to effect change than originally anticipated.

Principle 7. There is a high likelihood that change agents' proposals will be misunderstood.

Principle 8. It is important for implementers to have a stake in the innovations they are expected to implement.

Principle 9. It is important for change agents to work through opinion leaders, who can influence their peers.

(Markee, 1997, pp. 172–179)

Drawing on research findings from a large number of empirical studies, Underwood (2012) reviewed factors reported to have hindering effects on mandated curriculum innovation, including “difficult classroom conditions, the absence of training, an unsupportive school environment, insufficient resources, and mismatched, high-stakes assessment” (pp. 911–912). Fullan (2001) listed nine factors, divided into three categories—characteristics of change, local characteristics, and external factors—that influence the implementation of an innovation project (see Fig. 2.3).

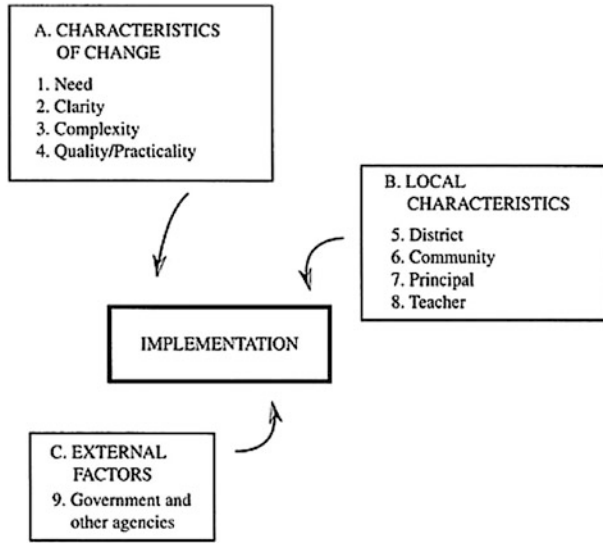


Fig. 2.3 Interactive factors affecting implementation (Fullan, 2001, p. 47)

Both theoretical and empirical studies add our understandings of the components influencing the implementation of curriculum innovation, which roughly fall into three categories. The first is perception—that is, how stakeholders perceive or believe about the change and its potential effects. The second is contextual condition—specifically, the policy that guarantees financial and intellectual resources are provided to support the innovation. The last is implemental realities—in other words, how the process of enactment is organized and coordinated, how stakeholders involved interact with each other, and how opinion leaders in the community influence the trajectory of change. These components have also been referred to as “the subjective reality of curriculum implementation” (Underwood, 2012, p. 911).

These components are interrelated, and work dynamically to influence what is happening in educational settings. As Markee (1997) noted, “curricular innovation is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon” (p. 39). Other researchers have offered congruent views (for example, Carless, 2003; Kirkgöz, 2008; Orafi & Borg, 2009) stating that, among all change agents involved in educational change, teacher factors (e.g., teacher belief, perception, attitude, thinking, decision-making, knowledge, and practices) play a pivotal role. As stated by Orafi & Borg (2009), “the uptake of an educational innovation can be limited when it is not congruent with and does not take into consideration the cognitive and contextual realities of teacher’s work” (p. 243).

2.5 Teacher Cognition: Theory and Research

2.5.1 Defining Teacher Cognition

The last three decades have witnessed the development of research on teacher cognition. While signaling the robustness of the domain of enquiry, the proliferation of terminologies in these studies has also admittedly led to “definitional confusion” (Clandinin and Connelly, 1987; Eisenhart et al., 1988; Woods, 2011). For the sake of simplicity and conformity, the present study adopts the umbrella term ‘teacher cognition,’ defined by Borg (2006) as “the complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs that language teachers draw on in their work” (2006, p. 272). In his later publication, Borg (2012) proposed three core constructs of language teacher cognition—how teachers “think, know, and believe” (2012, p. 11). This definition of teacher cognition aligns with Ellis’s (2004) definition of teacher beliefs as “statements teachers made about their ideas, thoughts, and knowledge that are expressed as evaluations of what ‘should be done’, ‘should be the case’, and ‘is preferable’” (2004, p. 244).

2.5.2 Teacher Cognition and Teaching Practices: Consistency or Inconsistency

In recent years, teacher cognition has attracted considerable research interest. In the field of language teacher education, the bulk of research has explored the correspondence between teacher cognition and teaching practices, addressing the recurrent question of whether these two conceptual areas exist in consistent juxtaposition in language teachers’ career life (Basturkmen, 2012).

