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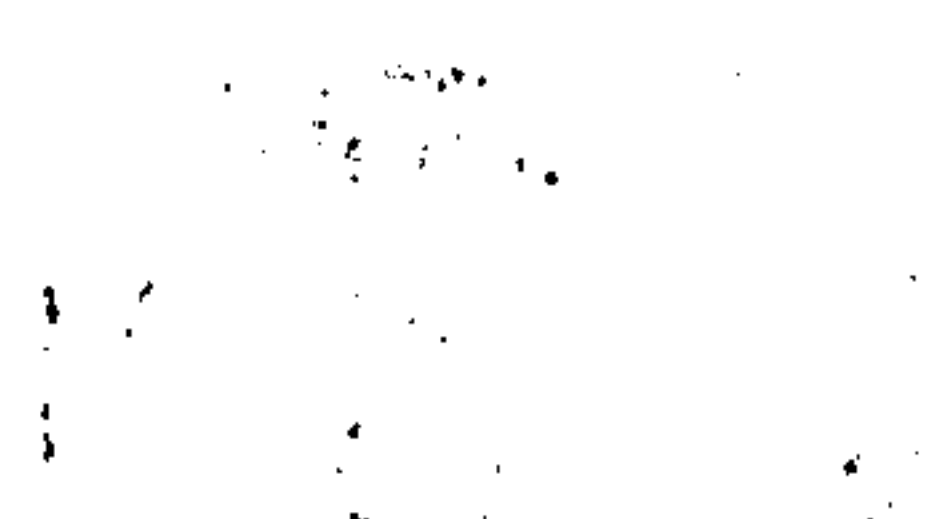
**‘Exploring Students’ and Teachers’ Perceptions of Roles in  
English Language Classrooms in Hong Kong’**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Ph. D.

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October 2002





## **Abstract**

The difference between roles prescribed by teaching methodology and roles that classroom participants are or are not willing to adopt is sometimes cited as one reason for the problems in the implementation of new teaching policy. Personal experience, consistent with such an argument, formed part of the rationale for this research into students' and teachers' perceptions of roles in language classrooms in Hong Kong. This thesis presents a pathway for exploring perceptions of roles of students and teachers through the development and use of a conceptual framework. This conceptual framework highlighted the need to explore the concepts of perceptions and roles, and the factors influencing roles. Explorations of these indicated that the research should include an analysis of the research context and two empirical studies. These studies focussed on attitudes, beliefs and cultural dimensions and data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The findings identified differences between the perceptions of roles expressed by students and teachers. Comparison was also made with reports from teachers and stereotypical images portrayed in the literature. While the findings and differences may in part be associated with the social and economic changes in Hong Kong, they also provide insights that potentially offer greater understanding about the role relationship between students and teachers. These insights include possible implications of these findings for teaching approaches, curriculum and materials design, educational change and teacher education. The findings illustrate that students' and teachers' beliefs need to be investigated more deeply to ensure that further information is gained that can be applied to the teaching and learning process.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank: my family and husband Derek for their encouragement, Dr. Nicki Hedge and Louise Hayward for their unfailing support, and guidance during the conceptualisation and development of this research, the informants and the British Council and Hong Kong Education Department for permission to collect the data.

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## **Section 1: Introduction**

### **Introduction**

The interactive nature of the teaching and learning process is built on a relationship between teachers and students that requires them to assume specific roles. The roles might be dependent upon a teaching methodology and implicit within these roles may be certain interaction patterns. Sedlak *et al.* (1986:110) recognise interaction between students and teachers as important as it ‘can be allowed to shape or even control access to knowledge.’ The resulting roles might lead to excitement, disappointment, clashes or unity within the classroom that affect the teaching and learning process positively or negatively. In descriptions of roles, stereotypical images are frequently established within a community, perhaps giving a less than accurate picture of roles for teachers and learners. Such a situation was highlighted through personal teaching experience in Asia, specifically in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong the literature and reports from teachers often cite students as being passive in the classroom, yet personal teaching experience did not match these descriptions. This experience and other reasons for the research are reflected below in the rationale, and exploring both students’ and teachers’ roles in Hong Kong became the research focus with the aim to seek to deepen understanding of what appeared a complex area. The research comprised several studies with different groups of students, teachers and student teachers as the informants. It was considered that the findings might have implications for the teaching and learning process and for such areas as the relationships between teachers and students, teaching approaches, curriculum design and materials development, the management of educational policy and change, and teacher education.

Investigating roles is challenging because, as Wright (1987:iii) acknowledges, ‘many different and complex factors influence the roles that teachers and learners adopt in the classroom.’ He suggests that there is a need to understand roles and their influencing factors if knowledge about the teaching and learning process is to be



enhanced. The initial starting point for the research was a consideration of the concept of role to identify influencing factors that could be investigated to inform knowledge of roles. This formed the basis for the conceptual framework and from this other areas were highlighted for investigation. For example, as Wright (1987) recognises, education and roles are deeply influenced by beliefs and attitudes. From such information attitudes and beliefs were identified for exploration in Study 1 – Attitudes and beliefs, through questionnaires and interviews. A further influencing factor that both Hoyle (1969) and Wright (1987) identified was the cultural context of a society and the classroom context including the teaching methodology. These were explored through an analysis of elements of Hong Kong society and classrooms, and through Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions, that sought data using a questionnaire on dimensions of specific cultural values.

The aim of the research was not to confirm or refute hypotheses or to find facts but to gain information that could inform understanding about roles and so the research approach adopted was, according to Grotjahn (1987), an exploratory one. This is in contrast to what Redding (1997) describes as a research approach that looks in isolation at one element and segments the research into tiny pieces. He claims this leads to understanding more and more about less and less, therefore making it difficult to construct general theories or ideas which connect up the various disciplines, various layers and the levels of analysis involved. Whilst this research was not concerned with constructing general theories it was clear from an initial review of literature that for an exploration of a concept such as roles, it would be necessary to draw on literature from various disciplines. In addition, the concept of roles highlighted various layers for investigation, and analysis would need to be completed at different levels. Inevitably, this would necessitate a synthesis of all the information to understand more about students' and teachers' roles.

As noted above, questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain data and in writing up the thesis several decisions were made regarding the inclusion of excerpts from informants, the need to refer to data from the research early in the thesis, and

the review of literature. With regard to the first and second decisions, excerpts from the interview data from both teachers (n=15) and student teachers (n=6) are presented throughout the thesis, including this section. In addition, excerpts from students' descriptions (n=170) of English classes from Study 1 – Attitudes and beliefs questionnaires are also presented at various stages in the thesis. All extracts are indicated in italics and given verbatim to maintain the integrity of the data. The extracts provide empirical data and are used to highlight points or illustrate ideas being discussed. For example, the analysis of Hong Kong classrooms (Section 3) includes excerpts from both the interview data and the descriptions of the English lessons to provide a more detailed picture of the context. The descriptions of English lessons were analysed according to key words and ideas (see Section 4). One criticism of this could be that they are isolated comments and that selective citation has been used. The rationale for the inclusion of the quotes is in an attempt to share the findings and extend understanding with examples of what teachers and student teachers think and believe. The data collection is outlined fully in Section 4. The transcriptions and descriptions can be found in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 respectively. A third decision in the organisation of the thesis was that the review of literature should be incorporated throughout as the research was exploratory and it was necessary to continually refer to the literature from various fields to inform emerging and developing ideas.

This introduction has provided a brief outline of the topic for the research, an indication of how the research was completed and some information about the presentation of the thesis. The focus in the next part of this section is on the rationale for the research.



## **Rationale**

There were a number of reasons motivating the selection of this research topic and the research methodology. These included a personal perspective, other studies into roles and perceptions of teaching and learning, and finally, the situation in the Hong Kong regarding their language policy and an apparent gap between theory and practice.

### **a) A personal perspective**

Interest in roles stemmed from observing the behaviour of students I was teaching in classrooms in Brunei, Japan and Hong Kong. From this behaviour, perceptions of the students in the classroom were gained that were different from the passive learning behaviour that I had been led to expect was typical of students in South East Asia. In my classes, and in some other Western teachers' classes, the students were active participants, willing to work in pairs or undertake group work and volunteer answers. While there could be many explanations for such apparently active participation, including the novelty of being taught by a teacher from a different culture, the question was raised regarding how students perceived their own and the teacher's role.

According to the literature (Nolasco and Arthur, 1986; Tsui, 1995; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996) there were, and apparently still are, many teachers in Asia who label their students as passive learners. Descriptions of such students indicate that they sit quietly in their seats and will not engage actively with the teachers in interaction. Moreover they may expect the teacher to be the knower and giver of knowledge. In this study such behaviour was highlighted in comments in interviews with teachers (see Appendix 1 for transcription of interviews.). For example, one teacher said,

*I can't do communicative teaching. My students just sit there. They want spoon feeding.* (Group 1, Teacher 5 – Appendix 1)

Another teacher described herself in the classroom as,

*A one-man show sometimes. [Do] Anything, [so] they don't have to think. Have to do a lot of things to help them because they are so passive. (Group 3, Teacher 3 – Appendix 1)*

A student teacher described her students thus,

*My own personal view of HK students are passive because when I was a student, my classmates were very passive. (Student teacher W – Appendix 2)*

In this last excerpt the student teacher has drawn on her own experience as a student to justify her view, perhaps indicating that student teachers are reliant on their experience in the formation of their perceptions of students' roles. This portrayal of students as passive learners was reinforced in conversations with teachers and student teachers in other South East Asian countries, including Thailand, Brunei, Japan and Singapore. Such conversation content was particularly frequent at conferences where I was often presenting workshops on task-based learning. This approach, in part, requires students to take an active participatory role in the classroom. Many teachers saw the use of a task-based approach as problematic for themselves, their classrooms and the students. They specifically identified their students as passive learners and cited other problems such as large classes and noise as reasons not to use task-based activities. The pressures of examinations were also identified as compounding the problems in using a task-based approach.

This passive/active view of students' participation is perhaps a false one, though it is one used by teachers as noted above and by the literature. The over-simplification regarding the active/passive dichotomy is exemplified in this excerpt from a student teacher talking about students being passive. She states:

*...when I was a school student I did not think in this way. I did not think, oh I was passive, no, but I saw a lot of limitation in the classroom and I would not raise my hand even though I knew the answers. I wanted to answer the questions, but I would not raise my hand... when I answer the first question about my own experience what I looked at was the inside...I was not passive when I say I was not passive when I was a secondary school student. So when I look at my students I knew I knew many of them know the answer, many of them might want to answer the question and many of them would like to participate. They all want to learn. (Student teacher C – Appendix 2)*



The perspective illustrated in this comment represents a perspective different from the other teachers' comments above and is perhaps reflective of Marton and Booth's (1997) notion regarding the different ways of experiencing a phenomenon at different levels. As can be noted in the excerpt above, sitting and listening quietly might reflect passivity with regard to physical activity or linguistic interaction but it may not mean that the student is not actively engaging with the teacher mentally. This is an area that Biggs (1996) has investigated with respect to mental engagement, and he concluded that Asian students engage in learning at a deeper level than was first considered by Western analysis; this is discussed further in Section 2.

Additionally, there may be other cultural influences that result in specific behaviour and roles such as not answering the teacher. Teachers in Hong Kong often comment that learners who are labelled as passive may be suffering from 'tall poppy' syndrome. The syndrome refers to a person who does not want to stand out from the others by volunteering answers or asking the teacher's questions in front of the class. Wong (1984) and Walker (1997) identified other additional behaviour including hesitating before answering a teacher's question as being typical of Hong Kong students. A common reason cited by Walker (1997), and by informants in this study for such behaviour is not showing off in front of peers or taking responsibility for answering. This is illustrated by the excerpt below:

*...when I spoke to the students at recess time and said why didn't you answer my questions, why are you so quiet, because when you are so quiet you're wasting the whole class time, and then a few students tell me, 'Oh, you don't know? It's not because I don't want to answer question – it's because if I answer too many questions in the class, I being, how do I say that, the other students will not like me, they will say that I want to show off.' I think it is that kind of atmosphere that hinder the pupils. They don't want to speak up. Some teachers think it is good to have a quiet classroom, it's easy to control them. But I don't really agree. (Student teacher E – Appendix 2)*

In addition to the reasons given by the student teacher above, other explanations for answering behaviour are explored in Section 5. However, age and personality are also probably influences, as noted in these comments from teachers below:

*Every class is different. F1 and F2 even if they don't know me they are ever ready. But once they come to F3 I don't know what happened, they just*

*remain silent. Changes, physically as well. (Group 2, Teacher 1 – Appendix 1)*

*The junior forms are active, more active than the senior forms. When they are in F1 and F2 student they are not afraid of being laughed at by other students. But F3 students in fact they are concerned about this. Their superiority, if they say something wrong in English, then my classmates will laugh at me, so I don't want to be laughed at. (Group 3, Teacher 5 – Appendix 1)*

*I do agree with that. In lower forms they are more active and can talk, but once they reach F4 they want you to sort of like spoon feed them. They want information from you. They are more exam oriented. (Group 3, Teacher 5 – Appendix 1)*

These comments suggest the possibility that students change as they became older perhaps indicating that perceptions of roles change with age. This may mean that perceptions of roles are not static. This was the phenomenon investigated though a M.A. study (Aldred, 1994), as explained in the next sub-section, and was the second influence in the rationale for this research, which sought to gain a clearer understanding of students' and teachers' perceptions of their own roles and each others' roles.

#### **b) Other studies into roles and perceptions of the teaching/learning process**

The difference between my own teaching experience and the stereotypical passive label given to Asian learners was the initial driving force behind this thesis. As noted earlier, students' perceptions of roles had also been a focus for the research of my M.A. dissertation (Aldred, 1994). The focus of the M.A. dissertation was whether Hong Kong students' perceptions of role in the English language classroom changed with a new learning experience. The new learning experience was one of a very active communicative approach in small classes. A questionnaire was given to the students (n=61) at the beginning and the end of a four week course and data were collected regarding beliefs about students' and teachers' roles in the classroom, their expectations and their preferences for ways of learning. The findings indicated that the students' beliefs changed significantly for only two areas. There was a reduction in the number of students agreeing that they should be hesitant when answering



teachers' questions and an increase in the number of students agreeing that it was more important to talk in class than listen. In general the overall findings indicated a trend towards preferences for roles that included more active participation and interaction in the classroom. In addition, the results indicated tendencies for independence and responsibility in learning. Students also thought they were not passive in terms of their interaction and questioning behaviour with the teacher. Additional data, gathered using interviews and diaries, reinforced these findings and provided data on feelings about roles. Comments indicated that the students enjoyed taking active, participatory roles in the classroom but they also showed some dissatisfaction at the roles they were being offered in the school classroom.

Interestingly, this data threw up information that was at odds with the literature and the conversations with teachers discussed above that suggested students preferred to be passive learners. These findings appeared worthy of further investigation and were, consequently, another driving factor for this exploration. The findings also indicated an underlying problem with the M.A. research, as the exploration had not focussed on ascertaining what students' perceptions of roles were per se. Much like Redding's (1997) criticism of research with regard to segmenting research into pieces, referred to earlier, the focus of the research had been on the aspect of change rather than on establishing a base of information. Consequently, a revisit was required that would use a research process that would allow a more fundamental exploration of students' perceptions of roles.

Convergent with the differences highlighted above between students' own perceptions and those stereotypically reported, other studies over the past fifteen years have indicated that what one party thinks about aspects of language education is often not shared by other stakeholders. For example, in a study conducted by Brindley (1984) in a language school in Australia, teachers and students were interviewed to explore their views about language learning. The teachers were using a communicative approach in their classes and their comments about how they

viewed language learning were consistent with using communicative language teaching methodology. Comments from the teachers included:

*Learning consists of acquiring principles through encountering experiences.*

*The teacher is a resource person who provides language input for the learner to work on.*

*Language data is to be found everywhere - in the community, and in the media as well as in textbooks. (Brindley, 1984:97)*

The students of these teachers, on the other hand, held very different views about their learning as illustrated by the following statements:

*I just want a program so I know what I have to learn. They're the teachers. They know their jobs.*

*Without grammar you can't learn the language.*

*I want something I can take home and study. We do a lot of speaking but we never see it written down. (Brindley, 1984:96)*

Other studies investigating teachers' and students' perceptions about the teaching and learning environment yield results similar to Brindley (cf. Willing, 1988, and Nunan, 1988). Willing's (1988) study explored students' perceptions of the most useful parts of a language lesson and compared them with the perceptions of a group of teachers on a language migrant education programme. She discovered that the use of pair work, highly rated by the teachers, was rated as 'low' by the students in terms of usefulness. Another such example, given by Cortazzi and Jin (1996:186), reports on a Chinese student thanking her Western teacher at the end of the course. The student said that she had really enjoyed the class, but was unsure what she had learned or whether it would help her in the exam. The studies reveal clear differences between teachers' and learners' beliefs about language learning, how activities are valued and the roles that participants can play in the process. These differences highlight mismatches between the participants' views and suggest the need to observe and listen more carefully to both students and teachers regarding what they consider to be useful and important to inform the teaching and learning



process. The identification of potential mismatches between learners' and teachers' perceptions about learning and appropriate ways to learn might then be identified and acted on. The implications of such research further supported the decision to explore perceptions of roles.

Initially, the focus of the research here was on students' perceptions of roles, as this was the area of interest initiated through teaching experience. However, the preliminary data analysis, and the review of the studies referred to above, highlighted the need to include both teachers and student teachers in the exploration to provide a more complete picture. The inclusion of these groups would enable the exploration of similarities and possible differences between the students', teachers' and student teachers' perceptions of roles. It was also anticipated that student teachers might provide additional information regarding perceptions of roles as they were in a transition stage of moving from student to teacher. As Samuel and Stephens (2000) note, because of their situation student teachers can become critics of the existing educational system, and are able to comment on what is happening. From a review of the education and EFL literature it appears that although there are studies that look at teachers' roles (Holt-Reynolds, 2000), there are according to McCarger (1993), few published studies that compare aspects of student and teacher roles and the tensions between them. Thus limited research examining differences between the perceptions of the different participants in the classroom was another reason for the research. The final motivation for the research was the situation in Hong Kong regarding the language policy.

### **c) Hong Kong Language Policy - a gap between theory and reality**

Recently one Hong Kong teacher claimed:

... it's about time someone spilled the beans on something teachers have known for a long time - communicative language teaching doesn't work in Hong Kong schools. (TESL newsletter - Hong Kong, Vol. X, 1999)

In 1984 the Government of Hong Kong adopted communicative approaches for the new syllabus for language teaching (Education Committee Report, 1984). The

previous teaching approach was focused on form and function with a high degree of rote learning and mechanical manipulation of language. Government choices regarding the implementation of new teaching methods were a response to pressures to improve language standards and developments within educational theories with respect to the need for students to have opportunities to construct and transform knowledge to learn. As Wittrock (1977) acknowledges:

... methods of teaching should be designed to stimulate students to construct meaning from their own experience rather than stimulating them to reproduce the knowledge of others. (Wittrock, 1977:180)

By adopting approaches that would provide such opportunities the government aimed to improve language learning.

The adoption of a different teaching approach inevitably requires changes in roles for both students and teachers. However, in the 1980's there were many claims, by teachers and official working parties alike, that communicative approaches were failing to permeate classroom practice. This was perhaps not surprising considering the fact that communicative teaching approaches had, in effect, been transported from the West to the East and the differences between these contexts of use. For example communicative teaching approaches emphasise learner-centeredness and were largely developed in the Euro-centric contexts of independent language schools. Characteristically, these independent language schools cater for highly motivated student adults, in small classes, who are attending classes specifically to learn English for instrumental purposes, for example to gain language skills for business. In addition, the teachers are trained to teach language using communicative approaches and are likely to be native speakers. In contrast, in state schools in Asia class sizes are large, containing students with different types and levels of motivation. Teachers frequently come from traditional teaching and learning backgrounds, which may have been teacher rather than learner centred. The majority of the teachers are second language speakers who may lack confidence in their own English ability. This will be discussed further in Section 3, which focuses on the research context and Hong Kong classrooms.



In 1993, in response to allegations that communicative approaches were not being adopted, the Hong Kong government appointed a working party. It reported that many schools had:

... not fully embraced the communicative approach, preferring to concentrate on the formal features of the language at the expense of encouraging students to use the language. (Education Report, 1994:25)

While the working party's conclusion may have been correct, there seems to have been little attempt to understand why schools did not embrace communicative methodology. Some research has investigated what is actually happening in the classroom and this gives insights into classroom practice. For example, a survey by Richards *et al.* (1992) showed that, despite the changes in policy to embrace the communicative approach, the majority of teachers still used a grammar-based approach. This study also found that the three classroom activities most frequently employed were reading and writing exercises from the textbook, written grammar exercises, and composition. Richards *et al.* (1992) suggest these results indicate that, at the time of the research, teacher-dominated methodologies characterised Hong Kong's classrooms, with traditional approaches and values prevalent. Similarly, Evans (1996) argues that, since its introduction into classrooms in the late 1980's, communicative language teaching has had little impact on the way English is taught. From these reports it would seem that students and teachers continue to take on more traditional roles with the teacher as knower and giver of knowledge and the student expected to be a passive recipient. Consequently, the resulting scenario is not what the policy makers had envisaged, with many claims that there have been few changes for teachers and students regarding their roles in the language classroom.

An understanding of the difficulties for teachers in changing roles was observed while teaching on teacher education programmes. The aims of the programmes were to provide theory and practice to enable teachers to incorporate communicative language teaching approaches into their own teaching. These programmes encouraged the provision of opportunities for active participation for students in the classroom, for example, through pair and group-work and information gap activities.

Various tensions became evident in the programmes between the theory and classroom practice as highlighted by the following comment from a student teacher.

*I really want to apply what I've learned in the University but sometimes I find it hard to put into reality, because there is a little bit difference between what I have learned and the true world.* (Student teacher A – Appendix 2)

Such feelings are probably common to student teachers and teachers during the percolation process of combining professional identity and theory into a suitable role. The importance of 'getting it right' is acknowledged by Tarone and Yule (1989:10), as classroom problems might be predictable if there is a mismatch between perceptions and expectations of roles and actuality.

The change in language teaching policy that the Hong Kong government implemented in 1984 has been problematic and one reason for this, as recognised by Pepin (2000), is that the responsibility for change and transformation in education depends mostly upon the teacher. For policy makers involved in this and any other innovation, the ideas are probably clear. However, the teacher needs to understand the purpose for change, have the skills and confidence to interpret syllabi and be able to respond to pressures for change. These requirements are discussed at length in Sections 2, 3, and 6 with respect to the teachers in Hong Kong and the findings. Various studies concerning change have concluded that teachers' beliefs and dispositions are important factors influencing how individual teachers perceive and react to the teaching situation, and to calls for change (for a review of this see Clark and Peterson, 1986). One aspect in understanding change concerns differences between existing beliefs and beliefs underlying different teaching methodologies. Nunan (1988) considers such beliefs affect the development and application of teaching methodologies, so it would seem useful to explore such beliefs.

Taken together, these observations and readings began to highlight and suggest a possible need for all those involved in the teaching and learning process (students, teachers, student teachers and teacher educators) to know more about each other's individual perceptions of roles and beliefs about teaching and learning. Whilst a review of the education literature yields some research on changing roles (Fullan,



1999), there is as previously noted little research on gathering information regarding teachers' and students' perceptions of their own roles and others' roles.

Additionally, according to Cortazzi and Jin (1996), there are few studies that look at gaps between students' and teachers' perceptions and limited information on how such data might be obtained and analysed to better support and inform change. As Holliday (1994:3) argues, there is little advice about 'what we need to know about people and how we can find this out' to better understand the teaching and learning process. This lack of information had implications for the research approach, and this will be discussed in Section 2.

The process of implementation of new teaching approaches is clearly an area worthy of further investigation. As Holliday (1994) considers:

... we do not know enough about how learning might be affected by the attitudes and expectations that people bring to the learning situation, which are influenced by social forces within both the institution and the wider community outside the classroom, and which in turn influence the ways in which people deal with each other inside the classroom. (Holliday, 1994:9)

Ellis (1994), and Coleman (1996) support this view and highlight the centrality of appropriate methodology and social contexts, therefore increasing recognition that a classroom does not exist in a vacuum.

The rationale for the research has been explained. This included the need to find out more about students and teachers within the teaching and learning process especially with regard to change and challenging stereotypes. The research questions are now presented.

## **The research questions**

The research questions were established to address issues arising from the rationale. Four major questions were identified.

- a. What are students' perceptions of their own roles in language classrooms in Hong Kong?
- b. What are students' perceptions of teachers' roles in language classrooms in Hong Kong?
- c. What are teachers' perceptions of their own roles in language classrooms in Hong Kong?
- d. What are teachers' perceptions of students' roles in language classrooms in Hong Kong?

However, these research questions were not the only focus for the research, as other types of questions were developed to inform the research. These questions, deconstructed from the original research questions, can be clustered into the categories of information gathering questions, and information analysing questions. How these were incorporated into the research is now explained.

The research was designed in ways consistent with an exploratory approach (Grotjahn, 1987) and Section 4 provides a detailed analysis of the research. This exploratory approach was used throughout the study with regard to the literature review, the research design, the data analysis and the interpretation of the data. A conceptual framework was established to support the initial exploration of the concepts involved in the research. This exploration included studies of the concepts of perceptions and roles, and the information gained suggested that these concepts were problematic with both concepts being complex and contested. From this the need to draw on different fields, such as sociology and psychology, rather than just on the fields of education and especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education for information was identified. The use of different fields in the pursuit of information was consistent with Redding's (1997) holistic view, previously referred to, avoiding the consideration of elements in isolation. The information obtained



provided pathways for investigation into perceptions of roles. For example, the exploration of perceptions indicated that, according to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Rock (1990), perceptions are not directly observable but are mental constructs formed from the outside world. Such considerations explicitly influenced the conceptual research framework and the design of the research tools, including the decision to use questionnaires to investigate perceptions.

Similarly, the definition of roles influenced the research tools and their design. The work of Kelvin (1969) provided an initial understanding of roles, but roles were eventually interpreted according to the ideas of Hoyle (1969) and Wright (1987). Their work identified underlying attitudes, beliefs, expectations and preferences, as influencing teachers' and students' roles in different cultural contexts. Exploration of these features provided the direction for the research with regard to an analysis of the research context and the use of information gathering questions in Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs, to seek information about attitudes, beliefs, expectations and preferences. These information gathering questions included:

- a) What are students' attitudes to English language and learning English?
- b) What are student' and teachers' beliefs about
  - i. how to learn?
  - ii. group work and grouping preferences?
  - iii. error correction?
  - iv. responsibility for learning?
  - v. interaction?
  - vi. learning preferences?
  - vii. own behaviour?

However, on reviewing the literature on roles it was noted that the situation is probably more complicated, as the actions of one participant influenced by their beliefs, expectations or preferences, may directly influence the role the other participant can assume. Section 2 considers this interplay between the relationship of teachers and learner and possible differences between perceptions of roles and those roles observable in classrooms. Although the interplay between roles was not a

research question, the relationship between the perceptions of teachers and students had implications for understanding roles and for the analysis of the data collected. Therefore to guide the investigation and analysis of the data the information analysing question used was:

What, if any, are the similarities and differences between students and teachers beliefs regarding roles for themselves and each other?

The use of this question to analyse the possible interplay in the relationship between the teacher and student that could be inferred from the analysis became a central part of the discussion.

Several different informant groups were also incorporated into the research to provide a more complete picture of roles. One group of students (n=22) was investigated over time, other groups (n=41, 43, 31, and 34) were incorporated and investigated according to age and medium of instruction. Consequently different information analysing questions were required to reflect the different purposes of the micro studies. These questions included:

- a) What, if any, are the differences in students' beliefs regarding roles for themselves and teachers over time?
- b) What, if any, are the similarities and differences between different groups of students according to
  - i. age
  - ii. medium of instruction?

It was anticipated that the findings from these information analysing questions might provide information to further inform the research questions particularly in relation to perceptions of roles, over time, and for different the informant groups. From the definitions provided by Hoyle (1969) and Wright (1987) it was clear that roles are influenced by both social and psychological factors. These roles have associated with them sets of power relations and duties. The social factors include those drawn from the social context as well as the classroom culture. Prior to starting the data collection for the study into attitudes and beliefs about roles, referred to above,



another study that collected data on relevant teaching methodologies was undertaken (Miller and Aldred 2000). The findings indicated, via student teacher focus discussion groups, that culture and cultural dimensions were frequently mentioned as being underlying causes for the behaviour of both students and teachers in the classroom, as illustrated by these excerpts:

Group 1: *The role of the learners should be active, but in HK it is the tradition that Chinese culture does not allow them to do this...Chinese culture - avoid making mistakes, keep silent, no-one students likes to raise their hands.*

Group 2: *The teacher is superior... whereas in western culture the gap between teacher and student is smaller.* (Miller and Aldred, 2000:7 and 8)

From such comments the need to explore more specifically how variations in cultural dimensions may or may not influence perceptions of role became apparent, and a second study, Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions, was established. It was also considered that an investigation into culture might help to explain the findings in Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs. This second study used an established questionnaire for data collection based on the work of Hofstede (1980). The resulting scores related to the dimensions regarding Power Distance and Individualism. The rationale for the choice of this instrument is explained in Section 4. The information gathering question for Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions was:

What are students', student teachers' and teachers' beliefs about and perceptions of their cultural values regarding power distance and individuality/collectivism?

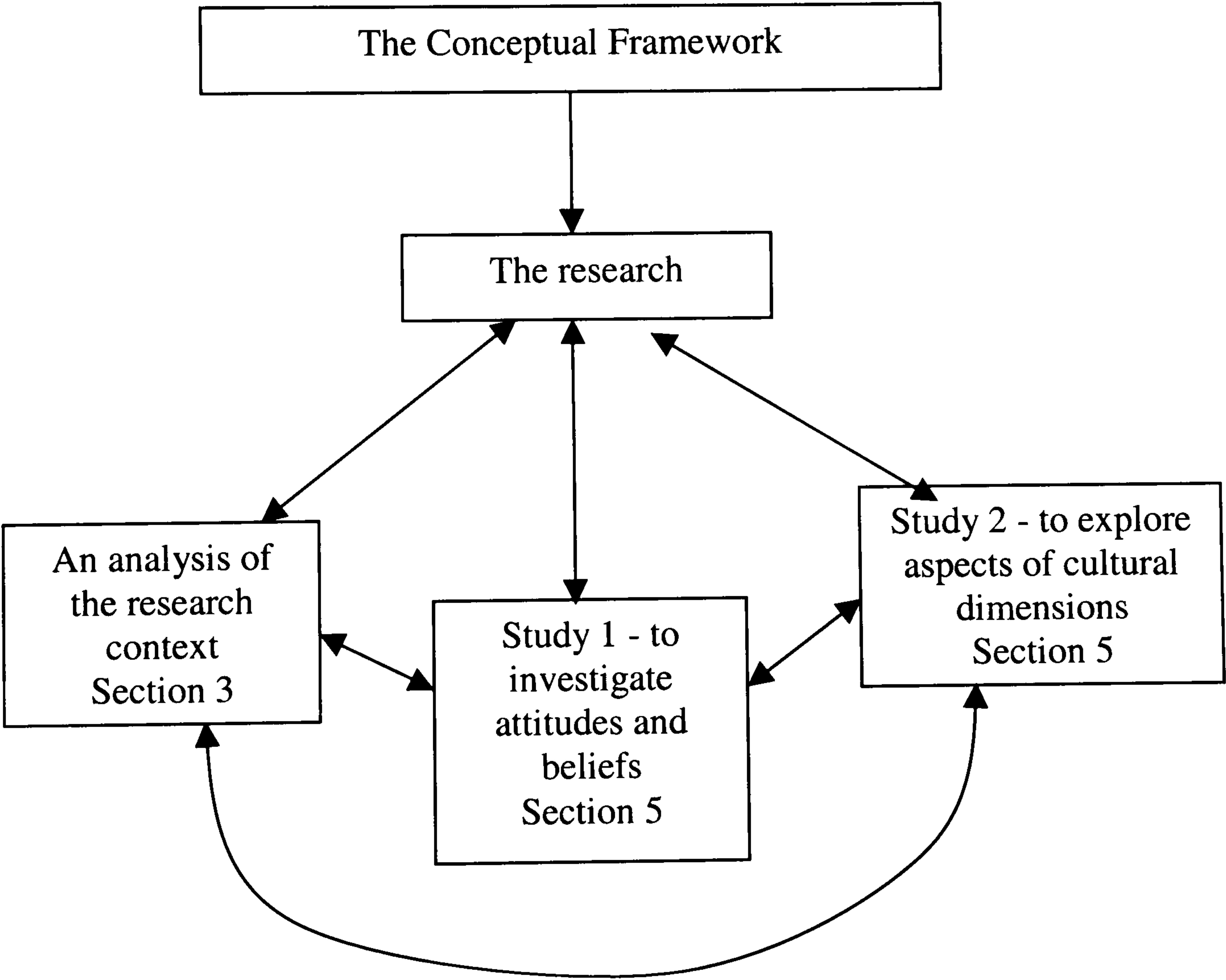
The information analysis questions used in the data analysis were:

- a) What, if any, are the similarities and differences between students', student teachers' and teachers' beliefs and perceptions regarding power distance and collectivism/individualism?
- b) How do the findings for power distance and individuality accord with other studies?
- c) Do these findings for power distance and individuality help to explain the findings in Study 1?

In the exploration of the concept of roles it is noted that other aspects including psychological aspects such as individuals’ personalities will also influence roles (Wright 1987). However, as this research had to be limited in scope, attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning and cultural dimensions were selected as the foci.

The following diagram summarises the information given here and the areas included in the research and how the information from one area informed others.

Figure 1.1 – An overview of the research



## **Thesis overview**

In this section the rationale for the research has been explained and the research and research questions introduced. Section 2 explores the concepts of perception and roles and presents the framework for exploring roles. The problematic nature of attempting to define roles is discussed. An explanation is given regarding the various understanding of roles and associated concepts and how they were used to inform the framework for the exploration. These understandings include some of the influences thought to impinge upon roles. The idea that the roles observed in the classroom may be different from an individual's internal perception of roles is also introduced.

Section 3 analyses the research context with an overview of the economic and political situation highlighting the changing face of Hong Kong. A description of the language background of the territory and the education system, a legacy of British colonial rule, follows. This description identifies the pertinent issues, medium of instruction and teaching methodologies. Finally, some of the features and characteristics of a Hong Kong classroom are discussed.

The research narrative in Section 4 explains how the research comprises a series of research micro-studies all based in Hong Kong. The rationale for the expansion of the original research to include teachers, student teachers and other groups of students to explore the possible effects of time, age and medium of instruction on perceptions of role is explained. The research approach, the informants and the research tools are described and the data collection procedure outlined. Links are made between the references to literature in Sections 2 and 3 to illustrate how this information was used to inform the design of the research. For example, Riley's (1988) ideas about language and learning informed the design of the questionnaires in Study 1. For Study 2 the work of Hofstede (1980) is introduced and it is noted how his work is frequently drawn on for information regarding the cultural dimensions of society. Study 2 uses a questionnaire designed by Goodman (1994)



based on the work of Hofstede (1980) to gain information regarding cultural dimensions and roles. In Section 5 the findings of both studies are presented and discussed and a critique of the research is offered.

Section 6 draws together the findings in relation to the research questions and considers the possible implications of the research for the teaching and learning process. The findings are interrogated and implications for pedagogy with respect to teaching methodology, classroom behaviour, and the relationships between students and teacher education are identified. The findings are also discussed with respect to educational change. Finally, the concluding section considers the various research themes and reflects on the nature of the research process.

## **Section 2: The Conceptual Framework**

### **Introduction**

In Section 1, the rationale underpinning this research and the research questions were explained. Initially in this section reference is made to the concept of a research cycle that advocates the use of a conceptual framework. The discussion is then focussed on the development of such a conceptual framework. This framework highlights possible pathways for exploring perceptions of roles through the understanding of the concepts incorporated within the framework.

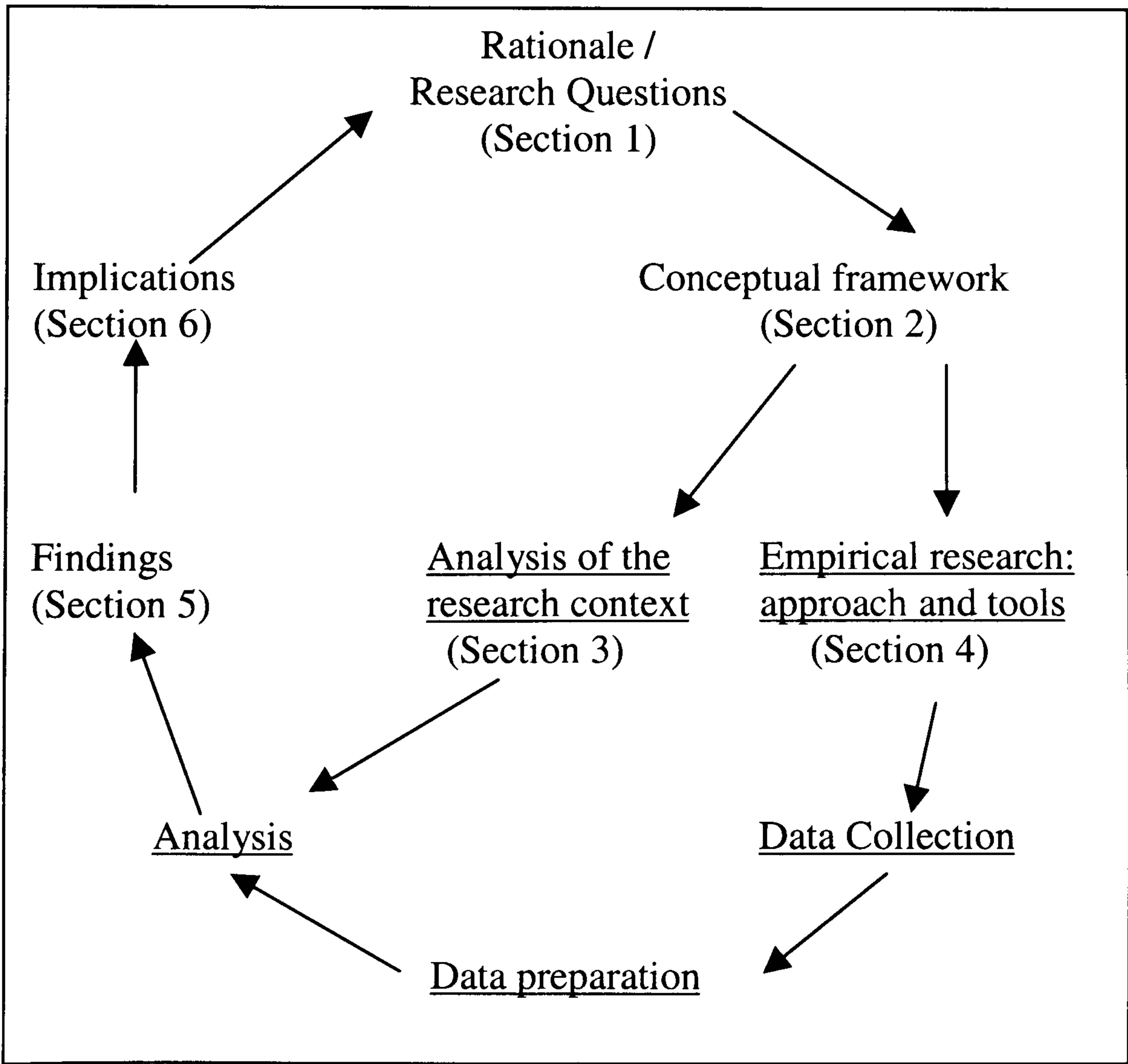
The first concept explored is perception and the rationale for including the word perception in the title of this thesis is presented. The concept of role, its complexity and some of the factors that may influence and underpin role are examined. These factors include attitudes, beliefs, values and cultural dimensions. A further influence on role is language teaching methodologies underpinned by models of learning and these are considered briefly. In relation to teaching methodologies, reference is made to the Chinese learner (Biggs and Watson, 1997) and the paradox of the success of rote learning and memorisation for many such learners and possible influences on roles.

The next sub-section examines some of the issues involved in changes in teaching and learning processes, as change and the management thereof has implications for teachers and learners with respect to roles. Finally, the concepts explored in this section are combined in a diagrammatic representation to provide a conceptual framework that was utilised in this exploration of roles to inform the research approach and design. The discussion opens with a summary of a process for research and introduces the idea of the research cycle.

**The Research Cycle – a basic pattern for research**

Rosier (1997) suggests that research follows a basic cyclical pattern with each stage having implications for the next stage. According to Rosier (1997), the starting point for some research is the rationale and the research questions. It is from this starting point that a conceptual framework is developed that informs the research. This pattern was followed in this research because there were no direct guidelines for investigating roles. However some adaptations were made to the cycle that arose from initial exploration of the concepts within the conceptual framework. The adaptations included an analysis of the research context and more than one study. The cycle is illustrated in Figure 2.1. The parts of the cycle that were adapted are underlined.

Figure 2.1 – The research cycle (adapted from Rossier, 1997:453)





The research cycle provided overall guidance for the research, and the focus of this section is the development of a conceptual framework. As noted earlier in this section, this required an understanding of the concepts involved in the conceptual framework.

## **Understandings**

### **a) Perception: process and concept**

The word perception is commonly used in the titles of many research projects and it is included here for specific reasons. The first reason is that the use of the word perception in conjunction with the word roles is intended to represent the nature of the data collected. The data collected was information on various aspects of roles as reported by the informants in the research. It was anticipated that such data and the findings might be different from the roles for students and teachers that may be directly observable in the classroom. On reviewing the literature this idea was supported by Natansen (1966) and also Keesing (1989) in their discussions of role theory. Secondly, through the incorporation of perceptions into the conceptual framework and an exploration of the concept, information was gained that informed the design of the research and the research tools as will be explained in Section 4.

The field of psychology was the starting point in the attempt to understand perception. The initial reviews of literature highlighted the links between perception as a process and perception as a concept. In respect to perception as a process, Forgas (1966) defines perception as:

... the process by which an organism receives or extracts certain information about the environment. (Forgas, 1966:2)

French (1963) extends this as he identifies the process as being immediate and initially linked with sensations that can be further refined into perceptual processes. In addition, French (1963:420) considers that with time 'the amount of inference by the organism increases, processes of cognition become involved.' This understanding of perception incorporates the process of perceiving at a higher level of cognition than

merely receiving information without processing. Rock (1984) elaborates on this arguing that the last part of the process may be attended to or unattended to. He comments that:

... the perceptual world we create differs quantitatively from the physicist's descriptions because our experience is mediated by our senses and construed internally as a representation of the world... even though our perceptions are mental constructs rather than direct recordings of reality, they clearly are neither arbitrary nor mostly illusory. (Rock, 1984:4)

Rock's descriptions of perceptions as mental constructs gained through the attended-to or unattended-to process of perceiving the world provides a useful frame for reference. The description highlights the notion that during the formation of perceptions of roles (mental constructs of roles), a person may not have attended to all the aspects that may influence roles, nor have consciously analysed them. For example, through the process of everyday living, certain values or beliefs may be absorbed and internalised without conscious analysis and these could influence perceptions of roles. This process might include the general influence of a teacher's own experience at school on their perceptions of roles for both themselves and their students. The impact of such influences might mean that the resulting perceptions are, as Rock suggests, not direct recordings of reality at that moment in time. This point will be discussed further in Sections 5 and 6 with respect to values and cultural dimensions.

From Rock's (1984) descriptions above, it is clear that perceptions may be changeable, according to different experiences and the mediation of them. Dember and Warm (1979) propose that:

... a perceptual system, relates input to output, a system which receives various kinds of sensory input, processes this input and thereby leads to the production of a particular response. Such a system is one which mediates or intervenes between stimuli and responses. (Dember and Warm, 1979:6)

This processing reinforces Rock's (1984) idea that perceptions are not direct recordings of reality, although they probably reflect some aspects of the world outside. In the exploration of roles that follows, it would seem that roles are concerned with input and output, and one of the many influences is context. However, output or a particular response may not show the observer the entire picture. For example, a student may



have internal perceptions of role that reflect a very active participatory role in the classroom, but because of other influences such as context, the opportunities for realising such a role might be limited. In such a situation, the students' perceptual system mediates the response and the student's actual behaviour may not reflect their internal perceptions of role. For example, what they want and what they do, perhaps sitting and listening quietly, may be different. Differences between actual behaviour and perceptions of roles are probably influenced by a range of factors including conditions in a classroom or school, peers and teachers, students or teachers, expectations of roles and teaching methods. This idea, although not surprising, is summarised in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 – Perceptions of Role

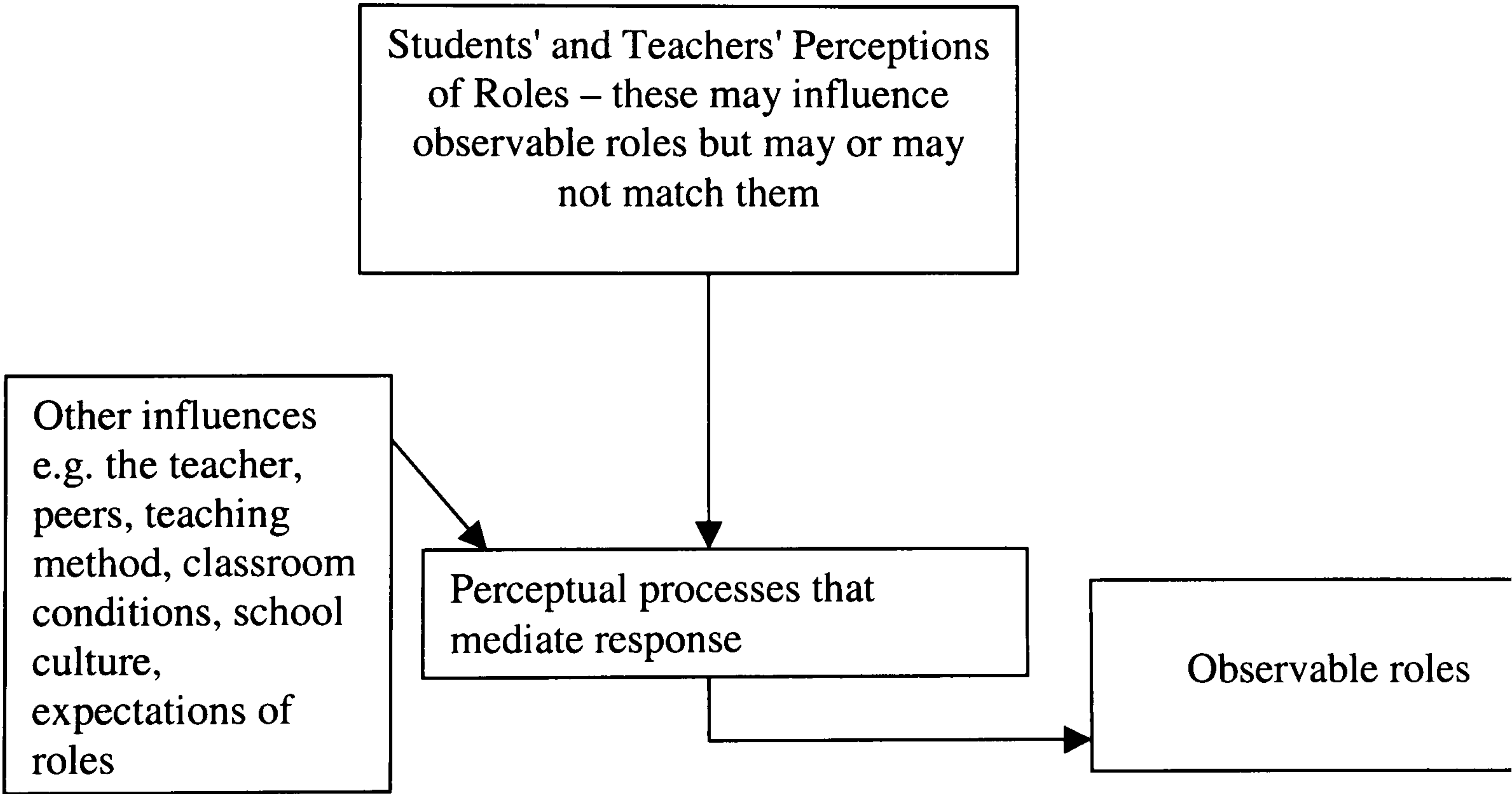


Figure 2.2 attempts to illustrate the complexity of the situation and to show that for any individual their perception of their role may be different from the role they portray in the classroom. In addition, individual factors such as personality probably also affect observable roles.

With respect to studying perceptions, Rock advises that:



... the study of perception, however, differs from other fields of scientific inquiry in certain crucial respects... perceptions are subjective states, therefore they are not directly observable... (Rock, 1984:5)

The notion of perceptions as subjective states would appear to reinforce the ideas presented in Figure 2.2 that internal models of roles may not, because of various influences, be directly observable. This view suggests the need to explore perceptions using multiple research tools such as questionnaires and interviews rather than direct observation. Rock (1984) also recommends that when finding out about perceptions repeated investigation is necessary to confirm or disconfirm generality. This recommendation had implications for the research design with the inclusion of a repeated questionnaire with similar cohorts of students (n=56,59,31 respectively) over 3 years.

In summary, the inclusion of perceptions of roles in the title of the thesis refers to students' and teachers' understanding of their roles as they report them. It is proposed that these perceptions of roles may, or may not, be observable in the classroom because of other influences. The exploration of the concept of perception itself was also informative in guiding the choice and use of research tools. As important as a clear understanding of perceptions was a clear understanding of the concept of roles.

## **b) Roles**

Kelvin (1969:141) states that 'the word role itself is a treacherous word. It is familiar and looks simple.' However, social scientists trying to develop Role Theory find:

... the concept of role is the central idea in the language of most role analysis but, ironically, there is probably more disagreement concerning this concept than there is for any other in role theory. (Biddle and Thomas, 1966:29)

Within the field of education and language education the concept of role is often referred to especially in relation to change, but there appear to be few explicit discussions regarding the concept of role and perhaps this reflects its complexity. Thus, literature from the fields of sociology and psychology was used to provide information to inform the understandings of role.

Havinghurst and Neugarten (1962), from the field of sociology, define the concept of role as:

... a coherent pattern of behaviour common to all persons who fill the same position or place in society and a pattern of behaviour 'expected' by other members of society. (Havinghurst and Neugarten, 1962:6)

This is a definition with which most people would probably agree. However, Kelvin (1969) would argue that one of the basic problems with the concept of role is that, for him, it has both sociological and psychological aspects. He considers that the sociological level of analysis is concerned with the study of groups, where role refers to the functions associated with various parts of the structure of a group or society. This concerns status and positions, and is independent of the individual. He argues that the term role is essentially descriptive, describing the behaviour associated with the position. By contrast, the psychological level of analysis is ultimately concerned with the behaviour of the individual and personal interaction. Kelvin (1969) considers that, because of this, it is necessary to look at role not from the standpoint of the observer, but from the standpoint of the individual. Thus, from the standpoint of the individual, categorisation in terms of roles arises from the individual's perception of the social structure or context. Additionally, Kelvin (1969) considers that perceptions of role reflect the individual's perceptions of the relationships between various parts of that social structure or context. From this, the implications for this study were that for students and teachers in language classrooms their perceptions of roles reflect their individual perceptions of the classroom situated within a specific social structure and the relationships between all the various inter-linking parts.

Within the field of education Hoyle (1969) explicitly considered the concept of the role of the teacher, whilst Wright (1987) explored both teacher's and learner's roles. In agreement with Kelvin (1969), Hoyle (1969:36) notes that, 'the concept of role, however, is very complex and highly important for the behavioural sciences.' Wright (1987) supports this in his acknowledgement that there are many different and complex factors influencing the roles that teachers and learners adopt in the classroom. It is



useful to compare Hoyle and Wright's ideas as together they informed the understanding of role used in this thesis.

Hoyle (1969) provides what might now be considered a limited view of roles. This is that the major social functions and corresponding roles of the teacher in an industrial society are concerned with:

- instruction: - to give knowledge and skills
- socialisation: - participation in life
- evaluation: - to judge performance.

What emerges from this is that Hoyle (1969:36) believes the concept of role indicates:

- a) a position (or status)
- b) a pattern of behaviour associated with that position
- c) a pattern of expectations held by the occupant of the position which imply how he ought to behave and how it is anticipated he will act.

These categories seem to reflect Kelvin's (1969) sociological perspective identified above concerning descriptions of behaviour associated with position. Wright's analysis of roles is similar but he proposes that role is affected by two categories:

- a) social and psychological factors: views about status and position / attitude and values held by individuals and groups and individual personalities
  - b) teacher and learner expectations about the nature of learning tasks and the way in which individuals and groups deal with learning tasks.
- (Wright 1987:22)

Wright argues that the features outlined above underpin role behaviour. With respect to the first category he considers that the education system as a whole is deeply influenced by beliefs and attitudes that will inevitably affect the teaching learning process. Accordingly he comments that:

... the way in which we interpret our role and the role of another individual depends on our attitudes and beliefs about the roles themselves and the individuals who occupy them. (Wright, 1987:10)

Within his first category Wright's (1987) explanation also includes the suggestion that teachers and learners are accorded high or low status. This status he claims, has implications for the classroom and these can be summarised thus:

- a) role and status imply a set of power relationships

- b) role and status confer on their holders a set of rights, duties and obligations
- c) social distance results from different status and position
- d) status and position have a great influence on the sorts of role a teacher or learner may fulfil.

From this the idea of power relationships was noted and on exploring the concept of culture, power distance was again identified and highlighted as a possible further dimension for investigation.

Wright's (1987) second category concerns expectations, a category also identified by Hoyle (1969) in his concluding thoughts on the definition of the teacher's role. Hoyle (1969:37) comments that 'we base our behaviour towards the occupant of a particular position on the assumption that in general he will tend to conform to expectations and fulfil certain obligations.' According to Keesing (1989) these expectations may shift depending on the other people involved. For example, a teacher would have different expectations for their own role when they are interacting with the Principal as compared to the students.

The identification of expectations of roles was to be an important one with respect to this research and the interplay between roles. For example, as noted in Section 1, teachers appear to have perceptions of students that reflect them as passive learners. One possibility is that this passive concept of the student is so strongly influenced by expectations and obligations that despite an individual's own interpretation of values and perceptions of role, individuals will conform to expectations different from their own perceptions. Consequently, students enact passive roles and the teacher expects students to be passive and so provides limited opportunities for students to take more active roles. When students' behaviour reinforces this, a self-fulfilling prophecy may develop. The concept of expected roles and obligations reinforces the idea that internal models of roles are probably different from those enacted in the classroom, as illustrated in Figure 2.2.

The identification from the literature (Kelvin, 1969; Hoyle, 1969; and Wright, 1987) of features such as attitudes and beliefs underpinning roles provided a pathway for the



research. The investigation of such features was intended to reveal information about perceptions of roles. Using the understandings of roles and their associated features, an initial study (Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs), was developed that concerned the collection of data to find out about attitudes and beliefs and, within these, expectations and preferences. The data were collected using statements that focused on students' and teachers' behaviour in the classroom. The idea that beliefs influence roles is supported by studies such as those of Munby (1984) and Richardson (1989), who both note that the extent to which teachers adopt a new instructional practice depends on how closely their beliefs match the assumptions behind the innovations. Similarly, Tinker Sachs and Mahon (1996) consider understanding teacher beliefs to be of crucial importance to understanding their current classroom practices. They argue that such information can be used in the development of education programmes supporting educational change requiring different classroom practice. These studies gave direction for considering the possible implications for the findings of the research.

On further investigation of the literature on roles, another area of influence identified was culture. Goodenough's (1965) work on rethinking status and role identified the importance of social and cultural influences. Similarly, Keesing (1989:424) argues that there is the possibility that 'the whole notion of "role" is a product of our own cultural bias.' With respect to status and position, Wright (1987) and Hoyle (1969) also consider both of these to influence roles and they link these with the notion of values. Within his definition, Hoyle (1969) explicitly recognises the importance of a value context for the teacher's role. He argues that:

... at any point in time every society is permeated by a particular set of values which shape and are shaped by, the major institutions - the economy, politics, religion, education, etc. These values are not static... (Hoyle, 1969:16)

By implication this would appear to suggest that as major institutions change, so value systems change and these affect roles specifically role and status. Thus this review of literature (Goodenough, 1965; Hoyle, 1969; Keesing, 1989; and Wright, 1987) informed research decisions by highlighting the need to explore societal (the research context) and cultural dimensions. The research context, Hong Kong and its major institutions have changed rapidly over the last forty years. Section 3 outlines these

changes with regard to the political and economic situation and acknowledges that value systems appear not to be static. These social changes were part of the rationale for the reference to Hofstede's (1980) work. In addition, Hofstede's work also reflected Wright's ideas regarding roles, status and position. To provide an opportunity for exploring these aspects an adapted form of Hofstede's research was completed for Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions.

In summary, in the exploration of roles, influences were identified and these included attitudes, beliefs and socio-cultural context. This information regarding roles formed part of the conceptual framework and was used to inform the design of the research and the research tools. However, to inform the research further it was necessary to explore the concepts of attitudes and beliefs as outlined and discussed below.

### **c) Attitudes**

#### **i) Understandings of attitude and roles**

Like the use of the words perception and roles, attitudes and beliefs are frequently used and referred to in English language teaching. Although there is research investigating students' and teachers' attitudes and beliefs, (Brindely, 1984; Willing, 1988; Nunan, 1989; Richards and Lockhart, 1994; and Bada and Okan, 2000), there is little explicit examination of what might be involved within these concepts and their relationship to roles.

With regard to attitudes and beliefs Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) provide a definition.

They state that:

... whereas attitude refers to a person's favourable or unfavourable evaluation of an object, beliefs represent the information he has about the object. Specifically, a belief links an object to some attribute. (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975:12)

The literature reviewed on attitudes and beliefs was largely from the field of psychology. Whilst this proved complex and challenging in terms of conceptualisation for a non-psychologist, Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) explanations appeared suitable for



reference purposes in this exploration and it was noted that their work was frequently referred to by other writers in the field (Rokeach, 1972; and Tagiuri and Petullo, 1976). Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) definition for attitude identified three basic features. These are that attitude:

- 1) is learned
  - 2) predisposes actions and
  - 3) such actions are consistently favourable or unfavourable towards the object.
- (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975:6)

The first feature, by its very nature, implies that attitudes are probably influenced by the socio-cultural context, most likely learned from a role-figure, such as a parent or sibling. The second feature, predisposing action, suggests that a person needs to have an attitude about something before they can act and that attitudes are stable, being either positive or negative. Oppenheim (1970:108) also considers that attitudes are positive or negative. From these features it would seem that attitude might affect role. The negative-positive dimension was incorporated into the design of the responses required to statements concerning attitudes in the questionnaire, (see Section 4). Another feature of attitude identified by Oppenheim (1970), Rokeach (1972), and Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) is that attitudes are connected to beliefs. Rokeach (1972:112) also adds that 'an attitude is a relatively enduring organisation of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner.' By contrast, for Oppenheim (1970), attitudes are reinforced by beliefs (a cognitive component), often attracting strong feelings (an emotional component). The connection of attitudes to beliefs and feelings was important for the design of the research and, as detailed in Section 4, it is often impossible to directly ask about someone's attitude and so frequently attitudes need to be accessed through beliefs and emotions. Having examined the concept of attitude, it was the link between attitude and roles and learning that was deemed important for this study and this is now discussed with respect to other research.

## **ii) Attitude and learning, and other research**

The significance of attitude for learning is widely accepted. In Gardner and MacIntyre's (1993:8) Socio-Educational Model of Learning it is proposed that attitudes

towards language influence motivation to learn either negatively or positively. Thus if attitudes to language are positive, motivation is high. If, as considered by Hoyle (1969) and Wright (1987), attitude to learning English underpins role, then as well as influencing motivation a positive or negative attitude may also affect role positively or negatively as attitude predisposes action or in this case learning, (see Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) earlier). While this may be true there are probably other factors involved.

Specific research into Hong Kong students' attitudes towards English includes a study by Lyczak, Fu and Ho (1976). They found English was viewed as the symbol of power, respectability, prestige and competence, whereas Chinese was associated with positive attributes such as honesty and ethnic cohesion. Studies carried out by Gibbons (1983) confirmed this and Bond (1985) found that Cantonese rated higher in honesty, friendliness, hardwork and humbleness, but people who could speak English were considered more respectable. Of interest in Gibbon's research is the very strong ambivalence towards English. This may reflect the political uncertainty of the time and perhaps that although people were positive towards English for economic reasons, they did not want to make it clear that they liked English. Thus ambiguity may have arisen due to conflicts between their feelings and loyalty towards Chinese traditions and Chinese language and the pragmatic need to learn English. In another study, Yu (1988) found that the majority of Form 4 (14-15 year old) Anglo-Chinese School students used only Chinese when talking to family members and friends, reading newspapers or watching television. However, despite this and difficulties in performing classroom tasks in English, students displayed a favourable attitude towards English and still preferred English as the medium of instruction. Yu (1988) attributed this to the belief that an English education could bring more benefits than a Chinese medium education. Consequently, and as noted in Section 3, attitude to language learning is unlikely to be solely a linguistic issue but one intrinsically tied to the social, economic, and cultural milieu. From the understanding of roles presented above it was noted that beliefs as well as attitudes influence roles and so understandings of beliefs are explored in the next sub-section.



## **d) Beliefs**

### **i) Understandings of beliefs and roles**

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975:12) state that, ‘beliefs represent the information he (*sic*) has about the object. Specifically, a belief links an object to some attribute.’ The object of a belief maybe a person, a group of people, an institution, or a behaviour as in the case of role, and the associated attribute may be a trait, property, quality, characteristic, outcome or event.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975:summarised from pp12-18) also note that beliefs appear to

- be fundamental building blocks constructed from direct observation, or information received from outside sources or by ways of various inferencing processes
- serve as the informational base that ultimately determine a person’s attitude and intentions, but there is no proof that beliefs lead to certain behaviour
- be on a central-periphery dimension (strength related), in that not all beliefs are of central importance to a person; the more central the belief the more resistant it is to change.

This information provided direction about how beliefs might be formed, and informed decisions regarding the research design and the interpretation of the findings. For example, the first point concerning how beliefs are formed and influenced again supported the inclusion of the analysis of the research context and Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions. The second point, that beliefs may not lead to certain behaviour, informed the decision not to include observations as a research tool. The final point, that beliefs are strength related, had implications for the design of the research tools and the use of a Likert scale (see Section 4). Another aspect regarding the final point is that if beliefs are on a central-periphery dimension it is possible there could be a difference between beliefs for self and beliefs regarding others especially with respect to change and this is considered in the interpretation of the findings.

As noted above an important feature of beliefs is the premise that beliefs lead to certain behaviour. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) identified a special case of beliefs that they label behavioural intentions - beliefs about intentions to perform certain behaviours. They are characterised by the object always being the person and the attribute, a behaviour. In addition, these beliefs need some action or condition. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) argue that a person can have a belief that is a behavioural intention but that it may not be realised. For example, a student may have beliefs about behaving in a specific way and intend to do so. However, the context and circumstances of the classroom, or the teacher, do not allow the student to realise his or her intentions and consequently not to realise the internal model or perceptions of role. This notion that perceptions of roles and beliefs about roles may not be directly reflected in teachers' and students' classroom roles was incorporated into Figure 2.2. In relating beliefs to roles, and noting Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) idea about influences on beliefs, it was necessary to consider sources of beliefs for both teachers and students.