There is a consensus that a teacher’s belief system plays an essential role in a his or her teaching practice, by informing, motivating, guiding, or shaping his or her decision-making process and pedagogical behaviors (Borg, 2003, 2011; Burns, 1992; Fang 1996; Johnson, 1992). A proliferation of research since the beginning of the 1990s has yielded findings that have range from being very inconsistent, to being highly consistent. For instance, Johnson (1992) investigated how three ESL teachers’ theoretical beliefs corresponded with their pedagogical practice, and found there was consistency between literacy instruction and those teachers’ theoretical orientation. Similar results were found in other studies (see, for example, Allen, 2002; Kern, 1995; Richardson et al., 1991). However, not surprisingly, inconsistency between language teachers’ beliefs and teaching practices was reported by researchers (Kumaravadivelu, 1993; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Roehler & Duff, 1991). Despite the controversy over whether and how language teachers’ belief systems affects their pedagogical practice, it is nearly certain the two are interactively and dialogically related, rather than mutually exclusive (Borg, 2003; Fang, 1996).

2.5.3 Factors Contributing to the Interplay between Teacher Cognition and Teaching Practices

A vital point here, however, is what accounts for the consistency or inconsistency between teachers' practices and their stated cognition. A synthesis of relevant literature sheds light on how personal, educational, and contextual factors influence how teachers' cognition and practices intertwine and interact.

In respect to the personal dimension, mainstream studies support the claim that individual teachers' prior learning experience, or "apprenticeship of observation" as lexicalized by Lortie (1975), largely influences their cognition (Freeman, 1993; Holt Reynolds, 1992; Nesper, 1987). In his oft-cited review article, Borg (2003) found teachers' preliminary ideas about language teaching were largely governed by their own experiences as language learners, and changes in trainee teachers' behaviors did not necessarily result in changes in their cognition. Other studies (see, for example, Johnson, 1994; Numrich, 1996; Woods, 1996) also reported how teachers' prior experience shaped their cognition and pedagogical decisions. In sum, the formation and transformation of teachers' cognition or practice is influenced by their prior learning experience, i.e., how they were taught by their teachers and how they learned as language learners. However, the bulk of research so far has provided little evidence to justify how teachers' prior working experience informs, influences, or interacts with their cognition and teaching practices.

Another central issue is whether, or to what extent, teacher education affects the relationship of between teacher cognition and teaching practice. Research, however, offers conflicting perspectives on the effectiveness of teacher education programs, both pre- and in-service, in changing teachers' cognitions. For instance, Kagan's (1992) widely-referenced review suggests no significant relationship between teacher education and teacher cognition; however, this claim could be regarded as premature, as subsequent studies found evidence of cognitive and behavior change in trainees (see, for example, Freeman, 1993; Peacock, 2001; Richards et al., 1996). The lack of consensus on such core issues as what counts as evidence of cognition, and how to measure its change highlights the themes to be investigated: the uniqueness of individual development, as opposed to a monolithic developmental pathway; the distinction and interaction between teachers' cognitive change and behavioral change; and, the mechanisms underpinning the process of change (Borg, 2003).

In addition to the personal and educational dimensions discussed above, the role of context in the agreement or conflict between teachers' cognition and practice has also been documented by a large body of literature. Contextual factors include the complexity and dynamics inside classrooms (Johnson, 1992a; Nunan, 1992), the students (Bailey 1996; Graden 1996), the school (Crookes & Arakaki, 1999; Richards & Pennington, 1998; Spada & Massey, 1992), and the social realities in the community and society (Burns, 1996). Dominant research has drawn on