## **ii) Teacher beliefs and roles**

Teacher beliefs appear to be complicated, with many factors influencing them, not least the existing beliefs that teachers bring with them when they become teachers. Richards and Lockhart (1994) identified attendance at teacher education courses as another factor influencing beliefs and attitude towards teaching. However, what student teachers and teachers learn about in their teacher education courses has to compete with the other factors. These include examination pressures, the school culture, discipline maintenance and existing beliefs, such as beliefs about language learning. With regard to language learning, Kinsvatter, Willen and Ishler (1988) conclude that teachers' beliefs are derived from a number of sources, summarised below. These are:

- own experience of language learning/learning
- experience of what works best
- established practice in the school
- personality factors
- educationally theory based or research-based principles
- principles derived from an approach or method.



Kinsvatter, Willen and Ishler (1988) highlighted the possibility that teachers' own experience of language learning as students probably deeply influences the existing beliefs about teaching and learning that they hold when they became teachers. One reason that Kinsvatter, Willen and Ishler (1988) identified this possibility was the greater number of days spent in the classroom as a student compared to those on a teacher education course. They considered that as beliefs are established over a length of time these existing beliefs would be a powerful influence especially in the translation of theory to practice. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), existing beliefs are likely to be centrally located, and therefore may be more resistant to change, reinforcing Kinsvatter, Willen and Ishler's (1988) ideas. For many Hong Kong teachers, existing beliefs will probably have been formed through educational experiences reflecting large teacher-centred classes and examination constraints. Richards and Lockhart (1994) warn that in research it is often difficult to know what teachers' beliefs about language learning are because of competing factors and existing beliefs. In view of this, it appeared that a structured questionnaire in addition to interviews would be required to explore teachers' beliefs and this questionnaire would need to incorporate some identified beliefs concerning roles rather than just asking about roles *per se*.

In a study of teachers' beliefs Richards *et al.* (1991) found that Hong Kong teachers of English believed their primary role in the classroom was to:

- provide useful learning experiences
- provide correct models of language use
- answer learners' questions
- correct learners' errors.

These findings seem to indicate that the teacher's role is one of a resource and provider of knowledge. Such findings highlighted areas for inclusion in the questionnaire, for example, error correction.

In another study, Richards *et al.* (1991) asked teachers to identify the kinds of learners they believed did well in their classes. The results suggested that teachers thought those who did well included those who:

- were motivated
- were active and spoke out
- were not afraid of making mistakes
- could work individually without the teachers' help.

Although teachers may have expressed these beliefs about learners, it is hard to gain evidence from classroom observations and from analysis of current textbooks that these types of learners are being encouraged in practice. It is also interesting to note the differences between the roles for teachers and the ones for learners implicit in the two sets of findings cited above. One difficulty with these sets of data is that while students should not be afraid of making mistakes, correction may reduce students' willingness to be active and speak out. Thus there appears to be a certain amount of mismatch. In addition, considering the pressures of the examination system in Hong Kong it is perhaps debatable how far teachers can go in developing students with the appropriate skills and strategies to become learners such as those identified above. The pressure of examinations is illustrated by the response of one teacher to the question 'What should a teacher do in the classroom?' The response was:

*'Promote interest in subject. Develop good learner – not necessarily good results though.'* (Teacher 6 – Appendix 1)

This comment highlights a possible gap between theory and practice and reality, specifically the teacher's belief that she should develop a good learner but that this may not lead to good examination results. Such thoughts may indicate the dilemma that teachers face with the need to produce good examination results as opposed to developing good learners. This situation probably has implications for roles that teachers adopt and the ones they develop for students, and may be reflected in the beliefs that teachers have. From the above there appear to be many influences on teachers' beliefs that have implications for this research including sources of beliefs. The consideration below of students' beliefs also provides further information to inform understanding of teachers' beliefs, as all teachers were once students.



### **iii) Student beliefs and roles**

Models of second language acquisition attribute a central role to learner beliefs (see Bialystok, 1978, and Naiman *et al.*, 1978) and, according to Tumposky (1991), these beliefs can influence attitudes towards a language and language learning. Whereas for teachers, beliefs are probably formed from a greater variety of influencing factors plus existing beliefs, it is probable that school students' beliefs are, according to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975:14) mostly 'constructed from direct observation or information received from the outside world or by ways of various inferencing processes.' Riley (1988), and Richards and Lockhart (1994) consider that learners' belief systems cover a wide range of issues such as beliefs about:

- the nature of English
- speakers of English
- teaching
- language learning
- appropriate classroom behaviour
- self
- goals.

These ideas were used to inform the design of the questionnaire for Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs. With regard to language learning it is useful to look briefly at attitudes to, and beliefs, about language learning as these further informed the conceptual framework of this study.

### **iv) Beliefs about language, learning, language learning and roles**

From the discussion regarding the nature of attitudes, it was noted that beliefs influence attitudes. It is therefore possible that beliefs about the nature of students' and teachers' own language and other languages might affect the attitudes they have towards learning another language as well as influence roles and role expectations. Riley (1988) identifies this possibility as the 'ethnocentricity' of language teaching. Drawing on his experience, Riley (1988) proposes that the cultural backgrounds of some ethnic or social groups predispose them for or against some methodologies or teaching

approaches. He argues that these specific reactions occur because of the cultural expectations the participants have to learning, and the inter-linking of three aspects. Riley (1988) identifies these aspects as representations and they are categorised as:

- representations of learning (Anthropology)
- representations of language (Ethnolinguistics)
- representations of language learning (Social Psychology of second language learning).

With respect to the representations of learning category, Riley (1988) argues that this is concerned with the way in which the learning process is conceived of in a society, for example how to learn and attitudes to learning. The Hong Kong education system and context is explained in detail in Section 3 and with regard to learning it is noted that there has traditionally been an emphasis on the teacher as the knower and giver of knowledge. In the past, Watkins and Biggs (1996) show evidence of extensive use of rote learning and memorization, and Walker (1997) considers that the teacher would expect to be respected and to be an authoritative figure. Such ideas about the teacher were considered and incorporated into the questionnaire statements regarding beliefs.

Riley's (1988) explanation of 'ethnolinguistics', considers the relationship between social group, culture and the view of a language's nature, status and use. Again this is discussed in Section 3 where it is noted that Chinese language was associated with honesty, friendliness, hard work and humility while English was associated with power, respectability, prestige and competence.

Riley (1988) expands this second category of ethnolinguistics with the identification of other aspects including:

- a) status of discourse
- b) the type of distribution of linguistic roles and their relationships to categories of speech events
- c) the communicative strategies available



- d) the relationship between speech and writing, and speech and non-verbal communication
- e) the values attributed to verbal games, euphemisms and taboos, formulaic expressions, literature, and songs
- f) perceptions of the relationships between language and social institutions such as class, religion, the education system, etc.

These categories again provided information that informed the research tools and were built into the questionnaire. For example, with respect to distribution of linguistic roles, this was reflected in statements such as ‘The teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom’ (Questionnaire 1a – statement 17). The categories were also used for the presentation of the data in Section 5.

With regard to this second category (ethnolinguistics), Richards, Tung and Ng (1991) found that English language teachers in Hong Kong whose first language was Chinese felt that English had more rules than Chinese, although not a larger vocabulary, nor that it was more flexible in terms of communication. Hartzell (1988), in Taiwan, observed that English is often perceived by the Chinese as being an illogical language. In addition to beliefs about the nature of language, there seem to be beliefs about the speakers of different languages. People often have specific views and attitudes (frequently stereotypes) about native speakers based on contact, the media or other sources, and these may influence the degree to which students want to interact with native speakers or learn a language. Riley’s (1988) insights provide a perspective that highlight the need to recognise that what students and teachers bring with them to the language classroom with regard to attitudes and beliefs might be more complex and important than has been appreciated in the past. Such beliefs about the nature of language, stereotypical impressions about a language/subject and culture, possibly all influence classroom practices, behaviour and roles and these ideas were used to aid interpretation of the data.

Riley’s third category relates to the social psychology of second language learning, how a language should be learnt, models of learning, difficulties, errors, behaviour,

patterns of interaction and preferences in learning. These features were again used to inform the design and content of the research tools. Although Riley has separated his ideas into three categories, these categories are probably not as discreet as in his presentation, as there seem to be links between elements within the different representations. For example, the type of distribution of linguistic roles introduced above in the second category is one that surely has implications for the third, language learning, and for roles.

The literature reviewed here provided guidance for the development of the questionnaire and establishing the categories for investigation. These included:

- a) how to learn
- b) group work and grouping preferences
- c) error correction
- d) responsibility for learning
- e) interaction
- f) learning preferences
- g) own behaviour.

This sub-section has explored attitudes, beliefs and specific beliefs about language learning. In Hoyle's (1969) and Wright's (1987) understandings of roles they also identify social context and culture as explicitly influencing roles and this will now be discussed.

## **e) Culture**

### **i) Understandings of culture and roles**

According to Keesing (1989) how culture is organised is important for understanding appropriate behaviour sequences. Within these behavioural sequences is social interaction that includes language. Vygotsky (1979) recognises that language and culture are to some degree indivisible and, similarly, Gardner (1985:149) acknowledges the importance of the cultural context in second language learning. As noted above Riley's (1988) theory considered that communities have differing cultural



beliefs about learning a language influenced by beliefs about society, learning and language learning. With respect to the classroom, Holliday (1994:24) comments that 'knowledge about how culture works generally can reveal much about the workings of classroom interaction.' Finally, in a recent study, Miller and Aldred (2000) noted that comments from student teachers highlighted Chinese culture as being the reason for certain role behaviour, and specifically interaction patterns. Thus culture was one of the concepts deemed necessary to include in the conceptual framework and it is explored below.

The word culture, like the word role, is complex. As Williams (1976) notes, it is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. In his attempt to explain culture, Geertz described it thus:

... best seen not as complexes of concrete behaviour patterns - customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters - .....but as a set of control mechanisms - plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call programmes) - for the governing of behaviour (Geertz, 1965:57).

This description focuses on the underlying control mechanisms of behaviour and from this it would appear that these mechanisms probably influence roles. Berger and Luckmann (1966), in their examination of the concept, argue that different societies collectively define their own frameworks and that these frameworks evolve as societies change. In addition, they consider that while there appear to be certain human universals, such as the tendency to live in families, pair bonding and care of children, there are also great differences, such as behaviour, eating traditions and the understanding of authority. Linking this idea to Geertz's (1965) view it would seem there are possibly different sets of control mechanisms for different societies.

Similarly to Geertz (1965), Hofstede (1980) defines culture as the collective programming of the mind, the software that guides the hardware of surface behaviour and social structures. However, Keesing (1989) understands culture differently, arguing that culture should be understood as the rules of the game, with the important qualification that culture is the aggregate of many individual perceptions of what others see as the rules. Keesing (1989) makes several assertions about the nature of culture,

and identifies culture as existing on different levels. He sees it as an adaptive system, a cognitive system, a structural system, and a symbolic system. In concluding his exploration of culture Keesing (1989) aligns it with the linguistic conceptual distinction between competence and performance. He comments:

... culture, conceived as a system of competence shared in its broad design and deeper principles, and varying between individuals in its specificities, is then not all of what an individual knows and thinks and feels about his world. It is his *theory of what his fellows know, believe and mean*, his theory of the code being followed, the game being played, in the society into which he was born. (Keesing, 1989:89)

Thus Keesing (1989) would argue that an individual can have a theory about culture and it should be noted that there appears to be a similarity between how perceptions are established and how culture is developed with respect to an individual building up their mental theory or constructs. Consistent with the nature of perceptions, Keesing (1989) questions how much conscious thought goes into an individual's theory of culture as he considers that people follow rules of which they are not consciously aware. He also asserts that people assume a world to be out there that they have in fact created in their minds and that these worlds will vary between individuals.

Thus Keesing (1989) sees culture:

... not simply as a collection of symbols fitted together by the analyst but as a system of knowledge, shaped and constrained by the way the human brain acquires and processes information and creates internal models of reality. (Keesing, 1989:59)

How far these models reflect reality may be a question similar in nature to one regarding how far perceptions of roles reflect observable roles in classrooms. Further complicating this Homans (1967) adds another dimension to the concept of culture, suggesting that although behaviour is guided and constrained by rules about the game of life, individuals also make choices about the rules that generate the patterns of social life. Consequently, the rules of the game are themselves both generated and changed by the patterns of life they guide, in a continuing dialectic. This idea of a continuing dialectic informed the discussion of the data and is referred to again in Section 6.



In addition to the above, McCargar (1993) considers that culture includes expected roles. It was noted previously that expectations were also identified in Hoyle's (1969) and Wright's (1978) definitions of roles. Biddle (1979:210) defines expected role as the 'set of expectations for the behaviours in context, of an identified object person (or position) held consensually by one or more subject persons.' The statements in Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs, included the notion of expected roles and one of the information analysing questions examined similarities and differences between expectations of roles for students and teachers. In support of research into expected roles, McCargar (1993) observed that there were few studies in this area within the field of education in general and noted that such studies have implications for teachers, teacher-educators, programme administrators and curriculum developers.

As noted above it would seem that if a society is to be coherent with a specific culture it needs rules, and if the rules are to work there must surely be some underlying organising principles or values that need to be shared by people. Rokeach (1972:124) considers that 'values are underlying abstract ideals which are a type of belief centrally located in our belief system.' Like beliefs, he suggests that values may be consciously conceived or unconsciously held but that they are inferred from what a person says or does. Hofstede (1980:19) further identifies values as 'broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others.' Additionally, Wright (1987) considers that values are complex and take a long time to form during the complex process of interaction. He identifies the social environment of childhood and adolescence as being the basis and time for the formation of attitudes, and this could also be true for the formation of cultural knowledge. As the concept of culture was explored and values were identified as underpinning culture, it became clear that it would probably be an important concept within the research, reinforced when the work of Redding (1990) on values and value systems was considered.

In the late 1980's Redding (1990) collected data via interviews from a large number of overseas Chinese in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. His data collection provided information regarding the values of these groups of Chinese. From his analysis of the

data, he identified three basic traits, those of paternalism, personalism and insecurity. These he acknowledged as legacies of Chinese social history. The analysis further showed how these traits operate at different levels (for example, individual, family and organisational/societal) within society that probably influenced roles. Finally Redding (1990) identified connections between these traits at the different levels. He linked his findings back to Chinese cultural heritage, including Confucianism. Although his work focuses on the 'spirit of Chinese capitalism', it gives explicit details of societal and family values, particularly the factors that have made these people successful, such as drive for money and the close network of the family (collectivism). These characteristics are probably evident in the many successful Chinese communities throughout the world. Redding's (1990) model is interesting as it provides information about Hong Kong from twenty years ago. This information provided background knowledge that was referred to when exploring the data collected in Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions.

It is interesting to note Keesing (1989) argues that for such value systems to work as in the example given above, other reinforcing and supporting systems are required. These systems uphold the rules of the game. He suggests this maintenance of the rules is achieved through the creation of institutional frameworks, such as religious bodies, government, employment, education and financial systems. Supporting this argument is the Allport-Vernon-Linzey (1960) scale of values where six classes of values are identified. These are theoretical, social, political, religious, aesthetic and economic, reflecting the background of the institutions mentioned above. Such ideas are consistent with Hoyle's (1969) reference to the origins and contextualisation of beliefs and attitudes. By finding out about these institutions, and the values within a society, information was sought in this study that could increase the understanding of the cultural context of a society and possibly inform the findings with respect to perceptions of roles.

In summary, it would appear that culture can perhaps be understood as a system of knowledge, which may be unique to one society, with underlying principles or values



(types of beliefs) maintained by institutional frameworks. Cultural knowledge starts to be formed during childhood, but during life is likely to be amenable to change. From the review of literature on culture it seemed possible that by collecting data about underlying principles or values, information could be gained that would be representative of the views on culture held by teachers and students and would include information about roles. The discussion above has been diagrammatically represented and synthesised in Figure 2.3. The different sections in the diagram illustrate the possible relationships between the underlying principles, the institutions, culture and behaviour including roles. The diagram also attempts to illustrate the notion of a continual dialectic and provides the framework for the exploration of roles from a cultural perspective, one layer of analysis.

Figure 2.3 – The suggested relationships between organising principles, institutional frameworks, culture and roles.

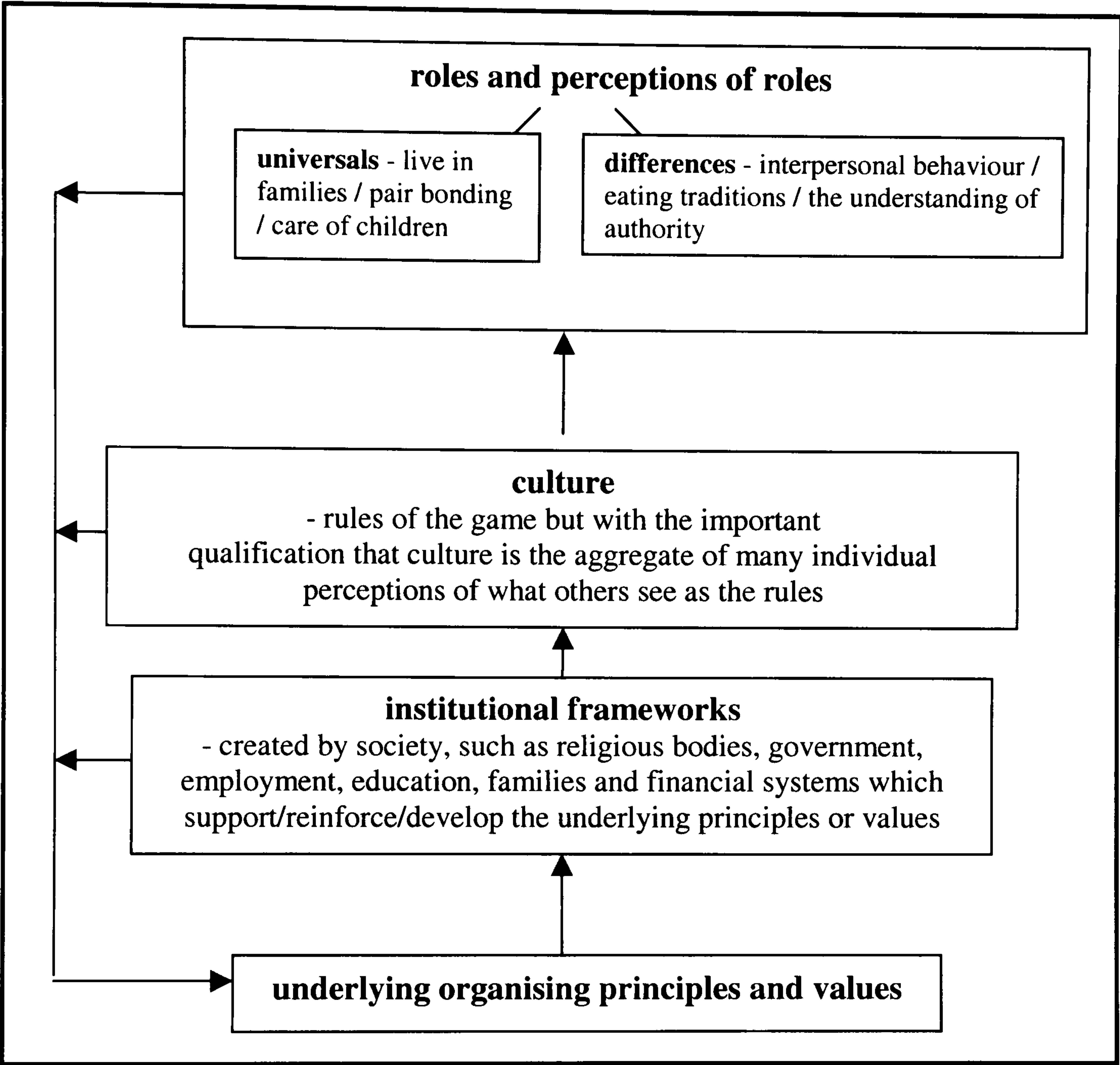


Figure 2.3 suggests how roles might be culturally bound and the complexity of attempting to understand the cultural influences on roles and perceptions of roles. Having defined culture and possible theories regarding how it evolves and changes, the institutions that underlie culture in Hong Kong will now be discussed. This will be followed by a more detailed consideration of the underlying principles of culture relevant to this exploration.

**ii) The institutions**

According to Hofstede (1986), one significant aspect of institutions (religious bodies, government, education, employment, family and financial systems) is that each



institution has a pair of unequal but complementary roles with the exception of the family, which has two role pairs. Hofstede’s categorisation is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 - Human institutions and corresponding role pairs (Hofstede 1986:302)

<b><u>Institution</u></b>	<b><u>Role pair</u></b>
Family	Parent-Child Man-Woman
School	Teacher-Student
Job	Boss-Subordinate
Community	Authority-Member

In Hofstede’s analysis there are four institutions; family, school, job and community. The categories of religious bodies, financial systems, and government above would be included in the Hofstede’s community category in Table 2.1. From the earlier discussion of culture it was observed that in different societies the above archetypal roles are played out in different ways. For example, the interaction within the pair (parent/child, teacher/student) is probably reflective of the culture of that society. Thus these role patterns are products of a society’s culture and through them culture is transferred from one generation to another. Hofstede (1986) suggests further that role patterns within each institution are not mutually exclusive and that patterns of parent-child interaction are carried over into teacher-student and boss-subordinate relationships.

One of the institutions identified above is religion. In Hong Kong, society has its religious roots based in Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. These have in many ways become entwined with elements of one religion existing within another. Of the three religions, Storey (1992) considers that, in the West, Confucian thought is often regarded as a large part of Chinese culture. Confucius lived from 551 to 479 B.C. and although he never claimed to be a religious leader, a prophet or a god, he was a reformer and a humanitarian. He emphasised devotion to family, loyalty to friends, justice, peace, education and reform or good government. Gradually his ideas and spoken proverbs permeated to all levels of society. It is such ideas and proverbs that

Redding (1990) considers significantly influence the values and value systems of the Chinese.

Another institution within those identified by Keesing (1989) is the financial one. When Redding's (1990) and Hofstede's (1980) studies were being completed, money was often invested in the family by supporting a relative in setting up a business, emigrating or studying overseas. With the development of the education system, a middle class and economic stability in Hong Kong, there is currently more income available for saving and investment. In addition, the pegging of the Hong Kong dollar to the U.S. dollar has added to the economic stability reinforced by a simple tax system with comparatively low taxes (Ho, 1989). Furthermore, the changes in education and the development of the economy have probably contributed to changes in the population's attitudes to saving money and investment using the financial systems contributing to Hong Kong's growth as a financial centre.

It would appear that within each institution there are specific features including specific cultures and these vary according to the host society. The institutions will be discussed further in Section 3 with explicit reference to the research context of Hong Kong and the education system. However, within the institution of education, there is the idea of a school culture, and earlier in this section reference was made to Riley (1988), who explicitly proposes that different societies have different cultures of learning. For the purpose of this study therefore the concept of culture of learning is worthy of further exploration.

### **iii) The culture of learning and roles**

As noted by Kowalski (1995:245), 'the degree to which teachers and administrators adhere to a common set of norms, beliefs and values determines whether a school has a strong or a weak culture.' This school culture probably has an influence on roles with respect to what happens and what can happen in the classroom, and would appear to be a part of the culture of learning.



With respect to culture of learning, Cortazzi and Jin (1996) identify it as a hidden part of the curriculum. They specifically comment that:

... much behaviour in language classrooms is set within taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relate to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education. (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996:169)

In many classrooms both teachers and learners may be unaware that such a culture of learning may be influencing the processes of teaching and learning and the roles that can be adopted. One aspect of the culture of learning, identified by Cortazzi and Jin (1996) above, concerns good learning. Possibly contained within such a concept are ideas about what makes a good teacher or learner. With respect to this, information was sought from informants regarding characteristics of good teachers and good learners. Such information was gathered in order to gain information about the culture of learning and associated roles.

Working hard is one characteristic that has been recognised as a feature of the Asian learner. In the light of the successful development of East Asian countries' economies during the 1990's, the Asian teacher and learner have become an area of interest. According to Lee (1996:25) much attention has been focused on the success of Asian learners overseas and Confucian ideas. Although Lee recognises the dangers of over-generalising, she maintains that Asian communities and specifically the Chinese place a high value on education. Lee (1996) considers the Confucian tradition to be of central importance with its philosophy of education for all. Within this the emphasis is on personal effort and will-power to succeed to achieve human perfection. This Lee argues provides intrinsic motivation and leads to learning for self-realisation. Thus there would appear to be links between the institutions, for example, religion and education with one influencing the other. Other so-called explicit features of learning within the Chinese context (Biggs and Watson, 1996) include the use of rote learning and memorisation. Biggs and Watson (1996) conclude that the Western interpretation of these activities that has identified them as superficial ways of learning may not be accurate, and that the processes involved may be more complex; this is discussed

further in Section 3. These and other studies (Coleman, 1996) support the argument that there are cultures of learning unique to a society. By understanding specific features of culture it may be possible to gain information that can be provide insights into those cultures of learning and associated roles for teachers and learners.

#### **iv) Understanding specific features of organising principles and values of culture**

The concept of organising principles or values was introduced previously and several researchers have suggested various conceptual tools to assist in the understanding of other cultures. Brislin (1984:51) points out that, ‘distinguishing between the value orientations of different cultures helps in the understanding of specific features and is a helpful tool in understanding intercultural interactions.’ With respect to value orientations, Hofstede (1980) identified four dimensions of cultural difference, power distribution, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. He developed one conceptual tool to explore the power-distance relationships between members of a society and another that centres on the dichotomies of collectivism and individualism. He considered these tools could be used to help explain the relationship between teachers and students within various cultures.

Hofstede (1980) conducted his research between 1967 and 1974. He designed and administered an international attitude questionnaire for International Business Machines (IBM). The questionnaire was translated into 20 languages and administered to samples of IBM employees matched by occupation, age and sex in 40 different countries. The questionnaire contained 32 questions on values and it was administered twice, to allow for stability of differences to be found and trends over time to be examined. The resulting number of questionnaires was over 116,000. Hofstede was interested in the differences or relationship between nationalities and mean value scores, so the unit of analysis was 40, (the number of countries rather than the number of people surveyed). Factor analysis revealed a variance in mean, that could be explained by three factors, one of which was later divided into two further factors (Hofstede, 1980). These eventual four factors or dimensions, form Hofstede’s 4



dimensional model of cultural difference. Details of these dimensions are summarised from Hofstede (1980) as follows:

1. Power distance – the degree to which a society accepts the idea that power is to be distributed unequally. The more this is accepted, the higher the country's ranking in power distance. As Hofstede (1980:136) notes, 'All societies are unequal but some are more unequal than others.' He found that the power distance variability influenced the teacher/student relationship.
2. Individualism – the degree to which a society feels that individual's beliefs and actions should be independent of collective thought and action. The more this idea is accepted the higher the rank on this measure. Collectivism is the opposite of individualism, characterised by a tightly knit collection of clannish groups, arranged hierarchically according to social standing. Each in-group protects the interests of its members, but in return expects their on-going loyalty. As with power-distance, this concept also has ramifications for the teacher-student relationship.
3. Masculinity – the degree to which a society focuses on assertiveness, task achievement, and the acquisition of things as opposed to quality of life issues such as caring for others, group solidarity, and helping others.
4. Uncertainty avoidance – the degree to which a society feels threatened by ambiguous situations and tries to avoid them by providing rules and refusing to tolerate deviance.

Whilst these dimensions are grounded in extensive research they are not without the problems associated with trying to label things finitely and clearly. Some of these problems were identified by Hofstede (1986) himself and will be addressed in the discussion Section 5. Of interest here are Hofstede's (1980) results for Hong Kong. According to Hofstede (1986) these results meant that, for the majority of Hong Kong Chinese, there was a tendency towards large power distance within society and a traditional feeling of collectivism rather than individualism. Underpinning these traits were the values associated with Confucianism. Additionally, such traits may have been reinforced by the need for identity and unity against uncertainty and colonialism within the crowded living conditions of Hong Kong at that time.

Hofstede's work is probably the most extensive study regarding societal values by national culture and provides a benchmark for comparison. Having examined the tools Hofstede developed and his findings, a decision was made to use an adapted version in this study to explore students' and teachers' scores for Power distance and Individualism. Furthermore, a study by Woodring (1994), also based on Hofstede's work supported the adoption of such a study in this research, as it would enable comparison with a similar sized study.

Having discussed culture and culture of learning, the following subsection will consider models of learning and language teaching methodologies as these also have an influence on the roles that students and teachers can adopt, and therefore also informed the design of the research.

#### **f) Language teaching methodologies**

Underpinning any teaching methodology there are theoretical considerations regarding models of learning. These models have implications for the roles that students and teachers can adopt. In this sub-section a brief outline of prevalent models of learning will be discussed.

#### **i) Roles and recent models of learning**

Models of learning include behaviourism and constructivism. From the behaviourist perspective learning is viewed as an event with the modification of behaviour central to attain specific outcomes, whereas constructivists view learning as a process. Vygotsky (1978) is often associated with elements of what is now recognised as social constructivist theory as he identified language and interaction as crucial for intellectual development. He highlighted the power of collaborative effort in the learning process as he considered working with others serves to aid, explain, model and demystify. The need for an expert was acknowledged to ensure that a child would reach its full potential through the creation of opportunities for learning. The role of the expert in



Bruner's (1978) theory of instruction was identified as a scaffold, someone who knows how knowledge can be structured and sequenced for optimal learning, with opportunities for feedback and reinforcement. Later Bruner (1996) identified the importance of reflection, collaboration and culture and the importance of the individual and individual differences. This highlighted the necessity to provide more opportunities for learners to succeed by providing alternative learning styles and choices.

In addition, what has been increasingly recognised in theories of learning, is the need for personal involvement in the learning process. That is, learning through doing. Dewey (1963:25) maintained that there exists an 'organic connection between education and personal experience' and that 'all genuine education comes about through experience.' In Section 1, this was noted in a quote from Wittrock (1977:180). Kolb (1993:155), writing on the process of experiential learning, offers his own definition of learning as '... the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.' With respect to these theories of experiential learning the role of the learner is one where the learner is not merely a passive consumer but an active participant. The role of the teacher is to contribute to learners' experiences. Frequently influenced by the work of Freire (1972, 1985), there is a growing movement in education that places the learner at the centre of the educational process known as critical pedagogy. From this perspective, the role for the teacher should include the creation of choices and non-traditional approaches, whilst the role for learners includes adding their voices to the learning process and personalising it. Such theories have influenced classroom practice with the development of methods that acknowledge individuality and individualised learning and learning together. These models of learning and the findings from the studies have implications for both teachers' roles and the roles that students may be able to adopt in the classroom.

As discussed earlier another interesting perspective on theories of learning relates to culture. Specifically in contrast to the models of learning introduced above is the paradox of the Chinese learner (see Ho and Crookall, 1995, and Biggs and Watkins,

1996). Many Chinese, including Hong Kong Chinese, have become very successful learners through more so-called traditional ways of learning including rote learning. This apparent paradox when compared to Western views of learning is discussed by Marton, Dall'Alba and Tse (1996). They attempt to explain the processing that is assumed to be taking place and other possibilities that could explain better the success of the process. The uniqueness of this process perhaps questions the adequacy of the theories of learning within the Western world. The inadequacy is perhaps on two levels. The first concerns whether Western learning theories, culturally bound as they are, can interpret and understand such methods of learning as rote learning, whilst the second inadequacy is perhaps with respect to whether Western learning theories can accommodate different cultures and traditions, and the tensions between the different socio-political contexts with different agendas to the West with respect to learning.

Within second language learning, theories of learning have focussed specifically on language acquisition and include: Krashen (1981, 1982, and 1985) with his Input Hypothesis and Monitor Model, Spolsky (1980) with his educational linguistics model, Swain (1985) with her Output Theory and Ellis (1990) with his Reception based theories. In addition to these, there is Lambert's (1972) Social-Psychological theory, with its emphasis on attitude, motivation and self-identity. These variables have been incorporated into many of the second language acquisition models that have since been developed. For example, motivation is included as one of Krashen's (1981) affective filters and also as one factor in Schumann's (1988) acculturation model. Within the field of second language learning, a well-known model that incorporates many of the features of earlier theories is Gardner's (1988) Socio-Education Model. It is interesting to note that Cortazzi and Jin (1996:171) when discussing theories of learning claim that 'within the field of second language acquisition, there are in general, remarkably few references to cultural influences.' However, both Schumann (1988) and Gardner (1988) are exceptions to this, and more recently, theories of learning in EFL are beginning to stress that learning takes place within a social and cultural context. This development perhaps indicates a slow recognition of the importance of cultural influences in the learning process. However, in this research the cultural influence is



recognised as being important from several perspectives in influencing roles and the teaching and learning process.

From the above there appear to be different models and theories regarding the learning process and it would be impossible to identify any one as the perfect model. The newest theories of learning (Bruner, 1996; Greeno, Collins & Resnick, 1996), emphasise context, learning through doing, individuality and developing the ability to learn by gaining skills and strategies. To have the ability to learn is probably considered more important today than having sets of knowledges. Such models enable teachers and researchers to understand some of the aspects involved in the learning process and the roles associated with them. The models of learning referred to have influenced recent language teaching methodologies but it is difficult to know exactly how, as reference to models of learning in the EFL literature is limited.

## **ii) Language teaching methodologies and roles**

Roles are inextricably linked to teaching methods. How successful teaching methods are in promoting language learning is, according to Brumfit (1985), dependent on only three fundamental requirements. These are:

- i. exposure (possibly systematic) to the target language
  - ii. opportunities to use the language (either actively or passively)
  - iii. motivation to respond to the two previous requirements.
- (Brumfit, 1985:38)

These conditions provide a frame that can be used to explore the situation for students in Hong Kong. Exposure to the target language is through the classroom, and possibly via media such the Internet, television, radio and the cinema. Opportunities to use the language are largely limited to the classroom or the work environment. Motivation to learn English is frequently extrinsic, as students repeatedly give studying or a better job as the reason for learning English. This is recognised by teachers and as one teacher commented:

Group 1 T. 4 – *Lucky as I'm in a high band school, [students are] motivated – motivated by exams, principally so they can make money!* (Appendix 1)

From such comments and the analysis of the research context (see Section 3), students in Hong Kong appear motivated to learn English at least in the higher-level schools. However, the complexity within the three requirements identified above by Brumfit (1985), is in how the provision for learning opportunities is made and what kind of opportunities for learning can be provided.

Brumfit (1985) comments that there are at least three different levels within the question about the best way to teach a foreign language. He cites Anthony (1963) as providing a classic definition.

Anthony (1963) relates a broad “approach” (“a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning”) to a “method” which is a plan “no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural”. Below “method” come “techniques”, which are the classroom activities that implement methods. (Brumfit, 1985:134)

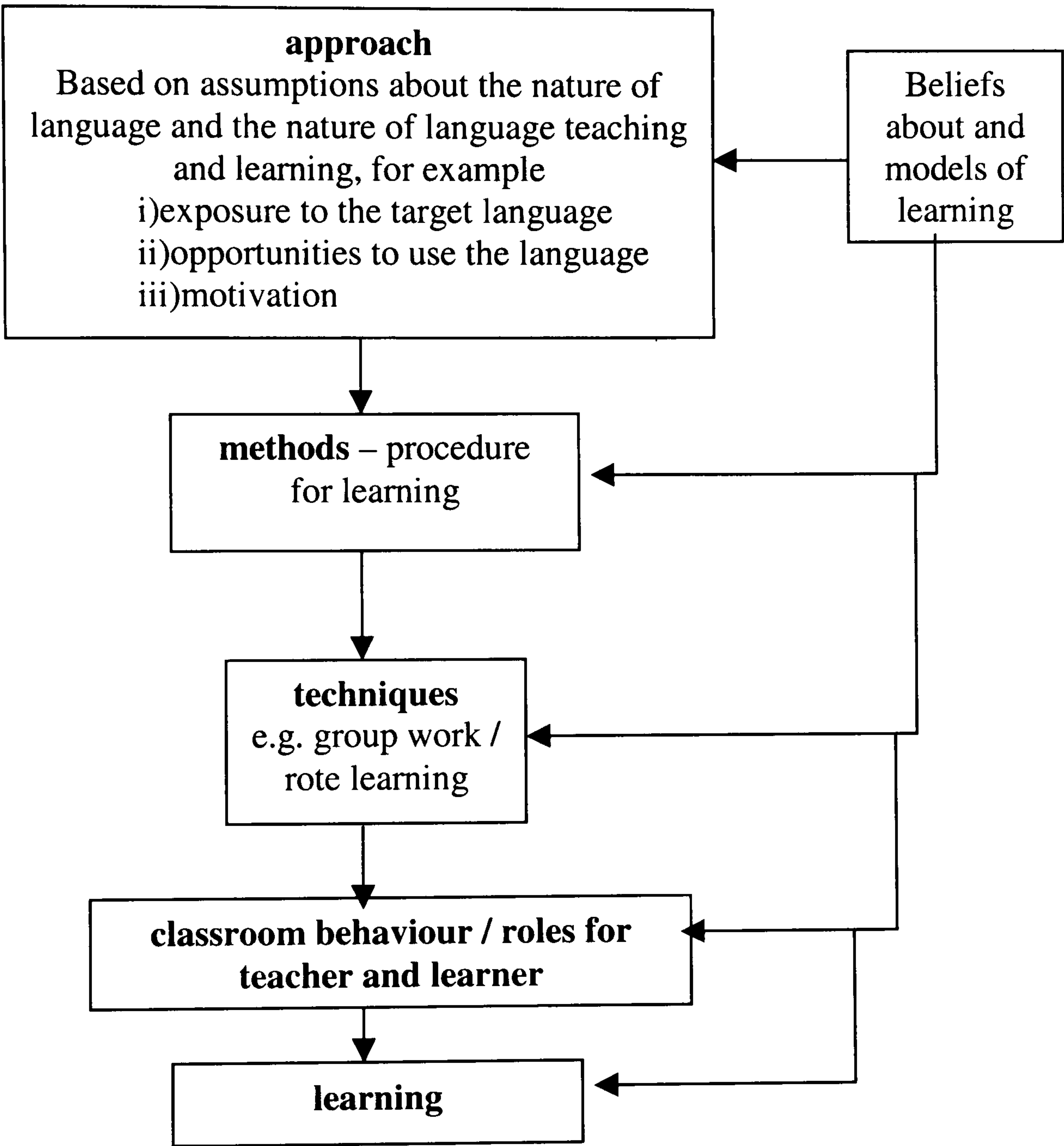
From this it would seem that the teacher is supposed to implement a method using specific techniques. The techniques involve the teacher assuming a specific role and providing opportunities for students to adopt the designated role required to ensure the technique is successful, thereby leading to learning. Diagrammatically, this is represented in Figure 2.4 overleaf.

Although this is a simple linear model, it provides a diagrammatic representation of a possible relationship between a teacher’s use of methods and techniques, and roles. This process suggests the teacher controls students’ behaviour and roles and ultimately their learning. However, it is possible that if students reject the roles they are being allowed opportunities to fulfil, they may respond in such a way that they control the teacher’s behaviour, for example by non-participation or disruption. In reality the situation is more complex than this and one of these complexities is that teachers frequently have their own perceptions of what constitutes a method and how to implement it and as noted above these perceptions are probably heavily influenced by their own learning experiences. This complexity and the diagram highlight possible



problems when the method for teaching English in schools is directed or determined by government policy.

Figure 2.4 – Language teaching methodologies



With regard to imposed policy and what should be happening in the classroom in Hong Kong, specific language teaching approaches are now discussed. The discussion will be limited to Hong Kong so that it is focussed and relevant to the thesis. Consideration will be given to more traditional approaches, reflective of pre-1984 policy in Hong Kong and communicative teaching approaches reflective of the policy directive of 1984.

In the traditional classroom in Hong Kong the teacher is knower and giver of knowledge, and a figure of authority. The focus is on the learner being given information for assimilation, with a consequence that there is probably a high level of teacher-talk and a lock-step approach that allows little room for individualised learning. Individualised learning was recognised by Bruner (1978) as an important consideration in providing learning opportunities, and one of the features of social constructionist models of learning. However, as noted above, for traditional English language teaching in Hong Kong the emphasis appears to be learning the form of the language rather than functions, with a focus on accuracy rather than fluency. According to Anderson (1993) skills are taught separately, with drilling and grammar emphasised. With respect to roles, students would be expected to sit quietly and listen carefully, with student talk considered to reflect lack of teacher control and to be representative of disruptive behaviour.

Contrary to this, the development of communicative teaching approaches has, according to Nunan (1991), been influenced by many of the methodologies that have been popular at different times since the Second World War. Nunan's (1991) description of Communicative Language Teaching Methodology (CLTM) as 'a cluster of approaches rather than a single methodology', (Nunan, 1988:24) would appear to be accurate and its development was perhaps a reaction against the structuralist and situational methods of the 1960's. In addition, the influence more recently of popular models of learning have probably influenced its development with an emphasis on student-centredness and learning through doing. Although within the EFL methodology literature reference is made to theories of second language acquisition little explicit reference is made to general educational models of learning. Thus it is difficult to understand links between these models and Communicative Language Teaching.

So much has been written on communicative approaches that it is sometimes difficult to give a clear definition. This means that very probably every teacher would draw up a different list regarding what Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) means to him or her. This has implications for the implementation of a syllabus claiming to advocate



CLT approaches and for teachers' interpretation of their roles within this frame. Nunan (1988) identifies some useful characteristics of CLT. Summarised here, these are that in CLT:

- focus is on genuine communication using everyday language
- content is considered more important than the form
- aim is to meet learner needs
- spoken aspect and interaction is as important as reading and writing
- attitude to error correction is less rigid and part of the learning process.

Nolasco and Arthur (1988) add that in CLT emphasis is placed on developing fluency as well as accuracy. Authenticity is also important, with the aim to expose students to natural examples of language as much as possible and encourage active participation on the part of the learner.

In a brainstorm of what CLT meant to a group of serving Hong Kong teachers in a Masters tutorial in 1999, the following ideas were generated. These were that CLT was about:

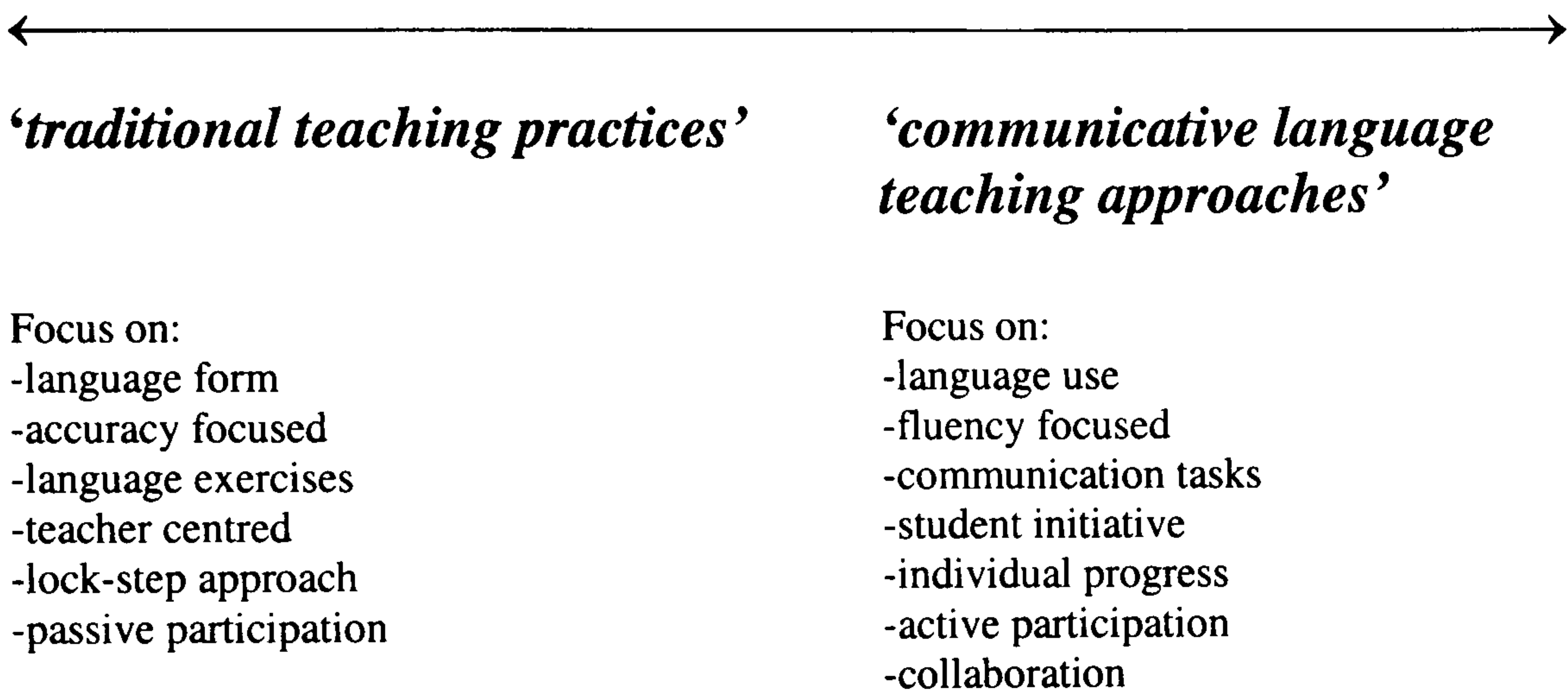
- knowing how to use language rather than knowing about language
- focusing on oral as opposed to written skills
- focusing on learners' needs
- using pair work and group work
- using target language rather than mother tongue
- using discussion/games - students actively participate in the lesson
- the teacher's role being one of an adviser or facilitator
- using authentic materials, with an emphasis on informal as well as formal language
- ensuring personal relevance, with student input being seen as important
- minimising correction.

These points appear to indicate that these teachers have clear ideas regarding the concepts involved and some of the implications for the roles of teachers and learners, but these ideas may not be representative of teachers in Hong Kong in general. They also illustrate how theories of learning have influenced practice with the importance of

the individual being recognised, the role of the teacher being one of a facilitator and the emphasis on experiential learning.

In Figure 2.5 the teaching approaches discussed here have been placed on a cline to summarise some of the differences between approaches.

Figure 2.5 Characteristics of teaching methodologies: A cline



The characteristics of traditional teaching practices and communicative teaching approaches in Figure 2.5 were used to inform the conceptual framework and the design of the questionnaires in Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs and, as evident from the characteristics, different ways of teaching require different roles for both students and teachers. As noted in Section 1, it is these differences and the required changes in roles that appear hard to effect. It is perhaps harder in situations such as Hong Kong where changes were instigated through policy at country level. From this it would appear that the concept of educational change with respect to teaching methodology has clear implications for the successful adoption of roles and this is now the focus for discussion.



### **g) Educational change and roles**

The pressure for change in Hong Kong teaching policy has been heavily influenced by the perceived falling standards of language. Additionally the recognition of new learning and teaching theories requiring active learner participation was recognised. In response to this, in 1984, the Hong Kong Education committee advocated the adoption of a communicative approach reflecting more recent models of teaching and learning. Further change towards a task-based learning, knowledge dimension and a target-oriented curriculum was imposed in September 2001. The complexity of such change is discussed below.

Although the government directs the education policy in Hong Kong, it is the teachers who have to implement the so-called new approaches. As Pepin (2000) notes:

... the responsibility for changes and transformation in education devolves directly upon the teachers. From them must come much of the vision, expertise and cultural sensitivity to interpret and respond to pressure for change. This is likely to imply changes in attitudes, belief systems and social roles, in methods of work and classroom practices, and in resources of knowledge. (Pepin, 2000:2)

Ultimately, as seen in Figure 2.5, a different or new teaching method or approach requires changes in role and this can be problematic. Kumaravaldivelu (1991) comments that such restructuring of roles is daunting because:

...teacher and learner...bring with them their own perceptions of what constitutes language teaching, language learning and learning outcome and their own prescriptions about what their classroom role ought to be. (Kumaravaldivelu, 1991:99)

However, any human being under pressures of time, work and other responsibilities is likely to implement a new policy through recourse to the techniques they can most readily use and this will not necessarily involve changes in roles. Compounding change may be a lack of adequate guidance and little opportunity to change beliefs about teaching and learning and increase knowledge about teaching and learning. For many teachers a new teaching policy may appear to be yet another idea in a perpetual flow of innovations and, as noted by Jung (1978), people who realise someone else is making their decisions for them are likely to react with resistance to change. Harris

and Wagner (1993) identified an example of such resistance in their national survey of teachers in America. They found that the majority of teachers saw themselves as the targets of reform and only 37% felt they were agents of reform. Harris and Wagner (1993) argue that feeling a target of reform serves to undermine teachers' sense of security. Another aspect of change is that existing beliefs about what the existing role is struggle with newly developed ideas about what the role might be and beliefs about the practicality of the new teaching method.

Another problem in change is that, according to Fullan and Pomfret (1977), role relationships often remain implicit in the plans for changes in curriculum. New curricula outline the new approaches but these still have to be interpreted by the teacher. For example, in the Hong Kong syllabus (Curriculum Development Committee, 1983) there was little explicit reference to teachers' roles, but had teachers gone outside the syllabus to such texts as that cited below, clarity may still have been elusive. According to Breen and Candlin (1980), the teacher roles in CLT are to:

- facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom and between participants and the various activities and texts.
- act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group.
- act as an organiser of resources and as a resource himself
- act as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities
- be a researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organisational capacities. (Breen and Candlin, 1980:99)

It is difficult to understand what is meant by the so-called second role to 'act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group'. In a state education system such as Hong Kong, with its priorities of examinations, it is probably debatable whether such descriptions would assist teachers in understanding more about their role in a communicative classroom. Certainly with respect to the final point, the opportunities for research and learning are limited within the daily life of a secondary schoolteacher anywhere in the world, unless the culture of the school encourages research and learning or research is required for a professional development course.

Another important area within policy documentation and directives concerns the language and concepts used. Several writers (Tudor, 1992; Anderson, 1991; and



Cortazzi and Jin, 1996) have documented the problem of using English to explain concepts and processes within the teaching/learning process which are a) alien to the teachers interpreting them, b) in a foreign language and c) not reflective of the cultural context within which they are being introduced. A study in Vietnam by Sullivan (1996) examined how teachers tried to implement communicative language teaching methods. Sullivan noted that in discussions with the supervisor about implementing communicative teaching methods the English word 'practice' was used to talk about the goals of CLT. However, the Vietnamese word for practice (with its implication of train and drill) was used when talking about what teachers should do in class. In this example it would appear that theory and reality have been dissociated and the use of the code switching was the strategy that the supervisor adopted to talk about dimensions of practice.

In addition to interpreting changes, Fullan (1999) notes that there are at least three dimensions at stake in implementing any new programme or policy. These are:

- 1) the possible use of new or revised materials
- 2) possible new or revised teaching approaches
- 3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g. pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programmes) (Fullan, 1999:37)

He considers that these three aspects form a system of variables that are all required for change to be successful and to achieve a particular educational goal or set of goals. Real change involves changes in conceptions and role behaviour, but these cannot be changed with immediate effect. Joyce and Showers (1988) agree that innovation is multidimensional, involving changes in skills, practice and conceptions, but they found that few staff development programmes get beyond the short-term manifestations of the changes they are addressing. Fullan (1999) would argue that the way his dimensions of change interrelate is complex and comments that, 'beliefs guide and are informed by teaching strategies and activities; the effective use of materials depends on their articulation of beliefs and teaching approaches and so on' (Fullan 1999:40). A problem may be that beliefs are deep, and changes in them may require changes to core values (see understandings of beliefs, earlier this section).

Benson (1997:2) expresses an interesting viewpoint concerning the issue of power; when referring to the introduction of autonomous learning he states that, 'it implies a restructuring of social relations in learning.' Such a situation might be equally applicable to changes in teaching methodology and consequently roles. This is a critical perspective that perhaps highlights the challenges of change for all parties involved. To further illustrate this situation, Benson (1997) claims that the language learner in a self-access context is a passive consumer of knowledge, and the idea of autonomous learning is a contradiction as this would result in a transfer of power from the institution, for example the school, to the learner. This philosophical debate highlights implications for the processes involved in control and is revisited in the final section of the thesis.

Another aspect is the realities of the status quo and also the question of valuing the change. One of the realities, according to Reitz (1987), is that schools are social units which themselves have specific goals. As such, Owens (1991) considers these social units have distinct cultures with value and belief systems that influence groups and individuals within them and as noted earlier according to Kowalski (1995) there are also strong or weak school cultures influenced by value and belief systems. Further Hofstede (1980) explicitly identified Hong Kong as being a community with high Power distance and high Collectivist tendencies and he proposed that these influenced the behaviour of the groups and individuals in Hong Kong at that time. These identified features probably all affect roles but the school culture could be an important factor influencing differences between perceptions of roles and observable roles. School culture was identified in discussions with teachers regarding the types of schools they worked in. For example:

*... if the class is noisy, we will be embarrassed and will be in trouble with the headmaster. The headmaster does not understand why students are making a noise. If he asked me I would explain, but he doesn't ask me. The policy is quietness. (Teacher 3 Group 2 – Appendix 1)*

The comment shows that this teacher is obviously very aware that quietness is valued and thus a quiet culture is being propagated in the school where he works. Yet it is within such constraints that teachers are being asked to change their teaching



approaches. As Fullan (1999:70) notes, major research has shown that the Principal strongly influences the likelihood of change and if the situation described above is considered, there seems to be little chance of any change in school culture whilst that Principal is in power. Any teacher working in such an environment would find it difficult to be able to change their teaching approach if noise meant upsetting the headteacher.

Another excerpt from a student teacher illustrates the existence of a classroom culture that exists within the school culture and this culture appears very much dependent on the teacher. She commented:

*I think the school was generally quite free, but in the classroom it very much depended on the teacher. My class told me, they got used to a very quiet class. They won't do activities so they can't get used to my teaching. In general, the atmosphere that the Principal tried to culture is active, learning happily, you know this kind of teaching. But while in the classroom it would be very different, because for different teachers, the students will have different expectations. Like for the music class the teacher will not allow them to speak even a word...(Interviewer interrupts 'in the music class?')... if they make any noise that's not necessary then they will be punished. The punishment will be copy the Chinese 100X so even the most misbehaved student will dare not to say a word. It's really different.*

(Student teacher W – Appendix 2)

From this excerpt it would seem possible that one classroom culture could be transferable to another classroom with a different teacher. In addition to school and classroom cultures, Kowalski and Reitzug (1993) identify schools as also having climates. They believe a school climate consists of the physical attributes, organizational structures, social relationships and human elements (for example, the needs, wants and motivation of individuals who work in the school). Kowalski (1995) considers that it is because of these factors that schools and behaviour of teachers prove resistant to change. In addition, he suggests that despite new instructional paradigms, many teachers work in isolation, trying to implement prescribed curricula with predetermined materials. This perhaps supports the view that teachers will often use the techniques they have known and feel comfortable with and the ones that will achieve the goals they are expected to meet. Within the Hong Kong context, the goals are enabling students to pass examinations.

With regard to the teacher's role, Prabhu (1987) summarises some of what is happening for a teacher on a personal level in the classroom. He comments that:

... what a teacher does in the classroom is not solely, or even primarily, determined by the teaching method he or she intends to follow. There are a complex of other forces at play, in varied forms and degrees. (Prabhu, 1987:109)

Prabhu highlights some of the difficulties in reacting to change which teachers face on a personal level. Another aspect of this, according to Kontra (1997:244), is that teachers are frequently successful language learners themselves and therefore consider that the way they learnt worked, and their teachers were suitable models. From this it would seem reasonable to propose that for teachers who have grown up and taught in cultures that have teacher-centred classrooms, examination and curriculum constraints, and large classes, mismatches between ideas about innovation and reality might prevail. This is frustrating for all concerned, perhaps resulting in the change in teaching methodology taking too much time or failing to become evident in the classroom.

A further problem within the process of change is that students are rarely considered. A project in Britain conducted by Hull and Ruddock (1980) examined the perceptions of students, and evidence indicated that their expectations were neglected. Hull and Ruddock (1980) noted that students are a crucial aspect in innovation, as any successful innovation requires students' participation. Fullan (1999:188) recognises that changes for students and teachers must happen together.

By examining perceptions of roles, information about students' beliefs can perhaps be gained to inform the teacher/innovator in investigating what students' perceptions of roles are, how the students might react to change and how they can be motivated to try new roles. In addition, information regarding preferences for certain types of interaction or group processes can be accessed, with the proviso that negative responses may be due to not having tried something before. The above would seem to indicate that there is a need for students' opinions to be recognised, as these opinions matter if



new roles are to be adopted successfully. The importance and knowledge that can be gained from such opinions is noted this research.

In this discussion some of the elements involved in change have been outlined; these include the need:

- to be able to understand and interpret new policy
- to change beliefs to meet the demands of innovation, which appears not to be a simple process
- to understand the teaching method involved
- to understand the influence of the school culture
- to understand the demands change makes on a teacher on a personal level
- for all parties within a school to be involved in the process of change.

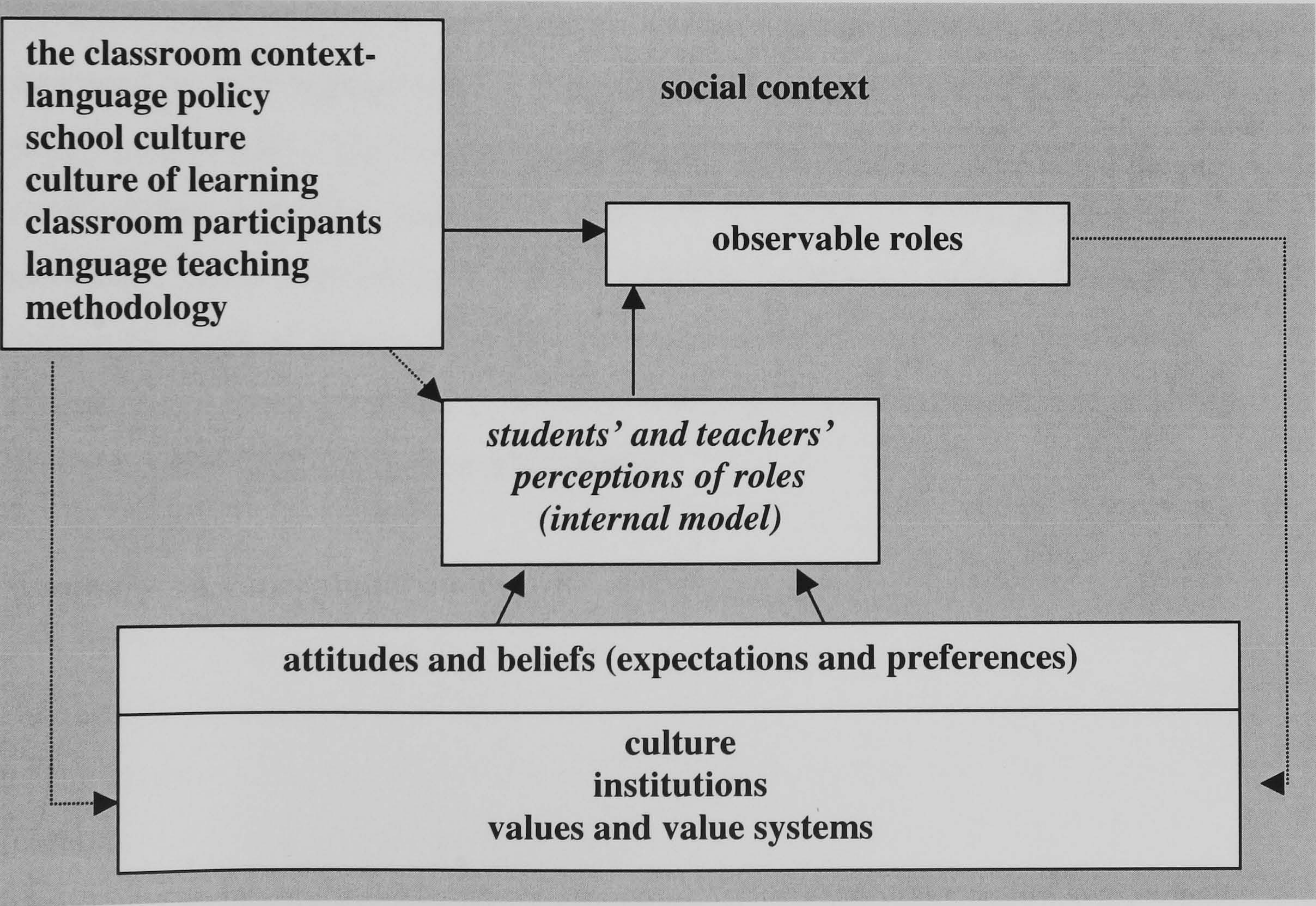
From Fullan's (1999) contribution regarding change there would seem to be little doubt that we need to know more about teachers and students to know 'where they are at', in order to make change more successful. This discussion indicates that this exploration of perceptions of roles might be useful in considerations and planning for change and innovation. The next part of this section explains how the discussion so far can be used in a framework for exploring perceptions of roles and to find out more about people.



**Summary - A conceptual framework**

Having explored the concepts of perceptions, roles, attitudes, beliefs, culture, and teaching methodologies, information was gained to inform the approach and the research tools. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 were used to develop Figure 2.6. In addition to providing a summary of the concepts discussed in this section the figure also indicates possible relationships between the different concepts and perceptions of roles. The dotted lines represent possible washback effects of the classroom variables and the experience of the classroom on attitudes and beliefs and consequently perceptions of roles.

Figure 2.6 – A conceptual framework for exploring roles



Within Figure 2.6, the understandings of the concepts indicate possible levels and layers that could be involved in an exploration of roles. In addition to the explorations of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and culture, other aspects discussed in this section were the institutions, values, school culture, culture of learning, language teaching



methodologies and policy, as these are other possible influences on roles. Together, these provided information that gave direction to the research and provided a basis on which decisions were based. This included the decision to analyse the research context and complete two studies, one investigating attitudes and beliefs and one examining cultural dimensions, in the attempt to explore perceptions of roles.

## **Summary**

In this section the notion that research follows a cyclical pattern was introduced as the guiding model for this research. The subsequent development of a conceptual framework was based on exploring the understandings of various concepts including perceptions and roles. From the exploration of the relevant literature, areas for investigation were highlighted that were deemed likely to provide information about perceptions of roles. The information gained from the review of literature was combined in a conceptual framework, and from this, areas for investigation were identified. These areas included context, attitudes, beliefs and culture. Context will be analysed in the next section although reference has already been made here to the institutions of Hong Kong and to language teaching methodologies and the language policy in Hong Kong with respect to change.

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## **Section 3: Description - The Research Context**

### **Introduction**

Within the conceptual framework the inclusion of an analysis of the research context was identified. This analysis provides information about Hong Kong, the language background and the education system. The information was used in the data analysis stage to inform the data. This section starts with a brief historical overview of the political, administrative and economic situation in Hong Kong and further information about the institutions that underpin society.