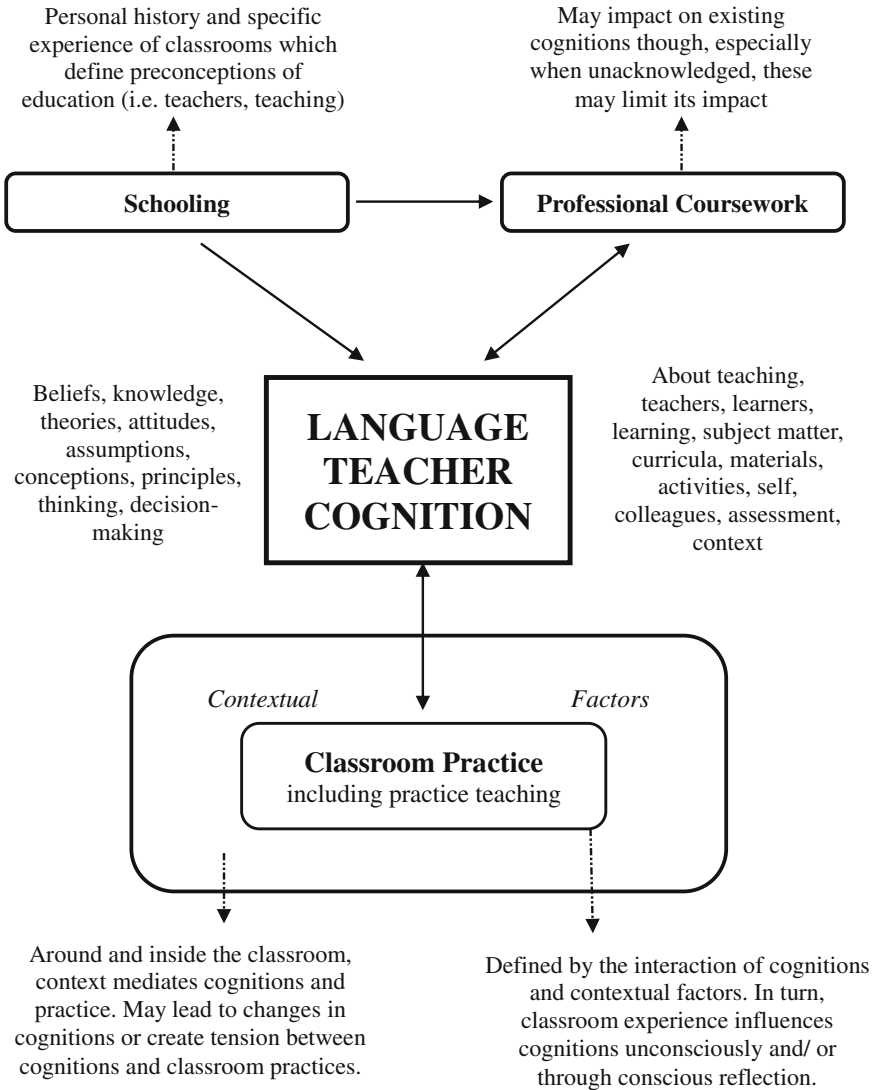


Fig. 2.4 Elements and processes in language teacher cognition (Borg, 2006, p. 283)

contextual factors as constraints explaining teachers' compromised or deviant practices, in relation to their stated beliefs. Nevertheless, the literature expresses reservations about this supposed causal relationship, and a longitudinal study is needed to investigate whether and how changes in context lead to teachers' cognitive and behavioral changes.

Borg's breakthrough work on language teacher cognition formulates a framework (illustrated in Fig. 2.4) for teacher cognition in which personal, context-specific, and social dimensions of language teachers are addressed. This largely overcomes the drawbacks of such earlier models as Belief, Assumptions, and Knowledge (BAK) (Woods, 1996) and Teacher Perspectives Inventory (TPI) (Pratt et al., 1998), both of which drew on teachers' individual and personal cognition. Figure 2.3 indicates the factors influencing language teacher cognition are schooling, professional coursework, and classroom practice, among which schooling is the only factor that has unidirectional effects; schooling also influences professional coursework in a unidirectional way. The figure shows mutual interaction between professional work and classroom practices, and language teacher cognition. This suggests that, although professional training does shape language teacher cognition, programs that do not consider trainees' prior learning experience, or that ignore their formed beliefs are likely to be unsuccessful. Borg's framework suggests classroom practices' relationship with language teachers' cognition is bidirectional and nonlinear, and that both are mediated by contextual factors outside and inside the classroom.

To summarize, most research supports the claim that language teachers' classroom practices are underpinned by their cognition; however, there is a paucity of studies documenting how changes in teachers' cognition and classroom practices take place and interact within curriculum innovation, and how they interact and interrelate with each other. These issues are of pivotal importance to language teachers and teacher educators, as it is a routine professional practice to deal with changes in language teachers' career life. These issues and the research gap they manifest have motivated the present study.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed extant studies of effective language classroom instruction, and formulated an operational framework by which to observe and examine whether and how changes took place in teachers' teaching behaviors in the DP. Given that the DP was a school-based curriculum innovation project, designed in alignment with the national foreign language curriculum innovation in Chinese basic education, curriculum innovation and the factors influencing its implementation are also reviewed. The third part of this chapter examined the relationships between two fundamental constructs in this study—teacher cognition and teaching practices—and justified the need to address these issues through longitudinal study.



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