In the first sub-section the language background of Hong Kong is discussed and the recent political and economic changes in Hong Kong highlighted. An understanding of such factors and the language background of a community was relevant as these, according to Riley (1988), have implications for the types of beliefs a population may hold regarding language and language learning. Following this analysis, an outline of the education system is provided, with a consideration of the issues of medium of instruction and the language teaching policy. The issue of medium of instruction is relevant as the main data for this study were collected from students from Chinese Medium of Instruction schools while other data were collected from informants from schools using different mediums of instruction. These different sets of data were collected in order to investigate the possible effects of the medium of instruction on perceptions of roles. The second issue of language teaching policy is one pertinent to the research as it provides information about the history of language teaching in Hong Kong and identifies possible tensions between the roles for students and teachers and the legacies that probably influence today's classrooms. The focus of the final part of the section is on Hong Kong classrooms and draws on empirical data from this study to offer some insights into real classroom life.



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## **The changing face of Hong Kong**

The politics, administration and economics of a country inevitably affect the place and use of languages within that country's society. The British administered Hong Kong as a colony from 1842 until 1997, when it was returned to China. During the post-war period, Hong Kong was transformed from a shipping port into a world leader in manufacturing, with industrial estates and factories dominating parts of the territory (Ho, 1989). Manufacturing provided work for thousands of new immigrants from Mainland China, who were escaping from the turmoil of civil war and various warlords. Within these groups of immigrants there was an enthusiasm for assimilating into the community and building a base for themselves, which added to the economic success of Hong Kong at this time. With the closure of China to the outside world for many years, the pressure for immigrants to assimilate and be successful was compounded. In the 1960's and 70's this was reflected in people's preoccupations with earning a living, sending their children to the best schools they could afford and providing a home. However, Ho (1989) notes that with an increase in public housing, stability in employment and educational opportunities, these daily concerns gradually became less of a main focus for life. During the late 1980's and 90's, the focus was turned towards home ownership, marital status and material wealth. In addition, there was another priority for the Hong Kong Chinese. This was the maintenance of democracy and rights, or alternatively, in view of experiences in China, moves towards securing a place overseas for the time after the 1997 hand-over of Hong Kong back to China.

Economically, during the 1980's as land prices and employment costs rose, industry and manufacturing were increasingly relocated to China and Hong Kong started to move towards becoming a leading service/finance centre with technology at the forefront. Yeung (1989) considers that with these changes came:

- the establishment and growth of a middle-class with the emergence of a clear group of professional working women

- a change in the structure of the family from the traditional extended family situation to the nuclear family situation.

These changes were supported in the 1960's with education for the masses rather than just the elite, through the government's provision of six years of universal primary education. This was achieved by 1972. Three years of compulsory secondary schooling was implemented by 1978. More recently, between 1980 and 1998, the number of tertiary education places available rose from 2% to nearly 20% of the eligible population (Johnson, 1998:265). From the above it can be seen that economically Hong Kong has grown over the past five decades and that with this growth the opportunities for education have increased substantially.

Politically, since 1997, Hong Kong has become an autonomously governed economic region within China, with the Beijing-based Chinese government recognising the importance of the economic growth of the region and the wealth it attracts and holds. Currently, Hong Kong appears stable in terms of political direction and the uncertainties characteristic of the pre-1997 hand-over seem to have disappeared. Both the political and economic development of Hong Kong have probably influenced the language background of Hong Kong, and the population's current use of language is now considered.

## **Language background**

Hong Kong is different from other ex-colonial countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, as the majority of the population are Cantonese speaking Chinese with no significant proportion of other Asian groups. Thus there was no need for English to function as the *lingua franca*. Twenty years ago Luke and Richards (1982) identified English as an auxiliary language, as its use was restricted to 'high' functions in society, that is, use in courts, government, education and business. Luke and Richards (1982) used Fishman's (1972) notion of diglossia without bilingualism to justify this category of an auxiliary language. This involves the notion that where



two or more languages are used within a society the majority of the population uses one language and it is used for intra-group interaction. In contrast, bilingualism is restricted to a minority of the population for inter-group contact.

The situation described above would seem to reflect Hong Kong in the past but not necessarily the present. Further evidence of specific language patterns can be found in Gibbons' (1984) profile that indicates language use was restricted according to different classes within society at that time. Gibbons' (1984) profile based on Schumann's (1976) social distance parameters showed that contact with Westerners and the use of English existed within specific domains of the Chinese population. Gibbons (1984) divided the Hong Kong Chinese into two groups, a Chinese elite and typical Chinese (working and lower working class). The first group consisted of a small elite who felt politically and socially equal to Westerners and integrated with them, including intermarrying. They had a positive attitude towards Westerners and often had residences in the same areas within Hong Kong as well as residences in the West. The second, much larger group, considered that Westerners had a higher status than typical Chinese, but they were proud of Chinese culture and wished to preserve it. This they achieved by sustaining a high level of cohesion. Members of this group lived in the Chinese speaking community with few opportunities for travel or residence in English speaking countries (Gibbons, 1984). Further descriptions of language use in Hong Kong include Lim (1992), who describes Hong Kong as a monocultural society with English as the language of the courts, civil service, most examinations, and university lectures. More recently supporting this, Falvey (1998) considers that Cantonese accounts for 95% of the language use amongst Hong Kong Chinese. Consequently, whilst Falvey (1998) agrees that Luke and Richards were right to give English in Hong Kong a new title of auxiliary language, which described the situation better than English as a Second Language (ESL), he also argues that the place and use of English reflects that of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) situation.

Currently, both English and Cantonese are the official languages of Hong Kong, with Cantonese gaining official recognition in 1974. The Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Tung Che Wai, supported this in his 1997 address when he announced that Hong Kong would work towards being trilingual (Cantonese, Putonghua (Standardised Chinese) and English) and biliterate, (Standard written Chinese and English). In reality this may not be achievable as there is probably insufficient use of both English and Putonghua within the Chinese population to attain these levels of proficiency.

One of the main factors that probably influenced the formation of the two very definite groups identified by Gibbons (1984) and the subsequent usage of English in Hong Kong was the economic situation. Firstly, as previously noted, English was not needed as a *lingua franca*. Secondly, the type of employment offered to the populace within Hong Kong reflected that offered by a society with an industrial / manufacturing base. As a consequence, much of the population were employed in blue-collar work with no necessity to use or speak English. This situation continued from the post-war period until the late 1980's when Hong Kong moved towards becoming a finance/service centre. This required more white-collar workers who were able to speak English. Other changes identified above, such as better education and smaller families, also contributed to the growth of a middle class (Yeung, 1989). This group have more contact with English through the media, technology, travel and more opportunities for education. According to Johnson (1998), more students are enrolling in English medium tertiary education both in Hong Kong and abroad than in the past. Additionally, census information from 1991 (cited in Bacon-Shone and Bolton, 1998) reinforces changes in language use, as it indicates that significantly more people claim to be able to speak English or Putonghua in the 1990's than in the 1980's.

The changing political situation has also affected language use. There has been an increasing use of Cantonese officially and, surely appropriately, in domains where English was once the vernacular, for example the law courts. Interesting



linguistic/literacy developments over the past decade have included the emergence of a Cantonese popular culture, Cantopop, the development of the Asian comic culture and in the popular culture domain, a genre of television advertisements. These developments could be interpreted as moves against colonialism or as the need for the recognition of the Asian or Cantonese identity, and might be reflective of Gibbons' (1984) identification of pride regarding own language and culture.

From the above it would seem that Cantonese is the main language used in Hong Kong. For students, their use of English is for work or study purposes, with perhaps more opportunities for exposure to English through the media and computer technology than a decade ago. When asked why they want to learn English, students say time and time again, that the reason is, 'to get a better job.' In this study, the students' most popular response to a questionnaire item concerning the main function of English in Hong Kong (Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale), indicated that students (1997-41% (n=56), 1998-32% (n=59), and 1999-42% (n=31)) considered the main function was to communicate with foreigners for business and work related purposes. Such a response appears to acknowledge the international aspect of Hong Kong and its future as a service finance centre. There have clearly been changes in the place of English within Hong Kong as it has developed, although, the overall language situation in Hong Kong appears to reflect one of an EFL situation with few real opportunities to speak English. As this research is grounded within the education system, this is the focus of next sub-section.

## **The education system**

### **a) A history**

As a British colony until 1997, the education system in Hong Kong was based largely on a European framework with primary and secondary schools and free education until form 3 (age 14) at secondary level. Secondary education has always been, and continues to be, driven by examinations. Today, the Hong Kong

Certificates of Education Examinations (HKCEE) are taken at age 16 and the Hong Kong Advanced levels (HKAL) are taken at 18 years old. The HKAL Use of English examination is also taken with the Advanced level certificates and is a pre-requisite for tertiary education. Success in examinations means a better job, thus providing a high level of extrinsic motivation. This examination-driven system gives rise to classrooms that are highly assessment oriented with frequent evaluations and an emphasis on learning outcomes that are exam oriented.

Within the Hong Kong education system two issues have become prominent. These are the medium of instruction and the policy regarding teaching methodology. These issues have been the subjects of on-going debates amongst politicians and educators in Hong Kong and are relevant to this research because of possible impacts on roles. The issue of medium of instruction prompted one micro-study within this research that aimed to investigate similarities and differences in perceptions of roles between sets of data from students from both English medium and Chinese medium of instruction schools. With regard to teaching policy, it was anticipated that the research findings might provide information that could inform knowledge about perceptions of roles and appropriate teaching methods. An understanding of these two issues highlights the tensions between the different stakeholders within the education process.

### **b) Medium of instruction**

Historically, children in Hong Kong were educated through a second language rather than through their mother tongue. This resulted in mixed-mode and mixed-code teaching in many of the so-called English medium schools. Mixed-mode means the use of Cantonese for instruction while using English textbooks. Mixed-code comprises Cantonese with English terms inserted.

In 1953, a UNESCO report recognised that the use of the vernacular language (the mother tongue) in education provided the best medium for teaching a child (UNESCO, 1953). The Llewellyn Report (1982:4) supported this view and advised



accepting ‘as a fact that the mother tongue, is all other things being equal, the best medium of teaching and learning.’ The Hong Kong Government and the Education Department used these two reports as justification in discussion and decisions regarding medium of instruction. For example, from these reports the Hong Kong Education Commission Report (1984) concluded that mother tongue instruction would be more effective and recommended schools should be encouraged to adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction. However, this had many implications within a system where an education in English was, and still is, seen as a step to prosperity. English was at one time the official language of the community, and the language required to obtain the best positions in trading and government. Therefore, parents saw English as the gateway to a better future for their children and demanded schools teach through English. In the light of the political uncertainties of the 1960’s and 70’s and the developments within the economy such parental reactions were understandable. Parents wanted what they considered to be the most advantageous education for their children and as a result, until 1998, most secondary education was taught using English as the medium of instruction.

One of the reasons underlying this large number of schools using English as the medium of instruction was the 75% increase in the number of junior secondary schools between 1960 and 1979. This expansion was in response to the legislation requiring the provision of education for all children until the age of fourteen. As schools were allowed to choose the medium of instruction, the number of schools that chose to teach in English rose rapidly as schools bowed to parental pressure for preference for Anglo-Chinese school places for their children. According to Ho (1989), the Government did not provide adequate guidance to the so-called English medium schools resulting in mixed-mode and mixed-code teaching in many. This situation forced the Government to take action regarding medium of instruction. Consequently, in 1984 the Education Commission Report (ECR) No. 1 established a clear policy to encourage secondary schools to teach in the mother tongue.

In 1986 the Government introduced support measures to schools using Chinese as the medium of instruction. Based on a study by Brimer (1985), the Government argued that only about 30% of students could benefit from an English medium education. Subsequently, guidelines were issued directing schools to adopt the medium of instruction appropriate to the intake of their students. This decision was based on results in Chinese and English tests at the end of primary education. In 1998, the Government had to intervene further and issued a directive based on students' results and inspection of all schools. 114 schools were designated as English medium schools and the other 370 were designated as Chinese medium schools. This caused an outcry from both parents and school Principals, and appeals were made for reversals of the decisions reinforced by extensive reports in the media.

Whilst the issue of medium of instruction will probably remain a prominent one in Hong Kong in the coming years, a question of interest for this research was how the medium of instruction in other content subjects might affect students' and teachers' perceptions and realisation of roles in language classrooms. In addition to the main database, comparative data were also collected from groups of students of similar ages from English Medium Schools and Chinese Medium Schools. This data was used to explore any patterns of difference emerging between perceptions of students educated in schools through different mediums of instruction, and is presented and discussed in Sections 5 and 6.

A further issue influencing roles identified in Section 2 appears to be teaching methodology and this is discussed below with respect to Hong Kong.

### **c) Teaching methodology**

In the post-war period various methods were used to teach English to Hong Kong secondary school students. According to Cheng (1983) the grammar translation method and the direct method were used during the 1940's and 50's, while in the 1960's and 70's the oral-structural approach, with its emphasis on the mastery of form through repetitive practice, was advocated in government publications and the



English language syllabus (CDC, 1975 and 1976). With regard to this teaching approach, Widdowson (1972) notes that this approach frequently results in students being unable to use and understand language.

Such complaints about employees' inability to use and understand English were voiced by the Hong Kong business community and these complaints initiated further replacement of the English syllabus and teaching approach in 1981. This new syllabus was grounded in the statement 'fluency and communicative effectiveness will receive as much emphasis as the production of correct English sentences' (CDC, 1981:13-14). The revised communicative syllabus has now been in schools for more than eighteen years. The main objective of this English language syllabus was to help every student develop the 'maximum degree of functional competence in English' (CDC, 1983:8), by providing the students with the 'opportunity to use the language...in a meaningful way to carry out acts of purposeful communication' (CDC, 1981:20). Theoretically, according to the Curriculum Development Committee (1981:13-14), this official revision of English language teaching moved the emphasis of the teaching method from 'form' to 'function' with the introduction of communicative language teaching.

Unfortunately, despite these changes in syllabus, there is much evidence that the learning of English in Hong Kong during the 1980's and 1990's tended to remain within highly structured formal classrooms with the teacher as knower and giver of knowledge, and textbooks and exercises being central to the teaching. This teaching situation was part of the rationale for the research as outlined in Section 1 and examples were given there to illustrate a possible gap between policy and practice in the classroom. Additionally, Evans (1996) comments that since its introduction into classrooms in the late 1980's, communicative language teaching has had little impact on the way English is taught. He argues that the lack of communicative language teaching methods in schools can be attributed to several factors. These are summarised as:

- the examination syllabus which encourages many of the traditional classroom practices
- textbooks which are influenced by the public examination
- teacher's lack of specialist training.

The poor relationship between syllabus and the exam can be illustrated by the failure to change the oral examination of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education to reflect the syllabus. Until 1995, only 10% of marks were allocated to this skill and this part of the examination took the form of the reading of a passage and the description of a picture. There were no opportunities that provided real reasons for communication. The number of marks allocated also meant that students could pass the examination without attending the oral exam. The allocation of marks has now been changed to reflect 18% of the total score and attendance is compulsory. In addition, the task includes the asking and answering of questions between the examiner and the student in contextualised situations where the student is required to acquire and transmit specific information.

When the new 1983 syllabus was published, many English teachers expressed concern about implementing communicative language teaching in Hong Kong's conservative, exam-driven education system. Richards *et al.* (1992:83) reported that 'both teachers and students see the primary goal of English teaching....as preparing students to pass public examinations', and this system was reinforced by the textbooks as noted above by Evans (1996). This is further illustrated by Ingham and Murphy (1995:92) who state when talking about teaching in Hong Kong, that 'we are all familiar with the difficulties of making examination oriented text-book teaching communicative.' The overwhelming examination pressures and priorities that both teachers and students face cannot be underestimated. The students' examination expectations were prominent in the discussions when teachers were asked what students' expectations of them were, as illustrated in the excerpts below:

*Make them pass the exam.* (Teacher 1, Group 3)

*The students that I have really expect me to get them somewhere.* (Teacher 4, Group 3)



*The same thing, exams, they [the students] are always worried about their exams. (Teacher 3, Group 2)*

*When they get to the higher forms, they [the students] get very exam orientated. They are very anxious about exams. So actually this influences our teaching because we have to make our lessons more exam oriented. (Teacher 2, Group 2)*

*They like to be well-briefed on a particular issue that may come up in the exam. (Teacher 4, Group 1)*

This problematic issue regarding the tension between syllabus and exam priorities is an issue that according to one teacher will remain. He suggests that:

*...the only way you are going to change the syllabus is by changing the exam syllabus, make oral much more of the whole percentage. If they are good at oral, all the other skills will knock on. (Teacher 4, Group 1)*

While this may be possible, the implications of implementing such an idea for staffing costs would be considerable and probably unrealistic.

In discussing the implementation of a different teaching approach Tomlison (1988) suggests that:

*... a teacher committed to introducing communicative language teaching in a conservative school in Hong Kong risks alienating his/her students, colleagues and principal, as it encourages noise, initiative, and disorder, which conflicts with the school, the textbooks and the examination. (Tomlison, 1988:105)*

This situation was illustrated in the remark cited in Section 2 from one of the teachers who was interviewed regarding his teaching situation. He reported that in his school the school culture was quiet and the Principal discouraged any noise from classrooms. The impact of school cultures such as these not only influence the roles that students and teachers can adopt but also the scope for implementation of new teaching policies.

According to Evans (1996), the approach outlined in the syllabus seems to reflect Howatt's (1984) weak version of communicative language teaching, and he suggests

that it builds on, rather than subverts, past practice. For example, the concluding paragraph of the introduction of the syllabus states that:

... throughout the whole programme, equal emphasis will be placed on English as a medium of instruction and as a formal linguistic system. This means that communicative effectiveness, ability to use the language, will receive as much attention as the production of correct English sentences. (CDC, 1983:15)

Evans (1996) argues that, as a consequence, old techniques for presenting and practising structures are largely retained. From personal observations of new and in-service teachers during teaching practice in Hong Kong over a number of years, it would seem that some teachers were using less communicative approaches than the teacher education programmes and the syllabus encouraged. In addition to the reasons already cited above, there are those reasons originally noted in Section 2, including concerns about the language of description regarding teaching concepts. In Hong Kong it is perhaps debatable whether the syllabus was explicit enough in describing the teaching concepts encouraged through a communicative approach. These concepts were probably totally alien to teachers' practice during the 1980's and 1990's, especially to non-specialist English subject teachers, who were forced to teach English in the lower forms during this time. From knowledge of the history of education in Hong Kong, many of the teachers would probably have experienced traditional teaching methods (perhaps with an emphasis on rote learning) during their education, their own English proficiency might be poor, (the rationale for the Benchmarking Initiative, Falvey and Coniam (1996)) and their qualifications lacking (see page 94 this section). These factors probably all influence the approaches teachers adopt or choose to adopt in the classroom. Furthermore, choice is most likely further influenced by existing beliefs derived primarily from one's own experience as a student, as described in Section 2. In addition, the materials recommended for use as reference materials in the syllabus include books on formal grammar and books on model compositions. Recommendations regarding books for professional development, for example books to assist in developing teachers' understanding of the communicative approaches, were very limited. Further considerations affecting choice of teaching approach are classroom conditions, such



as large classes, outside noise, and discipline problems. These considerations provide understandable explanations why teachers might prefer to retain known teaching approaches in attempts to maintain the status quo and control.

Supporting the apparent lack of adoption of communicative approaches in Hong Kong, studies in the late 1980's and 1990's confirmed the considerable anecdotal evidence that the new syllabus advocating communicative language teaching seemed to have had little impact on the Hong Kong classroom and changes in teaching approaches (see for example, Leung, 1987; Lai, 1993; Evans, 1996). Lai states that:

... the Hong Kong classroom is didactic and non-interactive; there is little genuine communication between teacher and student and student and student. A great deal of time is devoted to traditional class work. (Lai, 1993:44)

In 1993 the government appointed a group to investigate this and they confirmed that many schools had 'still not fully embraced the communicative approach' (Education Commission, 1994:25). A lack of trained teachers, shortage of stimulating materials and a lack of adequate resources were identified as problems. Additionally, the change of syllabus occurred in a climate which was perhaps less positive than it should have been. For example, Lai (1993) cites an article in which the Director of Education at the time stated that English teachers should stress basic grammar, pronunciation and sentence structures, and Brock (1994) quotes a Hong Kong educator who identifies teachers' use of the communicative approach in the past decade as the root of declining standards. Such a climate probably served to fuel the doubts of teachers, learners, parents, and the business community. In addition, this move to change the syllabus came when secondary schools were still adapting to the demands of universal secondary education introduced in the late 1970's. To compound problems with the implementation of a communicative approach, there had, in the 1980's, been few studies providing evidence that communicative classrooms were a more effective language learning environment than traditional teacher-centred classrooms (Canale, 1983; Richards, 1984). Within such an atmosphere and considering the backgrounds of many teachers, it is not surprising that changes were not immediately observable.

The implementation of the communicative approach may also have been affected by teachers' beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Teacher beliefs were discussed in Section 2 and one influence on beliefs was identified as experience. Miller and Aldred (2000) highlighted student teachers' beliefs about CLT in a study that collected data through focus groups on how appropriate student teachers thought CLT was in the Hong Kong context. The transcriptions revealed that each group gave the same four reasons why they thought CLT was appropriate for the Hong Kong context. These were that:

- students can learn English in a more active way.
- it is especially good for the oral component of examination.
- it improves the atmosphere in the classroom.
- teachers can raise the interest of the students, then most will participate, and they do not want to be bored. (Miller and Aldred, 2000:14)

In contrast to these positive attributes of CLT, student teachers identified seventeen difficulties or problems in using CLT in Hong Kong schools. These ranged from beliefs about incompatibility of culture and CLT, classroom organisational issues, classroom control, school management, teacher education, the exam priority of the education system, ways to learn, expectations and roles for students and teachers. The identification of these concerns highlights student teachers' awareness of the implications of using new or different teaching methods and the importance of attempting to understand people's own perceptions of a teaching approach. These perceptions must surely influence how policies with prescribed approaches are transported from paper to the classroom. As well as perceptions, information about Hong Kong classrooms was also necessary to inform knowledge about the research context. Thus the next part of this section will describe the conditions of the Hong Kong classroom and empirical data from interviews from informants in this study will be included to provide further reflections of reality.



#### **d) The Hong Kong classroom**

Walker (1997) argues that the education system in Hong Kong appears to generate classrooms that reflect a:

- high degree of competition and emphasis on normative evaluation
- high degree of teacher control
- high degree of importance placed on performing well in English classrooms (Walker, 1997: 33)

It is useful to consider the literature on Hong Kong classrooms using each of Walker's categories. Some of the data from the research regarding students' descriptions of classrooms is also included, as this appears to provide a contrasting picture.

Walker's (1997) first category identifies a high degree of competitiveness and an emphasis on normative evaluation. This is evident throughout the education system, culminating in the competition for tertiary education places based on the outcomes of examination results. Although there has been an increase in numbers of tertiary education places from 3% of school leavers 20 years ago to 18% today (Johnson, 1998), many argue that this is still insufficient. Additionally, schools are categorised by a banding system, bands one to five. Those students who perform best in academic examinations in year six of primary school are admitted to the so-called band one schools and those who perform worst are admitted to band five and pre-vocational schools. The word 'banding' appears nowhere in the Education Department literature today, but students are allocated to schools by the Education Department according to such criteria as those outlined above. Within the education system, the situation is further complicated, with only 114 of the 430 secondary schools using English as the medium of instruction, and thus students are also assessed according to their ability to learn in English or Chinese. Consequently, a student is under pressure to do well from the start of primary school. The main groups of informants included in this exploration came from Bands 2 and 3 Chinese medium schools, as it was these students who were the attendees of the British Council course.

In Hong Kong secondary classrooms, Walker (1997) suggests that there is a high degree of teacher control. Physically, in the classrooms this control is exerted with teachers tending to observe a classroom protocol of students sitting in single or double rows. Tsui (1995) explains that in Hong Kong the teacher sees the classroom as a place where students learn in a well-disciplined manner, and where the teacher is in control of the students, and the subject. She argues that the teacher sees her/himself, and is used to being recognised by the students, as the expert transmitter of knowledge whose job is to cover everything in a densely packed syllabus set by the education department. The role of teacher as expert was also recognised by the student teachers in the Miller and Aldred (2002) study.

In reality the assumed role of expert is not convergent with reality as, according to Tsui *et al.* (1994:352), there is a ‘high proportion of ESL (English) teachers who are not subject trained and not professionally trained.’ In a cohort of 3,700 English teachers in the early 1990s, only 14.2% were both subject and professionally trained. Falvey (1996) discusses potential problems that a generally untrained teaching workforce will have in implementing any curriculum changes because of their reliance on textbooks and their inability to deviate from prescribed texts even when student needs require it (see also Cheng, 1997). More recently, Falvey and Coniam (1998) completed a survey of teachers of English on teacher qualifications. The responses to a questionnaire sent to a cohort of 12,500 English teachers indicated that the general picture (see Table3.1) regarding qualifications and relevant degrees remains virtually unchanged from the situation described by Tsui *et al.* (1994).

Table 3.1 Hong Kong English Language Teachers’ Qualifications (Falvey and Coniam 1998:6)

1996 Survey Questionnaire – Respondents with a ...	Number and % of total number of teachers (n=12,500) in survey
Professional teaching qualification and a ‘relevant’ degree <b>including</b> English literature, education and communications	1,714 (18.4% of total where n=12,500)
Professional teaching qualification and a ‘relevant’ degree <b>excluding</b> English literature, education and communications	1,035 (11.1% of total where n=12,500)



The data in Table 3.1 and similar data could prove valuable in indicating possible reasons behind the success or failure for an initiative such as the implementation of a new teaching approach. For example, the lack of professional qualifications of language teachers would seem to suggest that it might be difficult for them to assume new and different roles, and understand the rationale or learning theories behind the changes.

Despite the lack of qualifications of many teachers, Tsui (1995:358) found that most students in Hong Kong ‘regard teachers with a great deal of respect.’ This she claims is possibly a result of the influence of traditional Confucian values. Data from the Miller and Aldred (2000) study reinforces this with reference to Chinese culture appearing in student teachers’ discussions. However, in discussion with new student teachers involved in this study in 2000, they complained that students did not behave as they expected them to, (see Appendix 2 - student teacher interviews) and that students were livelier and less respectful than they had anticipated. For example, student teacher A expressed her concern in the comment below:

*The students nowadays have changed they didn’t show much respect to the teachers as I expected and as what E has just said, they sometimes challenge what I have just said. I think it is a good thing, because they are thinking themselves but the way they challenge, it seems their attitude is the opposite way to challenge me. So sometimes it is quite upsetting. As a teacher I also need my dignity. Sometimes the students didn’t listen to me, say for example I asked them to stop talking themselves and they just keep on talking and told me about and so it is quite upsetting. (Student teacher A –Appendix 2)*

This comment highlights tensions between expectations and reality and the adjustments that student teachers may need to make to cope in the classroom. Adjustments might include adopting a role for a teacher that is perhaps less convergent with personal perceptions of roles than the teacher would like.

As previously noted, students’ motivation would appear to be extrinsic with the goal of gaining paper qualifications, as this is seen as a way of facilitating upward social mobility. Lee (1988) considers that students are not necessarily interested in the subjects. Walker (1997:8) emphasises that one way of showing respect to the teacher

is by ‘passing the exam’ and in her study found that ‘students were usually required to, and content to, take a passive role in learning.’ Whether this is a strategic move by students to gain as much information as possible is not one that Walker considers. However, the focus on gaining examination knowledge is illustrated further in Tsui’s (1995:6) work. She notes that ‘showing digression into topics not seen as relevant by the students or regarded as tenuously connected to the subject matter is not approved of by students.’ With regard to the idea of change in teaching approaches, Tsui (1995:7) notes that ‘students who see the teacher as the giving end of knowledge, and themselves as the passive receiving end, may not welcome the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning.’ Comments such as those expressed by both Walker (1997) and Tsui (1995) reinforce the passive image of the students in Hong Kong. Secondly, if this image is true then problems can perhaps be anticipated with the change in the curriculum introduced in 2001, specifically with planned moves towards more emphasis on autonomy in learning for the students in both secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

Wu (1989) explored passivity and answering behaviour in Hong Kong and identified underlying tacit rules that students appeared to abide by. She suggests that students:

- do not demonstrate verbal success in front of peers
- hesitate and show difficulty in arriving at an oral answer and with particular regard to English
- do not answer the teacher voluntarily or enthusiastically in English
- do not speak fluent English.

These areas were included in the questionnaire for Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs and were a subject for discussion in the interviews. Comments from student teachers on answering behaviour can perhaps provide some insights for the type of behaviours that Wu identifies above. These include:

*The question I thought all the students knew the answer and I thought as they all knew the answer there was no need for me to answer it. Or the others would just think I showed off in front of the teacher...I think the questions were not really meaningful sometimes. Oh, all students could find the answer*



*in the textbook. Not something really creative about myself.* (Student teacher C)

*Somebody will answer...there are 30 students in the class and all are so quiet. You don't have any motivation for you to answer the question. If you are wrong you will be scolded and if you are right, so what?* (Student teacher Y)

*They would answer a model answer. But if you asked them something about themselves, they are quite eager to answer questions.* (Student teacher W)

*Sometimes they may think my question is not worth answering. When I did evaluate my class with T, she did mention about that, 'cos what I asked them is not that useful or catch their interest. What I ask them its something like, 'Oh come on Mr. Lee, we already know the answer, but why do you ask us such a stupid question.'* (Student teacher R)

One of the most interesting aspects in the comments above is the identification of the quality of the teachers' questions and this highlights how students might make discerning judgements about the quality of the teaching they are receiving which, in turn, may have an impact on the linguistic roles they choose to take up. It also possibly illustrates the complexity of roles with respect to the linguistic interplay in the classroom to be discussed further with respect to the findings in this study in Sections 5 and 6.

The third feature of Hong Kong classrooms noted by Walker (1997) was that a high degree of importance is placed on learning English in Hong Kong schools. Tsui (1996) points out that there is considerable pressure to produce graduates with high English competence for business. She comments that this goal is detrimental because:

... high English competence of a minority is acquired at the expense of the majority who are not only unable to join the ranks but are deprived of a decent education...for the majority of the students, English has remained a source of failure, frustration and low self-esteem... (Tsui, 1996:246)

This situation continues today, with the business world still berating the education system for failing to produce school leavers with sufficient levels of English to cope

with the work environment, despite the changes in the teaching approaches that were made in response to their complaints twenty years ago.

The picture of the Hong Kong classroom presented here was further informed by an open question in the questionnaires that asked the informants in this study to describe an English lesson, (see Appendix 4i and 4ii for data and analysis). From the analysis of the responses from cohorts of Form 6 students (17 year olds) from Chinese medium of instruction (CMI) schools, the picture reflected in Table 3.2, is interesting. Each description was analysed according to the criteria on the left of the table.

Table 3.2- Analysis of student descriptions of English lessons at school

Criteria for analysis – <u>Occurrence of....</u>	1997 % n=44	1998 % n=56	1999 % n=26
Positive comments about lessons and teachers	34.0	10.7	11.5
Negative comments about lessons	54.5	39.3	50.0
Comments critical of classmates	11.4	23.2	15.4
Positive comments about classmates	11.4	1.8	3.8
Comments about teachers talking too much / not enough opportunities for student talk	20.5	30.3	46.2
Comments critical of teacher / problems	22.7	21.4	19.2
Comments about opportunities for group work	11.4	1.8	-
Comments about speaking Chinese in lessons	6.8	8.9	7.7

The table indicates that in 1997 and 1999, 50% or more of students were negative in their comments about their English lessons, with many of these comments containing the word boring. Perhaps more importantly, positive comments about lessons were low. Additionally, increasingly over the three cohorts the teacher is criticised for talking too much, and students consider there are not enough opportunities for them to talk. Although the percentages are small, students were critical of classmates for not participating and positive comments regarding classmates were even fewer. Chinese was also mentioned as being used in the classrooms. Finally, it was noted that for group work, considered to be a feature of communicative teaching, there were only six occurrences of comments referring to it within the 125 descriptions.



Overall the descriptions tended to indicate teacher-centred classrooms. A selective sample of descriptions is given below.

### 1997

St.3 – *At my school it is not many chances for classmates to speak in English. Many times we will do the book exercise so it is not interesting. Repeatedly listen to the listening tape. It is not fun.*

ST.30- *Sometimes is boring because we're passive. Teacher talks more than students. Always work on my own cannot cooperate with classmates unless in oral lesson and discussing.*

St. 37 – *Most of time English teacher do most of the talking and always teach us sentence structure and grammar etc. We have no more time to practice oral. It becomes boring when taking English lesson.*

St.45 – *That is fun! My teacher is very nice and work heat[hard?]. She always want me to cut newspaper and study English. Moreover, we always have test such as oral test and grammar. Sometimes we will group together and then talk to each other with one topic such as social issue.*

St.46 – *Very boring. My English teacher gave me many notes and she told me had to read them and spell the new work. We were 100 percent in the lesson, and I feel very difficult and have many stress.*

### 1998

St. 12- *It's boring because the teacher always request us to do exercises during the lesson. It reduces many opportunities to talk with my classmates or my teacher because I'm so enjoyable in chatting in English.*

St. 17 – *It is boring because the teacher like to talk to herself. When we don't (I feel that) answer her question, she can continue the lesson.*

St. 18 – *The teacher have talking all the time, students didn't have time to talking. And she didn't know what we need to learn.*

St. 45 – *Almost just the teacher talks. Students talk very little. Exam is very important, so we are learning English under pressure. We can't enjoy when we are learning English.*

St.60 – *unuseful, teacher just talking, student just listening.*

### 1999

St. 19 – *There are lots of texts. It is so difficult./In my school. All English lessons is very boring because it is that always teacher speaking. We are always listening, and there are no games. So I think that it is not interesting.*

St. 21 – *Listen to the teacher look at the blackboard.*

St. 23 – *At our school, my English teacher talk to us with too more Chinese. And the students have a few response to the questions of the teacher. The pace of learning is so slow not to catch the normal speed to teach us, in my opinion. / Some of the students felt bored. Some don't like to listen teacher's word. Perhaps their English ability was so week. Indeed, I don't deny I am also the one.*

Part of the picture reflects one of boring classrooms with sleeping also mentioned.

The descriptions were also analysed for affective responses (see Appendix 3.2), concerning emotion, feeling and attitude. It is interesting to note that this analysis showed that positive comments about lessons ranged from 34% to 10.5% (between 1997 and 1999) whereas negative comments were considerably higher ranging from 54.5% to 39.3% of comments during that time.

An analysis of the frequency of activities mentioned in the descriptions of the lessons was also completed and the 5 most frequently mentioned activities are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 – Frequency of mentions of activities in students’ descriptions of English lessons

Activities	1997 n=44	1998 n=55	1999 n=26	Overall n=124
Exercises	7	12	5	24
Discussion / oral	12	5	3	21
Grammar	3	8	-	11
Listening	3	5	3	11
Exam papers/skills	2	4	2	8

Another aspect, that was evident in the descriptions of the English lessons, was that separate skills lessons could be identified, for example grammar, oral, listening and writing. This approach would appear to reflect the traditional skills approach to organisation of lessons and, combined with the findings in the Table 3.3, would tend to suggest activities are perhaps not reflective of CLT in which group/pair work, information gap activities, role-plays and tasks might be expected. However, it is difficult to make such an assumption because in the design of the questionnaire (see section 4) the students were asked to write their own descriptions and for example, the word exercise may not explicitly indicate the method of teaching.

From these descriptions and the organisation of classes it would seem that classrooms in Hong Kong appear to be less reflective of the characteristics representing communicative approaches than would perhaps be desirable with respect to policy. Perhaps more important is that students willingly gave their



opinions about the quality of teaching, teacher pronunciation and lesson format probably highlighting the need to recognise the student more actively as a stakeholder in the educational process.

From the exploration of the research context, the literature regarding classrooms and the empirical data, there seem to be some indications of a mismatch between the prescribed roles in terms of the language teaching policy and actual roles in the classroom, perhaps reflecting a gulf between policy and practice. With lessons such as those described by the students and the pressures on teachers with regard to examinations, it might be questionable how the aim of the syllabus to develop the ‘maximum degree of functional competence in English’ can, in reality, be met. An understanding of classroom practice from the perspective of the student may provide insights into the data collected from the informants regarding their perceptions of roles, hence the starting point for this study. Whilst at the same time, the information regarding perceptions of roles may provide insights for classroom practice and change.

## **Summary**

In this section an overview of the political and economic situation in Hong Kong was given. The overview indicated that Hong Kong has changed dramatically with respect to the economy, general living conditions and educational provision over the last two decades. Background information about language use in Hong Kong revealed that English is primarily used for work and study purposes. A brief history of the education system provided information that supported the understanding of two pertinent current issues including medium of instruction and the legacy of previous teaching methodologies. Finally, the conditions and expectations within Hong Kong classrooms were explored with reference to empirical data. Possible reasons for perceived problems in implementation of a communicative language teaching policy were discussed. Additionally, empirical data provided information

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about reported reality in classrooms and the roles for students and teachers. From the empirical data it was indicated that classrooms are perhaps not as reflective of communicative approaches as they could be, possibly revealing a gap between policy and reality. It was also noted that students were critical consumers regarding English lessons. Having provided the broad context for this study, the next section will discuss the research approach and design of the research.



## **Section 4: The Research Narrative**

### **Introduction**

According to Nunan (1992:3) ‘research is a systematic process of enquiry consisting of three components: (1) a question, problem or hypothesis, (2) data, (3) analysis and interpretation of data. This research sought to find out about students’ and teachers’ perceptions of roles. However, there were no obvious guidelines about how perceptions of roles could be investigated or what needed to be investigated in seeking to obtain information about perceptions of roles. As a consequence, a decision was made to explore theoretical understandings of perceptions and roles as a starting point. This provided information to enable the establishment of a conceptual framework and from this framework relevant areas that might yield information about roles were identified for investigation. These areas were explored to further inform the research approach, the design of the studies, and the research tools. These areas are the focus of the research narrative in this section. The explanation of the research approach includes an overview of the expansion of the research and the various informants. Details of the research questions will be outlined followed by an explanation of how the various research tools were developed or adopted for the different studies and sets of data collected. The studies were:

- Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs
- Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions

These two studies entailed the collection of empirical data on different aspects of roles through questionnaires and interviews. Although the studies were separate they were interlinked, with the intent that the second study might provide new information as well as further information that would help explain the findings of the first study. An account of the informants and data collection procedures and analysis of the data are provided. Finally, some of the problems and limitations of the research, including the question of validity, are considered, although this is returned to in the final section.

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## **The research approach**

With regard to the research approach, decisions on what to include in the research were made initially from information gained by exploring literature on roles. In Section 1 it was noted that an approach was necessary that would connect up the various disciplines, various layers and levels of analysis involved and that would not look in isolation at one element and segment the research into tiny pieces. The aim of the research was not to create a general theory but to seek to gain information that might add to the wider knowledge base regarding students' and teachers' perceptions of roles. In the process, and informed by the conceptual framework (Section 2), it was anticipated that different layers involved in the exploration would be exposed, such as attitudes, beliefs and culture, and links between these layers might be suggested. From the outset, the consideration of Kelvin's (1969) discussion of roles had indicated that the data collection would probably need to involve the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. In addition, the study needed to be within a clear framework and in order for the research to be acceptable this had to be transparent and accessible to ensure its validity as research.

There is extensive discussion in the literature regarding possible research paradigms and it was noted that it is important to recognise that the selection of research paradigms is influenced by the aims of the research, the type of information required, and the nature of the informants. One of the problems with the literature concerning research paradigms is the use of many different labels. For example, Cohen and Manion (1995) identify paradigms as being models or ways of finding out information and they simplify the many models for research into two distinct paradigms: normative and interpretive. The normative paradigm (or model) considers that human behaviour is rule-governed and Cohen and Manion (1995) suggest that it should be realised by methods of natural science (quantitative) in an attempt to develop a theory. The interpretive paradigm, by contrast, is concerned with individuals and their interpretation of the world. The information gathered using an interpretative paradigm is more descriptive (qualitative) than that gathered



using a normative paradigm, as the information gained is used to build up 'multifaceted images of human behaviour as varied as the situations and contexts supporting them' (Cohen and Manion, 1995:37).

On considering the research in this study, it appeared more reflective of an interpretative paradigm than the normative one. However, Cohen and Manion's (1995) explanation with its clear divisions, whilst initially useful, was too restrictive and simplistic for this exploration. The focus of this research was to explore roles by investigating attitudes, beliefs and cultural dimensions. The investigation of the definitions of the concepts involved in roles (see Section 2) had directed the research towards a rich small-scale study with the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. Thus from an analysis of the aims and proposed study the research would not fall neatly into one of Cohen and Manion's paradigms. However, Patton (1980) advocates an additional paradigm, a paradigm of choices in which it is recognised that research approaches should consider the appropriateness of different methods for particular situations and according to the aim and nature of the research, for example non-experimental or experimental. He considers that the form of the data (qualitative versus quantitative) as well as the method of analysis (statistical or interpretative) is critical in identifying a paradigm. Grotjahn (1987) uses Patton's ideas to provide an alternative summary to Cohen and Manion's dichotomy of approaches by presenting various combinations of approach. Grotjahn (1987:59) cites Patton's (1980) identification of two pure paradigms and four mixed forms. The pure forms are:

- i) an exploratory-interpretative paradigm – non-experimental design, qualitative data and interpretative analysis
- ii) an analytical-nomological paradigm – experimental or quasis-experimental design, quantitative data and statistical analysis.

The mixed forms involve combinations of elements of the two pure forms and Grotjahn (1987) also adds exploratory-quantitative-interpretive and experimental-quantitative-interpretative noting that the existing paradigms do not include these options. Following Grotjahn's categorisation the approach taken here, is exploratory

as the research is not experimental and the data will be interpreted with the assistance of exploratory analysis. The approach adopted is consistent with the aim of the research, to explore roles and not to necessarily draw any conclusions from which theories would be established or hypotheses tested. However, applying the approach adopted was not unproblematic and this is discussed below.

In the research design, the decision to collect different types of data was based on the premise that one set of data should have the potential to inform the other. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1997:160), 'using a variety of procedures and by obtaining data from a variety of sources, the researcher obtains rich and comprehensive data.' McLeod (1994) notes that such approaches have been advocated since the 1930's and Keeves and Adams state:

... educators are free to draw on those methods of inquiry that seem most appropriate to them to answer the research questions that have been posed. Frequently, multi-methods are useful in achieving greater understanding. (Keeves and Adams, 1997:32)

As this research sought to explore a range of aspects concerned with roles, the research tools needed to fit within an approach that would adequately explore these different aspects. By taking a purely quantitative approach (such as questionnaires) the data collected might fail to access details that could provide the information necessary to inform perceptions of roles. By contrast, a purely qualitative approach might miss important general patterns that could be specifically identified using a descriptive statistical analysis. Hence, a decision was made to include both questionnaires and interviews.

One of the problems with the use of such an approach is that, according to Sturman (1997:62), 'there are those who still argue that qualitative and quantitative approaches are incompatible because of the different underlying philosophical traditions.' The underlying philosophical traditions consider that the function of quantitative data is to uncover facts and truths, and test hypotheses (Cohen and Manion, 1995). This was not the purpose of the quantitative data being collected in this research so the question began to emerge whether true quantitative data would be



collected. Another concern was how quantitative data could be incorporated in an exploratory approach. Consideration was given again to the purpose of the quantitative data and Grotjahn's (1987) argument was revisited. On reviewing the data to be collected through the questionnaires it was acknowledged that the data were both nominal, and ordinal (a number showing a position in a series). Thus the data were numerical qualitative data as opposed to quantitative data. Therefore the data gained would not equal a measurement that would represent a concept on a defined interval scale that could be used to prove or claim something or a theory, and indeed this was not the purpose for the data collection. In contrast the data would need to be explored and interpreted to provide descriptive information about beliefs, attitudes and cultural dimensions. Furthermore, it was not an intention that the data would provide generalisations but rather more indicate further areas for investigation. The above appeared convergent with an exploratory approach. Consequently, the concerns about the incorporation of questionnaires that would provide numerical data into an exploratory approach were clarified. A final concern with adopting an exploratory approach was that the research might appear inexact and subjective. Thus in the thesis the focus is on openness and reporting as clearly as possible the development and direction of the research. This includes explaining fully the expansion of the original research plans as outlined below so the research could be replicated or adapted in the future. In addition, any generalisation would be limited as the approach was one that would probably point to further questions to be explored.

### **The expansion of the research**

As the research developed the study expanded in two directions. The first was the inclusion of a second study that explored cultural dimensions and the second was the inclusion of more informant groups. These developments are outlined below.

In exploring understandings of role it was noted roles appear to be influenced by attitudes, beliefs and context. From this a decision was made to include an analysis of the social context of Hong Kong. Knowledge about the development of and changes in Hong Kong over the last twenty years supported this analysis. It was anticipated that information would be provided that might inform the interpretation of data. As Van Lier observes:

... it is clear that the classroom does not exist in a vacuum: before the lesson the learners come from somewhere and after the lesson they go somewhere else. What happens in those places inevitably has important repercussions on what happens in the classroom. (Van Lier, 1990:86)

Additionally, in discussions with local teachers and through research for a related study with student teachers (Miller and Aldred, 2000), it was observed that the word culture was frequently mentioned. For example:

*Group 2: In Chinese culture students should be obedient, quiet, they should not ask questions. This is the Chinese way. Usually passive, seldom ask questions.* (Miller and Aldred, 2000:7)

Consequently, a decision was made to include a more explicit study with respect to culture. As mentioned previously in Section 2 the inclusion of culture in the conceptual framework led to a review of Hofstede's (1980) work and his cultural dimensions. This inclusion of a second study (Study 2 – Cultural dimensions) was also an attempt to gain information that might inform the findings in Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs. Thus the research became multi-faceted with the analysis of the research context, a study to investigate attitudes and beliefs, and a further study to explore aspects of cultural dimensions. Whilst these areas were included in the exploration, inevitably it was necessary to omit some further dimensions of possible influence for example, personality. The exclusion of these other dimensions of influence might, according to Hammersley and Gomm (1997), indicate researcher bias and may have limited the possible findings. However, such decisions were necessary and the decision to include cultural dimensions was based on its possible influence on roles (Hoyle, 1969 and Wright, 1987), and because it was clearly identified by teachers and student teachers in discussions thus appearing important.



The original research plan had initially focused on exploring only students' perceptions of roles. As the findings of the questionnaires given to students were analysed it became clear that the findings and new assumptions began to suggest that the scope of the research needed to be expanded, as the importance of the interplay between the classroom participants became apparent. The research was thus data driven (Ericsson and Simon, 1984). Rossman (1999) considers such triggering of additional ideas and thoughts are valid parts of the research process and the inclusion of further sources of data is acceptable within an exploratory type study.

Additionally, the research was not driven by an underlying hypothesis but was concerned with building up a picture of perceptions of role and it was anticipated that the inclusion of teachers would enable exploration of more of the picture. Another further reason for the inclusion of teachers in the research was that evidence showed that the little research that had been completed into perceptions of the participants involved in teaching and learning was focused on the learner (Woods, 1996).

A further group of informants included were student teachers selected because they provided a unique opportunity to explore perceptions of role of people who were probably in the process of establishing a new repertoire of behaviours and beliefs about role for themselves. As these student teachers were in a learning situation it was likely that they were in a process of reflecting on their experiences in the classroom and the roles they were adopting. In addition students from Form 1 (aged 11 years) and 3 (aged 13 years) Chinese and English medium schools were included in the research to investigate possible differences in perceptions of roles that might be attributed to i) age or ii) medium of instruction. The addition of these informants was intended to add to the exploration of roles in an attempt to provide specific information on perceptions of roles and medium of instruction.

This continued extension of informants might be considered to reflect Miles and Huberman's (1994) idea of the researcher as *Bricoleur*; someone who is trying to build up a collage-like creation that represents the phenomenon (in this instance roles) under analysis. This expansion of data though was problematic with respect to

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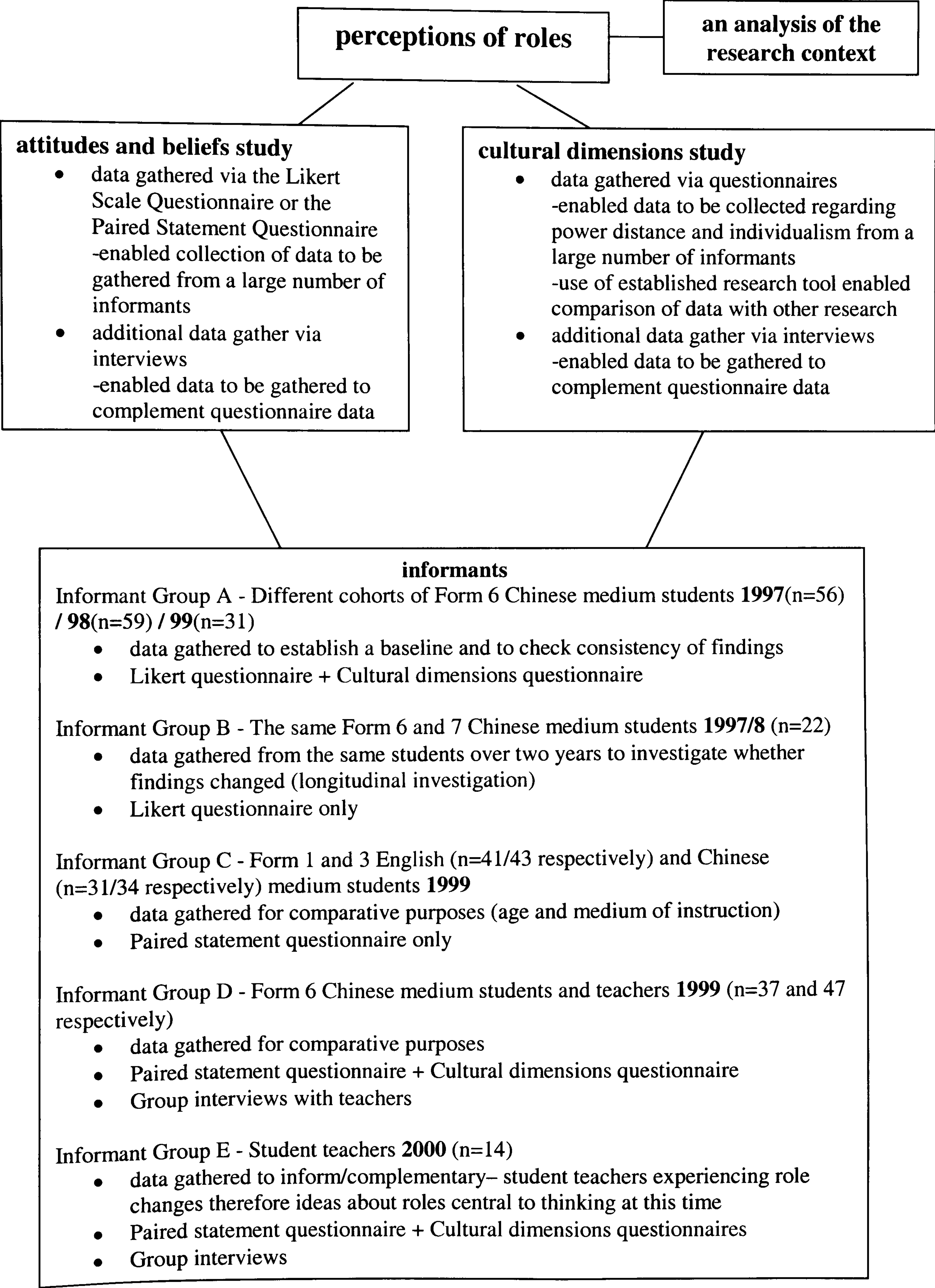
the different sets of data collected, the nature of the data, the analysis and for the organisation and focus for the writing-up of the thesis. The next sub-section gives an overview of the research incorporating all the informant groups and summarising the reasons for their inclusion in the research and identifies the research tools used with each group.

### **The research: an overview**

An overview of the research, the informants and their numbers, the data collection procedures and rationale for the use of the selected procedures is provided in Figure 4.1. The data were collected between 1997 and 2000. Both Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs and Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions used questionnaires for data collection. The questionnaire designs are explained later in this section. For Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs, two different questionnaires were constructed, one referred to here, as Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale and the other as Questionnaire 1b – Paired statement. These labels reflect the design of the questionnaires. According to Rossier's (1997) advice these questionnaires were linked to the understandings of the concepts included in the conceptual frame. For Study 2 – Cultural dimensions a questionnaire designed by Goodman (1994) was adopted. This enabled an investigation into scores for power distance and individualism and also allowed the results to be compared with a similar study into these dimensions.



Figure 4.1 – An overview of the research



The incorporation of different informants groups and the use of various questionnaires as shown in the Figure 4.1 above resulted in complexities for analysis and presentation of the findings (Section 5) and the decision to use extracts throughout the thesis to support and illustrate the discussion. The next sub-section considers the research tools.

### **The research tools and their design**

As perceptions are mental constructs and not directly observable, there was a need to seek information about them using such tools such as questionnaires as opposed to observations. Oppenheim (1970) supports the use of questionnaires and interviews to find out about perceptions and attitudes. These tools would enable a range of data to be collected from a variety of informants with the interview data providing data to complement that obtained via the questionnaires. From a practical perspective, questionnaires would allow for data to be collected quickly. This was necessary because of limited access to informants. However, the development of a questionnaire is complex and analysis of data led to other problems including the exact nature of the data collected.

A decision was made not to include observations or videos. One reason was the practical difficulties of obtaining permission to observe or videotape lessons in schools. In addition, it would have been necessary for teachers to analyse the observation sheets or videos to ascertain whether the observed behaviour in classrooms reflected usual behaviour, as according to Woods (1996), the presence of the observer or the camera can affect behaviour. Such teacher analysis would have been difficult because of the time constraints on teachers. In summary, for the reasons outlined above the main sources of data were questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires in general are now discussed followed by specific details of the design of the questionnaires for Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs.



### **a) Questionnaires in general**

There are many reasons for using questionnaires or surveys, not least because:

... survey methods are particularly useful to get an overview of a particular situation..... (Birley and Moreland, 1998:34)

Questionnaires are probably the most commonly used method of collecting data in educational research. According to Cohen and Manion, (1995:83) they enable information at a particular point in time to be gathered and analysis can be varied in complexity according to research questions and needs. Questionnaires and their subsequent analysis were used in this research because they allowed for:

- larger and wider sampling than interviews
- the identification of specific traits/perceptions/views of a whole groups and data regarding whether these are rejected or accepted by the majority of the sample
- data to be collected from different groups that could be compared within group, by sub-group and with other groups
- anonymity within limits which potentially improves the validity of the research
- a range of issue and aspects to be dealt with at one time.

In addition, as acknowledged by Rossier (1997), it was possible to gain both numerical data and qualitative data through the questionnaires. The latter was achieved by using open-ended questions in the questionnaires. The collection of data via questionnaires is not though unproblematic. One problem is that informants may take time to consider their responses and give the response they think the researcher is expecting or wanting. They may also be unwilling to give their true opinions or may have a different understanding of the questions to the researcher. Another problem with questionnaires is that certain assumptions are made in their use. These are according to Wolf (1997) that:

- a) the respondent can read and understand the questions or items
  - b) the respondent possesses the information to answer the questions or items
  - c) the respondent is willing to answer the questions or items honestly.
- (Wolf, 1997:422)

To overcome such problems Selltiz *et al.*'s (1981) suggestions for questionnaire designers were followed with regard to:

- a) content
- b) question wording
- c) the form of response to the question
- d) the place of questions in the sequence.

These criteria were considered for the questionnaires in Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs, resulting in the following action:

- i) the content was related to the conceptual framework and the concepts involved
- ii) the wording of statements / questions was concise
- iii) the form of required response was related to the type of information required (descriptive or numeric)
- iv) the sequence of the statements / questions was varied.

In addition, Wolf's (1997) assumptions concerning the understanding and ability of informants to complete the questionnaire informed the decision to ask local teachers to check the questionnaires and consider whether their students would have any difficulties responding to the questionnaires items. Adjustments were made accordingly. Two teachers were asked to pilot each of the questionnaires with two average ability Form 6 students at their schools. The difficulty of access to students was one of the major problems limiting piloting opportunities. The student informants involved in the research were only available during the course period and the questionnaires were to be administered on the first morning of the course. The limited piloting gave rise to problems that will be discussed in the Research Critique.

One of the adjustments related to the translation of the questionnaires to ensure understanding. The Attitude and Beliefs questionnaire was translated into Chinese when it was given to lower form students. The Cultural Dimension Questionnaire was given to all informants in both English and Chinese as some of the vocabulary



and concepts involved in the statements may have been inaccessible in English. The translation process is explained later in this section.

Finally, with regard to the data collected, an issue that arises according to Dean and Whyte (1969) and Wolf (1997) is whether the informant is telling the truth.

However, Selltiz *et al.* suggest:

... it may be reasonable to assume that people will tell the truth about themselves unless we have specific reasons to think otherwise. The researchers should identify particular, sensitive topics and try to take into account the sensitivity through proper interviewing techniques and question words. (Selltiz *et al.*, 1981:147)

While it was difficult to know if the informants were telling the truth there was no reason for the informants involved in this research not to do so. However, informants may have tried to answer according to what they thought the researcher wanted to know, but, again, there was no apparent reason for them to answer this way. In addition, the questions did not ask for personal information that might have posed a problem for the informants. The collection of data over time (baseline data plus the longitudinal data) indicated that the results were statistically consistent and possibly representative of students' attitudes and beliefs within the context of the research (see Section 5, for further details).

An important consideration in the use of the questionnaires is the constraint of time. For the questionnaires in Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs, these were restricted to two sides of A4 paper, and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. This timeframe was in response to two issues: fatigue and co-operation (Wolf, 1997) for both the informants and the administrator. The questionnaire in Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions, took approximately 20 minutes to complete and because of time constraints was not given to all informant groups, as explained later in this section. The questionnaires used in each study will now be explained in detail below.

**i) Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs**

In Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs two different questionnaires were constructed. These were Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale, and Questionnaire 1b – Paired statement. The reasons for two questionnaires are given below. The aim of the questionnaires in Study 1 was to investigate students’ and teachers’ perceptions of their roles by collecting data on attitudes and beliefs. An overview of the two questionnaires used in Study 1 is given in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 – An overview of questionnaires

Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale questionnaire	Questionnaire 1b – paired statement questionnaire
Reason for doing the course Questions about the 2 main functions of English in Hong Kong 7 questions to gain information about attitudes to English 2 multiple choice questions about the best way to learn English Description of English lesson at school 26 statements about learning English	16 paired statements about learning English 3 characteristics of a good learner / good teacher Description of English lesson at school 2 questions regarding what a teacher/student should do in the classroom

Data were collected through both closed and open questions. The use of closed and open questions sought to provide information that was both explicit and descriptive. Closed questions, which Nunan (1996) considers easier to collate and analyse than open questions, were in the form of statements, and the informants were required to agree or disagree with them. The foci of these statements were attitudes to English, learning English and beliefs regarding roles. The type of response required was directly related to the underlying nature of the information being gathered. For example, for attitudes (see Section 2) the response was bi-polar (yes/no and agree/disagree). The responses to the statements were analysed using statistical procedures outlined in the description of the analysis later in this section. Open questions included descriptions of English lessons at school. Such descriptive information provided opportunities for informants to express their opinions and was used to supplement data from the closed questions. Analysis was more difficult for the open questions and key themes were used to guide the analysis (see later this



section). Having discussed questionnaires in general, the different questionnaires for each study will now be considered.

### **Questionnaire 1a – Attitudes and Beliefs - Likert Scale**

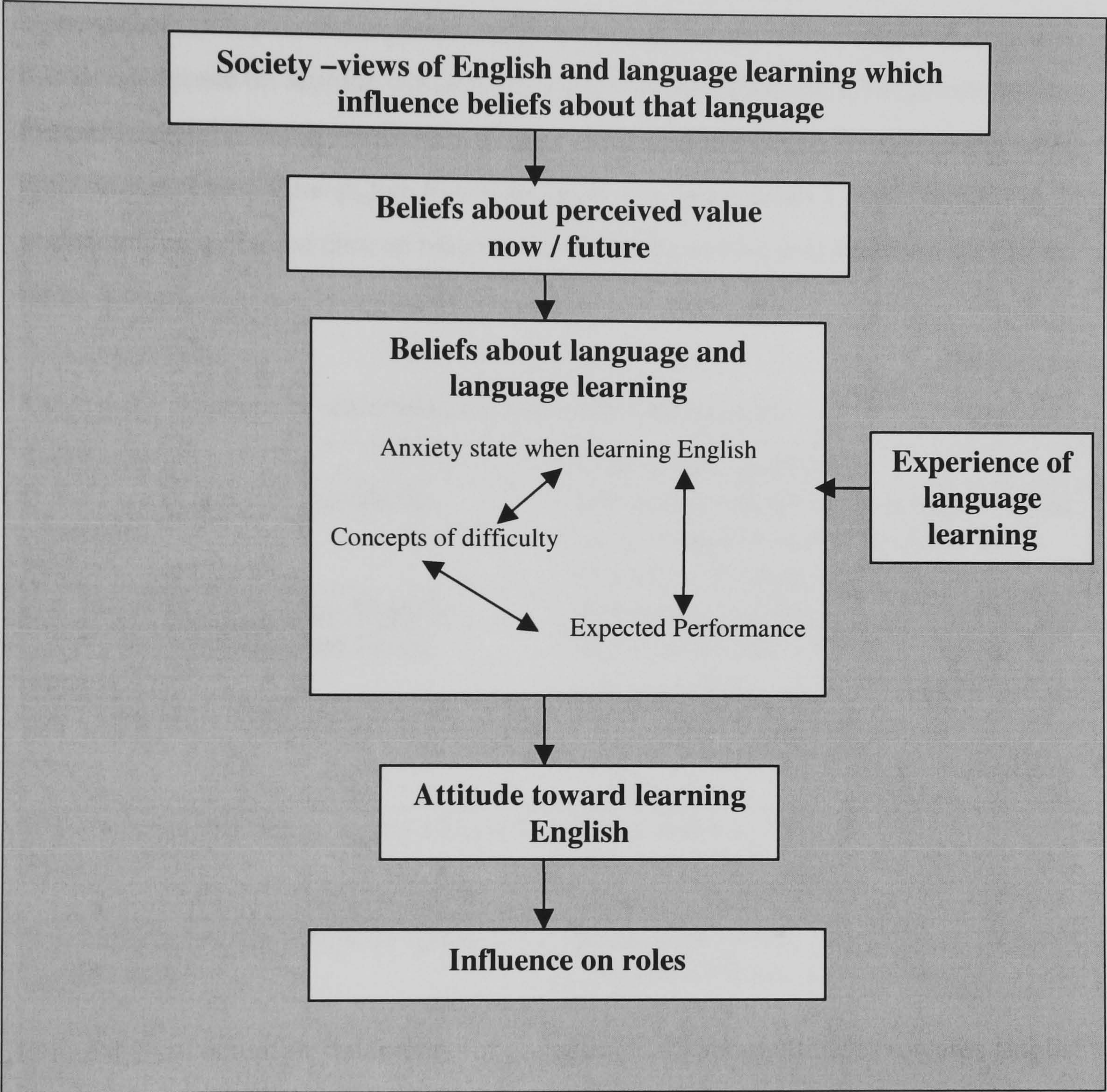
Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale (see Appendix 4.1) was developed after exploring the understandings of the concepts included in the conceptual framework and was based on the information gathering questions and topics below:

- i) What are students' reasons for learning English?
- ii) What are students' attitudes towards learning English?
- iii) How do students describe English lessons at school?
- iv) What are students' beliefs about the characteristics of good teachers and students?
- v) What are students' beliefs about:
  - a. how to learn?
  - b. group work and grouping preferences?
  - c. error correction?
  - d. responsibility for learning?
  - e. interaction?
  - f. learning preferences?
  - g. own behaviour?

These information-gathering questions were formed from the literature reviewed in Section 2. With regard to attitudes, statements (Q3-7) were used to collect data and these statements reflected beliefs about and emotions regarding English language and learning English. The statements also incorporated some of the ideas of Riley (1988) (see Section 2) regarding views about language and use. The content of the statements was based on Figure 4.2, with the notion that society's views about language and language learning, perceived usefulness and experience could all influence attitudes to English and learning English.



Figure 4.2 – Content of statements for collecting data about attitudes towards English and learning English.



While the above figure is an attempt to represent the rationale behind the design of the questionnaire statements to gain information on attitudes, the figure is constructed in a linear form and it is probable that there are many different links between the sections and other influences. The statements reflected Rokeach's (1972) notion that attitudes consist of a special set of beliefs. These beliefs about language and language learning focused on concepts of difficulty, expected performance and anxiety. For example, 'I feel anxious when I learn English', was



intended to represent a belief about how the informants might feel, reflecting Oppenheim’s (1970) analysis of attitudes that concluded attitudes can be emotional. Oppenheim (1970) also considered that such beliefs would have a negative or positive outcome on attitude towards learning English. Thus the ideas presented in Figure 4.2 guided the development of the statements for gaining data about attitudes and these statements are shown below in Table 4.2. (Questions 1 and 2 in the questionnaire collected data on reasons for doing the course and learning English in Hong Kong.)

Table 4.2 – Analysis of statements to collect data on attitudes

Statement	Type of data gathered
Q 3 – I speak English outside the classroom.	Information about current usage – could have a negative / positive affect on attitude to learning English
Q 4 – I prefer not to learn English.	Preference - evidence of possible attitude
Q 5 – I feel anxious when I learn English.	Belief about physical state – may have positive / negative influence on attitude
Q 6 – English is difficult for me to learn.	Belief about the language – may have a positive / negative influence on attitude to English.
Q 7 – I should not speak unless I know I am correct.	Belief about performance demand – may have a positive / negative influence on attitude to English.
Q 8 – It is important for me to speak English well.	Belief about value – may have a positive / negative influence on attitude to English.
Q 9 – English is useful to me now.	Belief about value – may have a positive / negative influence on attitude to English.
Q 10 – English will be useful to me now.	Belief about perceived value – may have a positive / negative influence on attitude to English.

The last two statements were not included in the questionnaire for the first year, but initial analysis revealed the need for the inclusion of such statements as use is probably related to value and high value might affect attitude. As there were no summative statistics for all of these findings for these statements, it was considered that this would not affect any overall results but on the contrary add to the

information collected. The data were collected using positive/negative responses consistent with the bi-polar nature of attitudes as reflected in Rockeach (1972) and Fishbein *et al.*'s (1975) understandings of attitudes.

The next section of the questionnaire asked informants to answer two multiple-choice questions regarding the best way to learn English. Then the questionnaire requested informants to give three characteristics of a good teacher and learner and to describe an English lesson at school. The aim of this questionnaire item was to gain information about the informants' beliefs regarding characteristics of good students and teachers. The descriptions of English lessons were gathered in order to provide information about the classroom and what was happening in the classroom. Such information was used to inform the closed statements.

The final section of the questionnaire contained 26 belief statements with which informants were required to agree or disagree. Selltiz *et al.*'s (1981) advice regarding content, statement wording, form of response and sequence of statements, referred to earlier, was considered when the statements were written. Half of these statements were designed to represent roles reflective of more traditional approaches to learning and the others to represent more communicative approaches to learning. Within this framework the 26 statements reflected the information gathering questions regarding beliefs about:

- a. how to learn
- b. group work and grouping preferences
- c. error correction
- d. responsibility for learning
- e. interaction
- f. learning preferences
- g. own behaviour

These categories were informed by knowledge about different teaching approaches and their underlying philosophies and the work of Riley (1988) as explored in Section 2. Implicit within many of the statements were expectations about students'



and teachers' roles (Wright, 1987), in for example, 'The teacher should do all the talking in the classroom.' The statements were all related to the classroom with respect to the beliefs underlying mechanics or processes such as how to learn and interaction, rather than such aspects as task choice, (e.g. 'I prefer to do exercises more than role-plays'), goals (e.g. 'I want to be able to speak English perfectly') and classroom conditions (e.g. 'I prefer a quiet classroom'). Additionally, these statements as well as reflecting beliefs were also intended to reflect differences between roles associated with more traditional approaches in the classroom and more communicative approaches. More traditional roles were supposed to be represented by such statements as, 'I don't feel I learn anything unless I talk to the teacher during class', where learning is linked to the teacher as the knower and giver of knowledge and the learner as dependent on the teacher to learn. This statement was also reflective of beliefs about interaction and linguistic roles, while 'I learn best when I can be active and can talk,' was considered to be reflective of a non-traditional or contemporary role for students in Hong Kong classrooms and a belief about a preferred way of learning.

For each of the information-gathering question areas there were several statements as illustrated in the annotated questionnaire in Appendix 4.1. This repetition was convergent with the advice of Seliger and Shohamy (1989:173), who consider that when low levels of explicitness are required in the response, such as agreeing or disagreeing, more than one single statement on a topic or area is required. For example the following two statements are concerned with how to learn and both reflect more communicative approaches to teaching, 'I have more opportunities to learn when I work in a group than when I work by myself' and 'I learn best when I am active and can talk.'

Decisions about wording were made reflecting Cohen and Manion's (1995) guidelines and included the use of short simple statements for ease of understanding. However, following this advice may have meant that some statements were perhaps too short and so the information given was limited. For example in statement 19, 'I

should sit and listen quietly in class' a condition should perhaps have been given, for example, 'for the all/most of the lesson'.

The first person was used to evoke a personal response (see Oppenheim, 1970), arouse interest and link the statements to the informants. For example, 'I prefer it when I can decide what to do in the classroom.' Decisions were also made about the sequence of the statements and these were based on avoiding any patterns reflecting one type of role or certain beliefs that could be observed by the respondents.

Knowledge about possible differences in meaning for the researcher and the student were considered. For example, the statement 'It is my fault if I don't learn anything' might have been problematic for the students as the word 'learn', may have implied 'learn by heart' rather than learning new skills or aspects of the English language. Thus in the study beliefs about responsibility for learning were sought through the statement 'It is my fault if I do not improve my English.' Interpretation is one of the problems in any questionnaire as individuals can interpret the statements in many different ways and the informants' understanding of the statement may not reflect that of the researcher (Marton, 1997). Nunan (1996) stresses the need to be aware of the cultural problem in understanding language when designing questionnaires. This is reinforced by Seliger and Shohamy (1997:172) who consider, 'there is no assurance that the questions used in a questionnaire have been properly understood by the subjects and answered correctly.' To address understanding, checks were made informally with six Form 6 students.

As well as developing the statements, the form of response to the statements had to be considered. The form of response chosen was a Likert scale (Likert, 1932). This was selected because as noted in Section 2, beliefs are strength related. Additionally, according to Oppenheim (1970), the reliability of Likert scales tends to be good. In this research, the respondents were asked to read the statements and then respond to them by choosing from the four categories of answer. These were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. Undecided or neutral and an odd number



of response options were deliberately omitted. Although there is debate regarding such action, Rust and Golombok (1989:154) note that there is ‘a tendency for respondents to show indecisiveness in answering questions and avoid either agreement or disagreement by opting for the middle category.’ In addition, Keats (1997:760) considers that ‘the inclusion of the alternative “undecided” has been shown to lead to anomalous results and so should possibly not be used.’ Rust and Golombok (1989:154) suggest that a way to combat this propensity is to eliminate the middle category altogether.

A consequence in limiting the response categories to four was that different respondents may have had different concepts of degree of opinion, but it was not possible to clarify this using this format. As McDonough and McDonough (1997:174) state, ‘one person’s agreement may be another person’s strong agreement.’ Rock (1974) suggests that to overcome such a problem repeating the data collection is one way to check the consistency of data. This advice was incorporated into the research design with the collection of data over time, the longitudinal study, and the repetition of the Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale with the three cohorts of Form 6 informants.

One of the main criticisms of Likert scales is that the same total score may be obtained by different respondents in a variety of ways, a total score being obtainable through the sum of scores for the individual statements. For example, by assigning 4 to strongly agree and 1 to strongly disagree, each statement is given a score and these scores are added together to reflect a total score. However, for this questionnaire this type of score analysis was not relevant because the statements reflected belief strengths regarding different aspects of teaching and learning related to different teaching approaches. Thus the means of the scores for each statement for the different informant groups were the focus of interest for this research rather than a total summative score.

In summary, Questionnaire 1a, Attitudes/Beliefs – Likert Scale consisted of two open questions asking informants to identify their reasons for attending the course and what they thought were the two main functions of English in Hong Kong. This was followed by eight closed (yes/no, agree/disagree) questions to find out about informants' attitudes to English and learning English. Next, two open questions collected data on the characteristics of good teachers and learners which was followed by two multiple-choice questions asking informants what they thought was the best way to learn English. The final section on this first page was an open question asking the informants to describe an English lesson at the informants' school. The last part of the questionnaire consisted of the 26 statements requiring an agree/disagree response on a Likert scale. The discussion above has explained the content of the Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale, giving the rationale for its design. However, after use some of problems with the questionnaire were noted and this was part of the rationale for developing a further questionnaire as outlined below.

### **Questionnaire 1b – Attitudes and Beliefs – Paired statement**

Questionnaire 1b – Paired statement (see Appendix 4.2) was based on the same information gathering categories in Questionnaire 1a– Likert scale, and was designed to substitute it for reasons explained below. This questionnaire was used to collect data from both students and teachers for comparative purposes. The initial data from Questionnaire 1a confirmed the findings of an earlier study (Aldred, 1994), that students indicated beliefs more reflective of communicative styles of teaching and learning than traditional styles. However, on closer analysis of Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale, problems became apparent concerning the findings for the 26 Likert statements. For example analysis showed that students agreed with both of the following statements with only a small degree of difference:

‘I prefer to decide what to do in class myself.’

‘I prefer the teacher to decide what to do in class.’

Consequently there appeared a need to re-focus this part of the questionnaire. One way to adjust this was to use pairs of statements asking the informants to decide which statement of a pair they agreed with most. For example, students were asked



to choose between a pair of statements reflecting different roles associated with more traditional or more communicative teaching approaches, as illustrated by the pair of statements highlighted on the previous page.

Another reason for the choice of paired statements was the design of the questionnaire for Study 2 – Cultural dimensions. This questionnaire consisted of paired statements. If the questionnaire for Study 1 also reflected this response type, completion time for the questionnaires might be reduced, convergent with Wolf's (1997) concerns regarding fatigue and co-operation. By reducing the time informants would take to complete the questionnaires, attempts were being made to ensure informants did not become bored, yet were still thinking about their responses. In this new questionnaire three open-ended questions were included. These asked informants to describe an English lesson at their school, give the characteristics of a good teacher and learner and, finally, to explain what a teacher and what a student should do in the classroom. Data concerning attitudes were not collected in this questionnaire as such data had been collected during the three years of data collection from student informants and the questions were not appropriate for teachers. The next part of this section considers the questionnaire used in Study 2 – Cultural dimensions.

## **ii) Study 2 - Cultural dimensions**

The questionnaire used in this study, called Study 2 - Cultural dimensions, was one developed and used by Goodman (1994) - see Appendix 4. It was based on the work of Hofstede (1980) whose work was outlined in Section 2. Hofstede designed a questionnaire that gathered information about countries' scores for the dimensions of:

- Power Distance
- Individualism / Collectivism
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Masculinity / Femininity.

According to Hofstede (1986), his original survey as used in the IBM research is not transferable from the workplace to the school situation as easily as his ideas about role patterns and value systems. He suggests that teacher-student and student-student interaction and hence role-patterns relate to the Power Distance and Individualism dimensions, rather than the Uncertainty Avoidance and Masculinity dimensions. Hofstede also found that in his work the Power Distance and Individualism dimensions correlated strongly, while there was no statistical correlation between Uncertainty avoidance and Masculinity. For the school situation Hofstede (1986) drew up a list of differences in teacher-student and student-student interaction related to all four dimensions. The lists for Power Distance and Individualism were adapted by Goodman (1994) to form a 46 paired-statements questionnaire and used for cross-cultural training purposes. This ready-made instrument was used in this study as it was a proven research tool and, as advocated by Selinger and Shohamy:

... using a ready-made instrument which has been developed by experts and for which information regarding reliability and validity is available is more advantageous than developing a new procedure, providing that it is appropriate for the given research. (Selinger and Shohamy, 1997:190)

Goodman's (1994) questionnaire was adopted to gain information about students with regard to their cultural dimensions of Power Distance and Individualism, specifically gathering data on teacher-student interactions. Another reason for its use was that it allowed for comparison with Hofstede's (1986) original findings for the Hong Kong Chinese but more importantly with another small-scale study (Woodring, 1995) that also used Goodman's questionnaire with Japanese students.

Hofstede's (1986) dimensions of Uncertainty Avoidance and Masculinity were not included in this study. The main reason for this exclusion was because on considering Hofstede's (1986) lists of differences for teachers and students concerning Uncertainty Avoidance and Masculinity, it was noted that many of the paired statements reflected self-efficacy, positive and negative reward, and subject choice. While the results may have provided interesting data, such data were not a focal point for this study, as it appeared that interaction patterns and the underlying values for Power Distance and Collectivism would provide more information about



roles. Supporting the decision not to include the Uncertainty Avoidance and Masculinity dimensions was the lack of correlation between the two dimensions, (see above). Additionally, Hofstede and Bond (1988), in a further exploration of cultural dimensions, concluded that Uncertainty Avoidance was a uniquely Western dimension. In coming to this conclusion they developed another tool to examine the Confucian dimension. This may have been an interesting extension to the research and possibly could contribute to understanding more about perceptions of roles in the future but was not used because the main focus of this study was to find out perceptions of roles.

Goodman's (1994) questionnaire (Appendix 4.3) was presented in the form of pairs of statements and informants needed to choose the one they agreed with most. As some of the concepts involved in the statements may have been too complex for the language level of some of the students the questionnaire was translated for all informants. The translation was achieved through back translation, from English to Chinese by one Chinese student teacher majoring in Chinese and then from Chinese to English by another Chinese student teacher majoring in English. The second translation was compared with the original and there were few differences. These differences were discussed and rectified. The version of the administered questionnaire contained both English and Chinese. Following Ellis (1994) the translation process may have caused some changes in the concepts as they were translated from one language to another, so a decision was made to give the translated version alongside the English to all informants involved in the study. This move was an attempt to ensure consistency in the format of the questionnaire that informants were asked to complete. Details of how the data from all the questionnaires were analysed will be given later in this section.

In summary, the questionnaires sought to provide data on attitudes, beliefs and cultural dimensions. However, there was a need for additional information that would inform the questionnaire data and interviews were used to gather such data.

## **b) Interviews**

Interviews were used as a means for extending the investigation beyond the controlled focus of the questionnaires and to provide opportunities for more individualised responses. As Seliger and Shohamy suggest:

... interviews are personalised and therefore permit a level of in-depth information gathering, free response and flexibility that cannot be obtained by other procedure. (Seliger and Shohamy, 1997:166)

Similarly, Christison and Krahne (1986) consider that interviews allow issues to be explored in greater depth and a richer picture to be gained. In this research the data gained was used to inform the research in general, as well as to provide illustration and deeper understanding of the issues arising and to provide voices from the classroom.

Although some researchers argue for completely open-ended interviews, Hammersley and Atkinson (1990:114) observe that 'interviewing... is by no means always non-directive' and they suggest that questions can direct the interview. They argue that some form of questions related to the research questions is required. Similarly, Selinger and Shohamy (1997) recommend the use of a style of interviews that could be described as 'semi-open interviews.' The features of such a style include:

... specific core questions determined in advance from which the interviewer branches off to explore in depth information, probing according to the way the interview proceeds and allowing elaboration within limits. (Selinger and Shohamy, 1997:167)

Consequently, the interview questions were based on the areas identified below (see also Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) and included questions to elicit:

- a) descriptions of students (and for student teachers any differences between reality and expectations)
- b) information about students' behaviour in class (and for student teachers any differences between teaching practice and their own experiences at school, and if there was any type of school culture)
- c) descriptions of their own roles in class



- d) information about students' expectations of the teacher
- e) information about activities students like
- f) what students do when they do not understand
- g) what students do when they are asked an open question
- h) knowledge about the new syllabus.

This last question was included because in September 2001 a new language teaching policy was to be introduced and so it was of interest to gain information that might illustrate teachers' knowledge and understanding of the new policy. Whilst there seemed to be a high degree of control in having specific core questions, there was also a reduced element of control in follow-up questions that allowed for the elaboration of topics as they were mentioned. Additionally, there was occasionally a change in order of questions to follow a topic mentioned by an informant.

Oppenheim (1970) warns of possible bias, and the possibility of attempting to elicit required responses. An example of this was when I asked teachers 'how students' behaved in class.' One teacher asked me what this meant. In replying, the words 'active and passive' were included and the teachers consequently used them. My intervention here needed to be considered when exploring the data and Grotjahn's (1987) warnings were heeded regarding the need for objectivity and openness when using an exploratory approach. Consequently, any comments that affected responses as illustrated above are included in the transcripts and this includes positive comments including my responses made from an interest perspective. Data collection procedures and details of how the interviews were analysed are discussed later in this section.

## **The informants**

The informants included in the research consisted of five groups comprising students, teachers and student teachers from Hong Kong. These were

- Informant Group A – three different cohorts of Form 6 (17 years old) Chinese medium students (1997, 1998, and 1999)
- Informant Group B – the same Form 6 and 7 Chinese medium students (1997 and 1998)
- Informant Group C – Form 1 (11 years old) and 3 (13 years old) students from schools using English as a medium of instructions and from schools using Chinese as the medium of instruction (1999)
- Informant Group D – Form 6 (17 years old) Chinese medium of instruction students and Teachers (1999)
- Informant Group E – student teachers (2000)

Informant sampling would ideally have been larger but time constraints and pressures of the examination system mean that schools in Hong Kong are reluctant to become involved in research unless it has an official sponsor, for example the government or one of the Universities. As Wellington (1996:23) notes, ‘one of the barriers to careful and thoughtful sampling, of course is the problems of gaining access.’ The use of a more rigorous probability sample (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) was not possible as there was a need to use personal contacts to access informants, nor was it deemed strictly necessary for the research approach.

The main student informants in Informant groups A, B and D were 16-17 year old learners (Form 6) attending a British Council summer programme. This course was run in conjunction with, and financed by, the Education Department. It focused on the Hong Kong Use of English Exam (A level). The teaching approach was communicative and there was a self-access programme. The students came from Chinese medium schools where subjects are taught using Chinese as the language of instruction. As discussed in Section 3, Hong Kong schools are banded according to



the ability and achievements of the students. The majority of the students were from band 2 and 3 schools, so were of average ability. The students had a variety of reasons for attending the course, ranging from personal choice to compulsory attendance required by the school. These varied reasons for attendance may have affected motivation. Information from these informants was to form the main database.

As explained earlier, other student informants were also incorporated into the research as it developed. These were informants from English medium of instruction schools and from different year groups (both Chinese and English medium students). The inclusion of such learners served to gain data to explore differences and similarities in perceptions of roles between students who were taught through a different medium of instruction and of different ages. These informants were accessed via local teacher contacts on the Post-Graduate Certificate Education programme or co-operative head teachers who took student teachers from Hong Kong University for teaching practice.

The teachers involved in the study were accessed via the Post-Graduate Certificate of Education programmes at Hong Kong University. The disadvantage of this was that they were all attending a course of study and tended to be within the age group of 25-40. Therefore older teachers were not included in the informant group, limiting analysis of the data according to age. However, the advantage of using such a group was that questionnaires could be administered during lecture time ensuring 100% returns. Student teachers involved in the research were also attending a course at Hong Kong University and their ages ranged from 19 to 28 years old.

## **Data collection procedure**

The data collection summarised in Figure 4.1 showed the research instruments and the informant groups involved in the research. The headings from that figure are used below to provide structure to this section on data collection procedures. It should be noted that permission was sought from the authorities concerned (British Council and the Education Department) to complete the research and this was duly given as there would be ‘no identification of individual respondents’ (Rossier, 1997:159). It was not considered necessary by the Education Department to inform parents of the students but students were informed about the nature of the research and the purpose of the questionnaires before they were asked to complete them.

### **a) Informant Group A - Different cohorts of Form 6 Chinese medium students 1997/98/99**

Data were collected from four classes of Form 6 students on the British Council course each year. Classes were selected at random so, for example, where there were 16 classes every fourth class was selected to complete the questionnaires. In the first lesson teachers were asked to explain that the questionnaires were part of a research project to investigate students’ beliefs about learning English and that there were no right answers. The teachers then gave the questionnaires to the students for them to complete, before the objectives of the course were discussed. Such an approach was used because the aims and objectives of the course would stress the teachers’ expectations of the students with regard to taking an active role and being interactive in class. If the questionnaires had been completed after the aims and objectives had been discussed, the discussion may have influenced the students’ responses. Students were asked to put some form of identification on the questionnaire and to remember this for the next day so that a check could be made to ensure students had completed both questionnaires. The teacher was asked to check that students had completed the answers for the 26 statements on the second page of the questionnaire.

The second questionnaire for Study 2 – Cultural dimensions questionnaire was administered to these same groups of students on the second day of the course using



the same procedure as for the first questionnaire. This data set was collected over three years from similar cohorts of students. This was convergent with Rock's (1984) notion that when considering perceptions there is a need to ascertain consistency. This data set was to form the main baseline data for the research.

b) Informant Group B - The same Form 6 and 7 Chinese medium students 1997/8  
A longitudinal data collection was also included using Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale with this informant group. According to Keeves (1997) longitudinal studies are of growing importance as 'educational research is primarily concerned with stability and change over time' (Keeves, 1997:148). For the purpose of this research this study was included to explore any possibilities of change in perceptions of roles over time. The informants were originally from Informant Group A from the 1997 cohort who completed another follow-up course in 1998. Keeves (1997) recognises that longitudinal studies often have significant problems and one of the problems here was tracing students who had taken part in the first study. Only 22 of the original students involved in the first study took part in a similar course the following year. These students were asked to complete Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale.

c) Informant Group C - Form 1 and 3 English and Chinese medium students 1999  
This data was obtained via teachers on a Post Graduate Certificate of Education programme. All these teachers were practising teachers and they were asked if they taught any of the following groups of students. These were Form 1 (11 year-old) and Form 3 (14 year-old) students from both English and Chinese medium of instruction schools. Teachers of these forms were then asked if they would give their students Questionnaire 1b – Paired statement. Data were collected using only one questionnaire because general timetabling constraints made it unreasonable to ask these teachers to also give students the Cultural dimensions questionnaire.

d) Informant Group D - Form 6 Chinese medium of instruction students and Teachers 1999

The Form 6 students were selected from the British Council programme and the same procedures were completed as in a) above but using Questionnaire 1b – Attitudes/Beliefs – paired statements questionnaire and the Cultural Dimensions questionnaire. Teachers on the Post Graduate Certificate of Education programme were also asked to complete Questionnaire 1b – Attitudes/Beliefs-paired statement questionnaire and questionnaire 2 – Cultural Dimensions questionnaire. There were 47 teachers and 37 students who completed both questionnaires. The number of students was smaller than planned as one teacher did not administer the questionnaires on the first day. Personal administration of the questionnaire was impossible because of the need to administer the questionnaire to four classes simultaneously.

For teachers, Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements was completed on the second session of the semester. Teachers were also asked to complete the questionnaire a second time according to how they believed their students would answer it. Questionnaire 2 – Cultural dimensions was completed on the third session of the semester. The data from this group of teachers were used for comparative purposes with the Form 6 students identified above. One tutorial group of 19 teachers was asked if they could be interviewed the following week after their tutorial sessions. The teachers were interviewed in groups of 5-8 in an attempt to promote discussion and with respect to time constraints. The interviews were recorded using a flat microphone for minimum distraction for the purpose of analysis.

#### e) Informant Group E - Student teachers 2000

The student teachers involved in this collection of data were from Hong Kong University. They were also in their second year and were given their Questionnaire 1b – paired statements and Questionnaire 2 – Cultural dimensions at the beginning of their second methodology course, having studied a first methodology course in the first year. They had yet to study communicative teaching methods so it was anticipated that their perceptions of roles would not have been influenced by course theory (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). The interviews were paired or three person interviews, held during the second semester, after their second teaching practicum.



This grouping arrangement was adopted to stimulate discussion. The interviews were recorded so that data could be checked and listened to repeatedly for analysis.

The data collection provided information at three different levels. These were:

- i) the individual level
- ii) the interactive level (among groups)
- iii) the collective level

Data collected from such sources can, according to Denzin (1970), be incorporated into research to provide a method for triangulation. However, in this research these different levels were not incorporated for the purpose of triangulation to prove or refute hypotheses in a normative paradigm but for the purpose of extending knowledge about roles on a variety of levels and layers. Such an approach perhaps represents a different form of triangulation consistent with an exploratory paradigm.

## **Data analysis**

Analysis of the data was completed according to the nature of the data. The analysis is discussed under the categories 'numerical' and 'non-numerical' data.

### **a) Numerical data**

According to Rossier (1997:161) the 'ultimate purpose of the analysis stage is to produce sets of statistics that summarise the data' and these 'should reflect the conceptual framework.' With this aim in mind, the initial statistical analysis used was simple univariate analysis giving frequency counts and means. This enabled an initial view of the data for each statement for attitudes and the statements for beliefs to be gained. Further analysis was then completed on the sets of data to check for similarities and differences between the data sets. The processes involved are explained below.

Since the 1960's the development of the computer has proved invaluable in enabling empirical research into educational problems. Once the questionnaires had been

collected they were then edited to identify problems (Cohen and Manion, 1995, and Rossier, 1997). In editing the conditions of completeness, accuracy, and uniformity were used to guide the process. As teachers administering the questionnaires had been asked to check the responses for the 26 statements on the second page, the item response rate was virtually 100% in all cases. Problems that were identified on editing included three lower form students who had answered the statements using a repeated pattern of ticks across the page that on examination were found to represent a pattern as opposed to responses to the statements. These were considered invalid responses. Another problem was incomplete responses: in total there were two incomplete questionnaires, and following Nunan (1996) it was deemed appropriate to discard such responses. More problematic were the responses in Questionnaire 1a – Attitudes and Beliefs to the multiple choice questions about how to learn, as more than 70% of informants (n= 146) had ticked more than one response, perhaps because they did not understand the question, and so these items were discarded. After editing the questionnaires, the data needed to be coded. This was done according to the requirements for using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 9.0 for Windows (SPSS). SPSS was selected as it enabled more options for manipulation of the data than a package such as EXCEL. For example, SPSS allowed for the use of non-parametric tests that could be used to identify significant differences between sets of data. For closed questions (for example, yes/no) the coding frame was relatively simple with a number being assigned to represent a certain response. For Likert scales the numbers 1-4 were used to represent agree / slightly agree / slightly disagree and disagree respectively. The coding for open questions (for example, characteristics of a good teachers) was more complex and had to be developed after initial analysis. A random sample of 20 questionnaires was selected and the characteristics noted that could be categorised together and labelled with a letter. This was entered on to the database. When new characteristics were included in the responses new categories were developed. This type of coding allowed for frequency counts, to identify the most common responses. In addition, peers were used to check the cross categorisation.



Once the numerical data had been coded and entered into the computer each database was checked for the range of valid values. Specific statistical tests were used to test between different sets of data. For example for Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale the data were ordinal and hence the Kruskal-Wallis test and Wilcoxon signed rank test were both used to compare means between different sets of data and to check for any significant differences between sets of responses to the 26 statements. The Kruskal-Wallis Test was used to check for significant differences in the responses between the three independent samples of Form 6 students (base data). This allowed a check for consistency within the results over the three years. The Wilcoxon signed rank test was used to check for significant differences within the sample in the longitudinal study. This test was used in order to check for significant differences between the same informants and not between different groups. The analyses were based on the information gathering and information analysing questions. The information analysing questions concerned the similarities and differences between sets of responses for different informants.

For Questionnaire 1b - Paired statement, administered to Form 6 students, teachers and the various English and Chinese Form 1 and 3 students, frequencies were computed. These frequencies provided information into perceptions of roles according to classroom participant, age and medium of instruction. The data from the Form 6 students and the teachers were also analysed for similarities and differences in the data. Additionally, the teachers had also been asked to complete the questionnaires as they thought their students might, so these data were also included in this analysis. Chi-squared tests of homogeneity were used to identify significant differences between the sets of data. This test was used because the data were nominal and comparison was between different groups.

For Questionnaire 2 - Cultural Dimensions, the data were coded according to the nature of the statement either a) high or low power distance, or b) individualism or collectivism. (For details of analysis of questions see Appendix 4.4.) The frequencies were obtained and then the data analysed according to the characteristic

of the statement, for example high or low power distance. This enabled access to the overall individualism or power distance score for each group of informants. Chi-squared tests of homogeneity (because the data were nominal) were completed to find any significant differences for the individual statements between the student and teacher group. The findings were compared with other studies and were then examined in the light of the responses for the Attitudes/Beliefs questionnaire.

## **b) Non-numerical data**

### **i) Questionnaire data**

The descriptions of the English lessons were compiled and, following Nunan (1996), keywords and ideas were used to sort the information. The descriptions were useful in gathering data about classrooms and were used to provide students' views regarding what was happening in classrooms and their likes and dislikes. Other data such as the characteristics of a good teacher/student were coded with the word (or first few letters) of the characteristic and frequency counts obtained.

### **ii) Interview data**

The interview data were listened to and notes made with the paraphrasing of some comments and complete transcription of others, an approach supported by Keeves and Sowden (1997). In addition, a decision was made that the transcriptions should not be detailed linguistic records and so for example linguistic interjections such as 'eh' and pauses were not always included. This decision was made as the study was not one focussing on linguistic analysis but was one concerned with identifying data that would convey ideas and thoughts about teaching and learning. The transcripts can be found in Appendix 1 and 2. The key words or ideas have been annotated in the margin next to the comments. For the student teachers, transcription was made of the data omitting repetitive data but including paraphrasing such anecdotal stories as one regarding E's brother who had been psychologically damaged by an incident in the classroom. Such incidents were of interest and highlighted issues of power in



the classroom and changes regarding student and parental rights and perceptions of roles. Key words or ideas have been noted in the margins (Nunan, 1996). The purpose of the interviews was to gain insights into behaviour of students and teachers in the classroom and some aspects of roles such as questioning. The data were used to provide 'voices from the classroom' which, according to Chenail, (1995) would effectively illustrate points discussed.

### **Some issues**

With any research there is a question of bias. The interpretation of the results is in part dependent on the research instruments and their internal validity. The questionnaires were statistically analysed for reliability, using reliability coefficients where possible. This refers to the precision of a measurement instrument irrespective of whether it measures what is supposed to measure. The reliability of the groups of statements in Questionnaire 1a were acceptable as a whole (with Alpha being 0.695), as the nearer a score of 1 the better the validity. However, the statements were open to individual interpretation, and so further analysis was required. Multivariate analysis showed that there was little significant difference between the responses of the three groups of students in the baseline data suggesting that the instrument was reliable within the circumstances of the research and suggesting that changes could be based over a longer time-frame than three years.

As noted, with respect to the research approach, the data collection procedures included both analytical and interpretative analyses. The inclusion of different groups gave access to a spread of data and information. However, interpretation of data will always be subject to bias and a researcher's own values but in the discussion of the findings analysis and conclusions are made as transparent as is possible. As Kaplan (1997:118) notes, 'in the end the scientist must walk alone, not in defiance but with the independence demanded by intellectual integrity.' The research took place in a foreign school system and this can sometimes be seen as a

cause for concern in the interpretation of data because it may be interpreted without the necessary knowledge regarding the context and culture. However, as Evans observes:

... research on a foreign school system is usually possible only if one has considerable knowledge of the country in question and its language and the opportunity to spend some time in the country. (Evans, 1986:20)

Additionally, whilst it seems reasonable to suggest that the researcher should be involved in the system, this can also result in bias. The contribution of this research is to explore information about perceptions of roles and how these perceptions might affect the teaching and learning process. As the research was exploratory the findings are not generalisable and no claims are being made statistically although any consistency in the findings for three cohorts (Informant Group A) could suggest the findings might be representative of informants with similar profiles in Hong Kong. The aim of the findings was to provide information useful for understanding more about the relationship in the classroom between students and teachers that could have implications for language teaching approaches, the management of change, curricular and materials design and teacher education.

A further aim of the research was to challenge stereotypical images of students and teachers. In support of this, as Barnlund (1989:167) notes, 'it is tempting once we have become attached to certain views of a culture for such images, through constant reiteration, to acquire the power of myth.' So the focus of this research provides an opportunity to look more closely at reality and myth in the classroom, by providing a window to gain access to perceptions of roles and compare these findings with widely held common beliefs about both students and teachers. Such action might highlight the need to find out more about the classroom participants.

With reference to the research approach and the tools, another important consideration for the research is the researcher. As noted my personal interest in and experience of roles was the initial rationale for my research. Van Lier (1990)



suggests that the experience and knowledge that the researcher has is vital for a research project. He comments that:

... this knowledge constitutes the *baseline*, a sense of common ground between observer and setting, which underlies efficient descriptive and analytic work. (Van Lier, 1990:5)

Having worked in South East Asia, in various contexts with both students and teachers for over 14 years I have, according to Van Lier, a wealth of experience and knowledge constituting a solid baseline that can act as a resource for the research. In addition, it was directly from this baseline that the research and the research questions emerged, in terms of my desire to find out more about students' and teachers' perceptions of roles and about the differences and similarities in these patterns. Whilst this may allow for appropriate interpretation of data, it can also lead to problems in objectivity or biased interpretation as the researcher manipulates the research to provide what is wanted. In some respects if the research tool has been designed to collect data according to the links between the research questions, the information gathering/analysing questions and the conceptual framework then this should result in data reflecting the information required to answer the research questions. More problematic is the interpretation of the findings. One aspect of this is the 'same data can have quite different meanings for researchers of different persuasions' (Nicholson, 1996:5) and in this thesis this is a problem because of the quantity of the data and the different areas that are included. As different readers from different fields read any research and use their own interpretative processes and look for their own coherence, Woods (1996) considers that they will inevitably ask why certain aspects that they see as areas for discussion have not been recognised or discussed more. This can perhaps be attributed to researcher bias, as interpretation and analysis were based on what the researcher's interest. With respect to this research the interest and consequently the interpretations and analysis were affected by my baseline, the knowledge I brought with me from my experience (Van Lier, 1990) and as the study developed, although I did not intentionally ignore an area for study if the data suggested it important.

In my role as a *Bricoleur* (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and in the process of assembling this collage-like creation, a major challenge was the organisation of the research. Throughout the thesis the advice of Rossier (1997) has been followed, that is to include sufficient information so that readers are able to make their own judgements about the data collected, the appropriateness of the analysis undertaken and the conclusions drawn.

## **Summary**

This section introduced the use of an exploratory approach within the research and the rationale underlying this choice. In discussing possible research paradigms the limitations of a single paradigm were discussed and the need for a paradigm to be applied throughout the different stages of the research process recognised. Decisions made with regard to the development of the research were described and rationalised. The findings of the research are now presented in the next section.



## **Section 5: Exploring Roles – Findings and Discussion**

### **Introduction**

In this section the findings of the research are presented and discussed. Reference is made to the literature reviewed, the analysis of the research context and to the conceptual framework. Initially, the focus of the section will be the findings from Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs. Students' indications of their attitudes to English language and learning English will be discussed with the possible implications that these indications might have for roles. This will be followed by a consideration of the responses to the statements reflecting beliefs about roles. These beliefs about roles were associated with more communicative teaching or more traditional teaching, the features of which were discussed in Section 2. The work of Riley (1988) provided insights to shape some of the statements in his explanation of the social connections between language, learning and language learning. These included how to learn; group work and grouping preferences; error correction; responsibility for learning; interaction; learning preferences; and own behaviour. These categories form the structure for the presentation of the findings and the discussion. For each category the possible relationship between it and classroom roles will be discussed and the relevant data from the Questionnaires 1a-Likert scale and Questionnaire 1b-Paired statement are analysed and compared according to the various informant groups. These informant groups include the three different cohorts of Chinese Medium of Instruction students (Questionnaires 1a-Likert scale) the baseline data group and the comparative informant group of teachers and students (Questionnaire 1b-Paired statements). Information analysing questions focussed analysis on the similarities and differences between the findings of the two questionnaires. In addition, a summary of the findings from the longitudinal study and the studies investigating perceptions of roles with respect to age and medium of instruction will also be given. A critique of the research can be found at the end of this sub-section.

For Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions, an established questionnaire was used to allow for comparison with other studies and for the findings from this study will be presented and discussed with regard to possible explanations. Concerns about the questionnaire will be voiced. Finally, a synopsis of the findings from the research is presented.

## **Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs: Findings and discussion**

### **a) Attitudes: Findings and discussion**

The students involved in this study were asked to read eight statements with which they needed to either agree or disagree. These eight statements sought to reveal information about need, usefulness, importance/value, difficulty of English, performance demands, and feelings and were explained in Section 4. It was intended that this data would give information that could be used to provide indications of students' attitudes towards English. All responses to the statements were subjected to Chi-squared statistical test of homogeneity, to check for any significant differences. The only significant difference between the responses (where  $p < 0.05$ ) was for those responses for statement 8, 'It is important for me to be able to speak English well'. However, these responses were within 12% of one another in agreement, and so the significant difference indicates that it is the difference between the number of students agreeing with this statement that is significant. The similarity of the data overall indicates that the findings are consistent with each other suggesting reliability within the context of this study. The findings concerning use and importance of speaking English are given in Table 5.1.



Table 5.1 – Findings for statements concerning use, importance and perceived value of speaking English – Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale

Statement	1997 – F6 % n=56		1998 - F6 % n=59		1999 - F6 % n=31	
	Yes / Agree	No / Disagree	Yes / Agree	No / Disagree	Yes / Agree	No / Disagree
Q 3 - I speak English outside the classroom.	37.5	62.5	10.2	89.8	25.8	74.2
Q 8 - It is important for me to be able to speak English well.	87.5*	12.5*	98.3*	1.7*	96.8*	3.2*
Q 9 – English is useful to me now.	Question not included		96.6	3.4	90.3	9.7
Q 10 – English will be useful to me in the future.	Question not included		100	0	100	0

\*sig. diff. between three groups where  $p < 0.05$  (Chi-squared test of homogeneity) – see note previous page

For statement 3 (Q 3) the majority of students in each year report that they do not speak English outside the classroom. However, the findings for statements 9 (Q 9) and 10 (Q10) indicate that while students may not use English outside the classroom now, they regard English as useful for them currently and in the future. These two statements were not included in the questionnaire for the first year, but on the initial analysis of the first set of data this was seen as an omission and these two questions were added. As the frequency counts and tests for significant difference were within questionnaire items no summative results were affected by the addition of two further items. This addition would add to the data collected and such a move was consistent with the exploratory approach (see Section 4). All three sets of responses to statement 8 indicate a high recognition of the importance of speaking English well. The findings show that students think English is useful and additionally that they appear to value the importance of speaking it, recognising that they need to speak it well. With reference to Gardner and MacIntyres' (1993) model, this recognition of the importance of learning English suggests that students are probably well motivated. This may mean that as students appear to value English they would therefore have a positive attitude towards learning it. An alternative possibility is that students might value English for its extrinsic rewards; for example, better

employment opportunities, and so may not be positively disposed towards English per se. However, supporting a positive attitude to learning English the findings for statement 4 (Q4) in Table 5.2 indicate that the majority of students (>85% where n=146 the total number of students) disagree that they would prefer not to learn English.

Table 5.2 – Findings for statement about preference in learning English – Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale

Statement	1997 – F6		1998 - F6		1999 – F6	
	%	n=56	%	n=59	%	n=31
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Q 4 – I prefer not to learn English.	14.3	85.7	10.2	89.8	19.4	80.6

The responses to the statement about anxiety indicated that over half of the students felt anxious when learning English (Q 5) and more than three-quarters believed English was difficult for them to learn (Q 6) as shown in Table 5.3.

5.3 – Findings for statements concerning feelings and beliefs about learning English – Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale

Statement	1997 – F6		1998 - F6		1999 - F6	
	%	n=56	%	n=59	%	n=31
	Yes / Agree	No / Disagree	Yes / Agree	No / Disagree	Yes / Agree	No / Disagree
Q 5 – I feel anxious when I learn English.	58.9	41.1	55.9	44.1	54.8	45.2
Q 6 – English is difficult for me to learn.	75.0	25.0	74.6	25.4	83.9	16.1

The two statements in the Table 5.3 reflect negative aspects about language learning. In isolation such responses might be indicative of a negative attitude to learning English that might perhaps result in a positive response to preferring not to learn English. However, the students did not express a preference for not learning English with 85.7% (n=56) wanting to learn English. Thus there is the possibility that because students see the value of English they are anxious to succeed in learning English. This would support the positive disposition towards learning English as



indicated in responses to statement 4 (Q 4). So although students are anxious and find English difficult they are positively disposed towards learning English.

Statement Q 7 (- not speaking unless the student knows they will be correct) reflects a belief about performance demands. The statement was included to indicate the pressure students might feel to perform correctly as this could influence attitudes to learning English negatively. In addition, the responses might also give indications of students’ own models of language learning. The findings in Table 5.4 are interesting because of the trend within the responses.

5.4 – Findings for statement concerning performance demands when learning English – Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale

Statement	1997 – F6		1998 - F6		1999 - F6	
	% n=56		% n=59		% n=31	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Q 7 – I should not speak unless I know I will be correct.	51.8	48.2	42.4	57.6	38.7	61.3

Over the three years the number of students disagreeing with the statement increased by 13.1%. This trend may reflect a change in the classroom with moves towards correctness appearing to be less important. Alternatively, the trend may show the influence of recent teacher education and/or changes in teaching policy towards more communicative approaches that have less concern with correctness.

In summary, the sampled students appear to have positive attitudes towards learning English, recognising it as important for their future despite thinking it is difficult to learn and feeling anxious when learning it. Having a positive attitude to learning English could have a positive influence on perceptions of roles and this might be important in enabling students to adopt successful roles in the classroom. The findings for beliefs are now presented and discussed.

## **b) Beliefs: Findings and discussion**

A summary of the findings for the statements on beliefs included in both questionnaires can be found in Appendices 5.3 and 5.4 respectively. The findings will be discussed under the categories of beliefs used in the design of the questionnaires as explained in Section 2 and 4. These are:

- a) how to learn
- b) group work and grouping preferences
- c) error correction
- d) responsibility for learning
- e) interaction
- f) learning preferences
- g) own behaviour.

Originally, on designing the questionnaire, the statements were associated with one category of beliefs. However, on analysis some of the statements could be included under more than one category. In such cases the findings are cross-referenced accordingly. The categorisation of statements is a situation where it would have been useful to subject the data to exploratory factor analysis. However, the sample included in this study is not large enough to enable this.

Questionnaire 1a-Likert scale was used to collect data on beliefs over three years from three different cohorts of students. As the data were ordinal the responses were tested using the Kruskal-Wallis k-sample test with the aim of ascertaining any significant differences between the sets of data. There were significant differences over the three years for three statements only. However, where there were significant differences the findings were all in agreement with each other, either all agreeing or disagreeing. This overall consistency of the findings suggests that the responses are consistent, reflecting possibly representative information regarding this particular informant group at this time within this study. Data are presented using means to provide an overall picture of the data. Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale was also used to collect data from the students in the longitudinal study. These findings also reflect the same pattern of responses as the three-cohort group, again reinforcing



the consistency of the responses. A Wilcoxon signed rank test was completed on this data to test for significant differences between the two sets of data. Significant differences were found for six of the statements suggesting moves towards more independent and active roles. A summary of the data can be found in Appendix 5.5.

Questionnaire 1b-Paired statement was used to collect data for the comparative study (students and teachers). The findings for the comparative student and teacher informant groups will be presented and discussed, juxtaposed with the findings for Questionnaire 1a-Likert scale, although they are presented in percentages. These differences in presentation reflect the method of data collected. The teachers were also asked to complete the questionnaire as they thought their students might complete it. This was to gain information to about their perceptions regarding students' beliefs and expectations. As the data were nominal, Chi-squared tests of homogeneity and McNemar tests were completed on these sets of data respectively depending on whether the data were between informants (teachers and students), or from the same informants (teachers and teachers completing the questionnaire as they believed students would). The final part of this sub-section will present and discuss the findings of the longitudinal study and also the informant groups included to investigate perceptions of roles with respect to medium of instruction and age.

#### **i) Beliefs about how to learn**

The beliefs represented in this category are all concerned with sources of knowledge, how to learn or suitable conditions which provide opportunities for learning. Such beliefs might affect perceptions of roles. A summary is given in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Summary of beliefs regarding ways to behaviour and learning:  
Questionnaire 1a – Likert Scale

	Statement	Findings (mean scores are given below) Range of possible scores is 1-4. 2.5 is mid point between agree and disagree. <2.5=agree >2.5= disagree			
		1997 F6 CMI	1998 F6 CMI	1999 F6 CMI	Grand mean
8	It is more important for me to talk than listen in order to learn.	2.43	2.29	2.46	2.39 Comment – students agree slightly with this statement
13	I don't feel I learn anything unless I talk to the teacher during class.	2.93	2.78	2.68	2.79 Comment- students disagree with statement
22	I learn more when I speak with other students than when I speak to the teacher.	2.67	2.71	2.61	2.66 Comment – students disagree slightly
24	I have more opportunities to learn when I work in a group than when I work by myself.	1.67	1.75	1.57	1.66 Comment – students agree strongly with statement
25	I learn best when I am active and can talk.	1.39	1.41	1.32	1.37 Comment – students agree strongly with statement

From Table 5.5 the findings indicate that students:

- value the importance of talking when learning (Statements 8 and 25 - ‘It is more important for me to talk than listen in order to learn’ and ‘I learn best when I am active and can talk’)
- recognise that they do not have to talk to the teacher in order to learn (Statement 13 - ‘I don't feel I learn anything unless I talk to the teacher during class’)
- do not think they learn more by talking to their peers than they do when they speak to the teacher (Statement 22 – ‘I learn more when I speak with other students than when I speak to the teacher’)
- consider that group work provides them with more opportunities to learn than when working by themselves (Statement 24 – ‘I have more opportunities to learn when I work in a group than when I work by myself’).



These findings suggest that students believe they should be active and talk in order to learn, and they believe they can learn from each other by working collaboratively rather than entirely on their own perhaps supporting the use of activities that are underpinned by more social constructivist models of learning. Students also appear to be aware of the opportunities that working with other students actively provide and think they can learn even if they do not speak to the teacher. However, the students indicate that they do not think they can learn more from other students than the teacher. From this it appears students' consider the teacher as a valuable learning source but not exclusively so. Within the group of statements above, statement 24 refers to group-work whilst the others refer to interaction and talking. This means that the statements fall into more than one category of beliefs, so there will be some back-reference to these statements when considering the statements presented under the other categories of group-work and interaction.

The responses of the student and teacher comparative group to Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements include three paired-statements under this sub-heading of how to learn, and these are shown in Table 5.6 overleaf.

Table 5.6 – Findings for beliefs regarding learning and behaviour: Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements

Paired statements	Student % n=37	Teacher % n =47	Teacher as student % n=47
7.a) I can learn English if I do not speak to the teacher during the lesson.	54.1 a	78.7 a, b	53.2 b
b) I cannot learn English if I do not speak to the teacher during the lesson.	45.9	21.3	46.8
11.a) When learning English it is more important for me to talk than listen in class.	48.6 c	57.4	17.0 c
b) When learning English it is more important for me to listen than talk in class.	51.4	42.6	83.0
15.a) I learn best when I can sit and listen quietly to the teacher in class.	21.6 c	21.3	51.1 c
b) I learn best when I am active and can talk in class.	78.4	78.7	48.9

a= significant difference between students’ and teachers’ beliefs where p<0.05 (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)  
b= significant difference between teachers and what teachers think students believe where p<0.05 (McNemar Test)  
c= significant difference between students and what teachers think students believe, where p<0.05 (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)

The findings for students for paired statements 7a) and b) in Table 5.6 are consistent with the findings for statement 13, Questionnaire 1a-Likert Scale questionnaire (Table 5.5), with just over half of the students indicating they believe they could learn English if they did not speak to the teacher. Although teachers were significantly more positive than the students with respect to not needing to speak to the teacher to learn English perhaps reflecting maturity or more experience of independent leaning. In assessing what they thought students would believe the findings are very similar to those gained from the students suggesting an accurate perception of students’ beliefs for this statement.

For statements 11a) and b) the students’ responses to these statements contradict those in Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale statement 8 (Table 5.5). However, for statement 8 students agree slightly that it is more important to talk than listen, while the responses in Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements (Table 5.2) indicate that slightly more than half the students agree that it is more important to listen than talk.



This would appear to be an area where the responses are inconclusive and suggests variations in views. However, of more interest is the difference between the responses regarding what teachers think students believe and what students indicate they believe. More teachers (83% (n=47)) believe students think it is more important for them to listen than talk compared with the students' responses (51.4% (n=37)). This difference is significant with  $p < 0.01$ . A summary of differences between students' and teachers' perceptions is given at the end of this sub-section.

Responses for paired statements 15 a) and b), how best the informants learn, indicate that the majority of students (78.4% (n=37)) and teachers (78.7% (n=47)) thought they learned best when they could be active and talk in class. The findings for the students were consistent with the findings in Table 5.5 for statement 25, perhaps indicating a possible general belief for the students in this study that requires and is amenable to further testing. However, there is again a significant difference between students' views and what teachers think students believe about their behaviour when learning. Over half of the teachers (51.1%, n=47) indicate that they think students believe that they learn best when they sit and listen quietly. This difference is significant with  $p < 0.01$ .

In summary, the findings tend to suggest that students believe the best way to learn is to be active and talk. The responses appear consistent with recent constructionist models of learning and communicative approaches to language learning as outlined in Section 2. The importance of the teacher as a source for learning is recognised, although less strongly than anticipated considering the literature and teachers' comments. Perhaps this reflects possible trends towards more learner centredness and an influence of the moves towards communicative teaching approaches. One interesting aspect emerging from the data is the difference between the students' beliefs and the teachers' perceptions of students' beliefs regarding learning as these possibly influence teaching practices and may give rise to mismatches between reality and expectations. Such beliefs and differences might have implications for classroom practice, the interplay between the teacher and the student, the

opportunities that teachers provide for students in class regarding participation and changes in teaching policy. This will be discussed explicitly in Section 6 with reference to those concerns.

**ii) Beliefs about group work and grouping preferences**

It was noted in Section 2 that within communicative approaches group work is promoted, whereas more traditional approaches tend to be associated with students working individually. Such group work and grouping arrangements affect the roles that students can adopt. In an attempt to reveal more about how students see their roles, statements were included in the questionnaires intended to access information regarding beliefs about group work and grouping preferences. A summary of findings for group work Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale is given in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7 Summary of findings for group work: Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale**

	Statement	Findings (mean scores are given below) Range of possible scores is 1-4. 2.5 is mid point between agree and disagree. <2.5=agree >2.5= disagree			
		1997 F6 CMI	1998 F6 CMI	1999 F6 CMI	Grand mean
4	I would rather work on my own than in a group.	2.94	2.92	2.98	2.95 Comment – students disagree strongly with this statement
5	I would rather work in a group than on my own.	1.89	1.98	1.79	1.89 Comment – students agree strongly with this statement
12	I prefer to work in a group because we can help each other.	1.61	1.71	1.66	1.65 Comment – students agree strongly with this statement reinforcing findings for statement 4

The responses in Table 5.7 indicate that students are positive about group work and are consistent with the findings for statement 24, ‘I have more opportunities to learn when I work in a group than when I work by myself’ (Table 5.5, page 144), where it was noted that students believe they have more opportunities to learn when they



work in a group. However, Table 5.8 reveals that there are significant differences between the three sets of data from the students and teachers.

Table 5.8 - Summary of findings for group process and preferences: Questionnaire 1b – Paired statement

Paired statements	Student % n=37	Teacher % n =47	Teacher as student % n=47
3.a) I would rather work on my own than in a group.	18.9 a,b	42.6 b	44.7 a
b) I would rather work in a group than on my own.	81.1	57.4	55.3

a= significant difference between students and what teachers think students believe, where  $p < 0.05$  (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)

b= significant difference between students' and teachers' beliefs where  $p < 0.05$  (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)

The table shows that just over half the teachers believe students prefer working in groups. This is in contrast to the findings for the students where over 80% indicate that they prefer group work. With respect to the teachers' own educational backgrounds and the traditional teaching approaches in Hong Kong, much of their education probably consisted of individual work and so this expectation of students having a lower preference for group-work than they actually reported could be a legacy of the teachers' own education. Again these differences between the students' and the teachers' preferences may have implications for classroom roles and choices that teachers give to students with respect to classroom grouping arrangements.

**iii) Beliefs about error correction**

Error correction is an interesting category with respect to Chinese learners, who are described as expecting a high degree of correction (Biggs and Watkins,1997). As one teacher commented:

Group 1 Teacher 4 – *They want lots of correcting. They expect you to correct every error...they have a clear notion of right and wrong.* (Appendix 1)

Tables 5.9 and 5.10 summarise the beliefs regarding error correction.

Table 5.9 – Summary of findings regarding error correction: Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale

	Statement	Findings (mean scores are given below) Range of possible scores is 1-4. 2.5 is mid point between agree and disagree. <2.5=agree >2.5= disagree			
		1997 F6 CMI	1998 F6 CMI	1999 F6 CMI	Grand mean
3	I expect the teacher to correct all my mistakes.	1.50	1.56	1.48	1.52 Comment – students agree strongly with this statement
23	I like it when other students correct my mistakes.	1.93	1.63	1.39	1.64 Comment – students agree strongly with statement. Significant difference between three groups where diff. = <0.05 (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

The students agree strongly that they expect the teacher to correct all their mistakes. This was reinforced by the teachers’ comments in the interviews illustrated by the example above. Additionally, from statement 23 it would also appear that students feel comfortable when other students correct their mistakes. The findings regarding error correction for Questionnaire 1b can be seen in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 –Summary of findings regarding error correction: Questionnaire 1b – Paired statement

Paired statements	Student % n=37	Teacher % n =47	Teacher as student % n=47
2.a) Only the teacher can correct my mistakes.	13.5 a	2.1 a,b	29.8 b
b) The teacher and my classmates can correct my mistakes.	86.5	97.9	70.2

a= significant difference between students’ and teachers’ beliefs where p<0.05 (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)  
b= significant difference between teachers and what teachers think students believe where p<0.05 (McNemar Test)

The findings in Table 5.10 again indicate significant differences between what teachers believe and what they think students believe. However, in the responses all informants indicate both teachers and peers can correct mistakes, although teachers



believe this more strongly than students. This appears to be more consistent with student-centred education rather than teacher-oriented classrooms and therefore perhaps more reflective of communicative approaches than traditional approaches. There is again a match between both teachers’ and students’ beliefs that could be further investigated. Riley (1988) noted that particular cultures might have specific attitudes to error correction. So the questionnaire items might be used to reveal specific information about Hong Kong Chinese students with regard to expecting all errors to be corrected.

**iv) Beliefs about responsibility for learning**

The fourth area explored was responsibility for learning, as this will surely have an influence on the roles that teachers and students are willing to adopt. Although both teachers and learners are responsible for learning, a positive response to accepting responsibility for learning might link with more independent approaches to language learning. In contrast, beliefs that the teacher is responsible for learning might be considered to be reflective of more traditional notions about language teaching. As can be seen in Tables 5.11 and 5.12, students consider that it is their responsibility to ensure they learn.

**Table 5.11 – Responsibility for learning: Questionnaire 1a: Likert scale**

	Statement	Findings (mean scores are given below) Range of possible scores is 1-4. 2.5 is mid point between agree and disagree. <2.5=agree >2.5= disagree			
		1997 F6 CMI	1998 F6 CMI	1999 F6 CMI	Grand mean
7	It is my fault if I don't improve my English.	1.57	1.85	1.71	1.71 Comment – students agree strongly with statement
11	I am responsible for my own progress.	1.91	1.80	1.68	1.80 Comment – students agree strongly with this statement reinforcing findings for statement 7

Table 5.12 – Responsibility for learning: Questionnaire 1b: Paired statement

Paired statements	Student % n=37	Teacher % N =47	Teacher as student % n=47
5.a) The teacher is responsible for my progress.	43.2	36.2	59.6
b) I am responsible for my progress.	56.8	63.8	40.4
13.a) It is my fault if I do not learn anything.	97.3 a,b	53.2 b	57.4 a
b) It is the teacher's fault if I do not learn anything.	2.7	46.8	42.6

a= significant difference between students and what teachers think students believe, where  $p < 0.05$  (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)

b= significant difference between students' and teachers' beliefs where  $p < 0.05$  (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)

The comparative data in Table 5.12 shows that for statement 5 more teachers than students indicate that students are likely to believe teachers are responsible for their progress. These findings may reflect teachers' own expectations of their role with respect to the pressures on teachers to ensure students achieve good examination results. In interviews with teachers they commented upon this indirectly, stating that students had certain expectations of them. Comments included:

Group 2 T. 1 : *'Make them pass the exams.'*

Group 2 T. 4: *'The students I have, really expect me to get them somewhere...also they are very smart, they look at you and wait a couple of weeks or months to decide whether you can deliver or not. I have noticed if they lose their trust, I don't know myself, but assume that if they lose their trust in you. They are not going to learn very much. As long as there are exams we have to prepare for them.'*

(Appendix 1)

For statement 13, the majority of students (97.3%, n=37) believe it is their own fault if they do not learn anything, whereas nearly half of the teachers (46.8%, n=47) think that it is the teachers' fault if they do not learn anything. From the findings there again appear to be significant differences between what students and teachers report with respect to their beliefs regarding responsibility for learning. The expectations that teachers have could in part be reflective of their views regarding their own



professional responsibilities. Such views could be based on experience and compounded by pressures to ensure students achieve good results. The data may also indicate that students are more willing to accept responsibility for learning than teachers believe and this could have a consequence for teachers taking on roles or imposing roles on students that incorporate a greater or lesser degree of responsibility that students may find difficult to accept.

**v) Beliefs about interaction**

The statements regarding interaction were intended to reveal beliefs about distribution of linguistic roles, available communication strategies, and linguistic behaviour as these probably affect roles, as discussed in Section 2 with reference to Riley (1988).

Beliefs about distribution of linguistic roles are shown in Tables 5.13 and 5.14.

Table 5.13 – Distribution of linguistic roles: Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale

	Statement	Findings (mean scores are given below) Range of possible scores is 1-4. 2.5 is mid point between agree and disagree. <2.5=agree >2.5= disagree			
		1997 F6 CMI	1998 F6 CMI	1999 F6 CMI	Grand mean
1	I should not speak unless I am spoken to.	2.57	2.44	2.66	2.57 Comment – students tend to disagree slightly with the statement
2	I should not ask the teacher questions.	3.26	3.37	3.39	3.34 Comment – students disagree strongly with this statement
10	Talking should take place between teacher and students and not students and students.	2.89	3.02	2.57	2.83 Comment – Students disagree with statement
17	Teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom.	2.31	2.08	2.13	2.17 Comment – students agree with statement

Questions were included in the negative to reflect behaviour more convergent with traditional teaching practices. For all statements, except statement 17, it would seem that students believe in asking the teacher questions, having a right to speak and

speaking to each other in the classroom. These findings could indicate that students have a particular perception of their own personal linguistic role that could be concerned with rights to voice their own opinions. A desire for more equal distribution of linguistic roles and perhaps changes in linguistic power distribution might also be reflected in these responses, but it is not possible from this research to know whether the students would acknowledge this. There is also the possibility that this trend (one that needs to be tested) might mirror the changes in society with children being born into smaller families with more opportunities for expression and to question. In contrast, students also indicate that the teacher should do most of the talking in the classroom, again suggesting they respect what the teacher has to say and see the teacher as a provider of knowledge. As was noted earlier responses to statement 22 ('I learn more when I speak to other students than when I speak to the teacher') which students disagreed slightly with, reinforces the idea of teacher as knowledge provider.

From these findings it appears students believe they:

- should speak in the classroom
- can ask questions
- value and respect what teachers have to say.

The findings for Questionnaire 1b in Table 5.14 overleaf show some inconsistencies with those in Table 5.13 above that are more difficult to explain.



Table 5.14 – Distribution of linguistic roles in the classroom: Questionnaire 1b:  
Paired statement

Paired statements	Student % n=37	Teacher % n =47	Teacher as student % n=47
6.a) Talking should take place between everyone in the classroom.	67.6 a	87.2 a	85.1
b) Talking should take place between the teacher and students, not students and students.	32.4	12.8	14.9
9.a) Students should do most of the talking in the classroom.	73 b	53.2 c	8.5 b,c
b) Teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom.	27	46.8	91.5

a= significant difference between students’ and teachers’ beliefs where p<0.05 (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)  
b= significant difference between students and what teachers think students believe, where p<0.05 (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)  
c= significant difference between teachers and what teachers think students believe where p<0.05 (McNemar Test)

The data for both students’ and teachers’ beliefs regarding linguistic roles indicates agreement between all three sets of data supporting the idea that talking should take place between everyone in the classroom. However, for statements 6a) and b) there is a significant degree of difference between the numbers of students and teachers who think that talking should take place between everyone in the classroom. More teachers (87.2%, n=47) than students (67.6%, n=37) indicate they believe that everyone should talk in the classroom. More interesting are the responses for statements 9 a) and b) as students reporting (73%, n=37) that they believe they should do most of the talking in the classroom, while only half of the teachers believe students should do most of the talking. Again there is a significant difference between what teachers think students believe regarding teacher talk and what students indicate they believe. This is of interest as the findings show that the vast majority of teachers (91.5%, n=47) think students believe teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom, whereas 73% (n=37) of students indicate they believe that students should do most of the talking. One of the central features of language learning is interaction, and the quality of interaction is thought to have a considerable influence on learning (Ellis, 1985). It was noted in Riley’s (1988) representation

(Ethno-linguistics) that he identifies linguistic roles in his description of the second representation. Linguistic roles include the distribution of speech between the different participants and the turn taking patterns involved. It would therefore seem reasonable to assume that any set of linguistic roles in a society may influence language use in the classroom and that beliefs and expectations of roles will also influence those linguistic roles. A specific example of language use that affects roles concerns teachers' questions and the responses expected, as these may either promote and encourage student participation in the lesson or discourage it. Thus, finding out about beliefs regarding interaction was a central feature of the questionnaire statements. From the findings here it is suggested that these types of beliefs influence the linguistic roles that both students and teachers adopt. In addition, beliefs such as these may influence the linguistic space within interaction that teachers provide or the linguistic roles students choose to use.

Linguistic roles have many different features, and moves identified by Richards and Lock (1996) include knowing when to ask questions, and knowing how and when to get assistance or feedback in completing a task. If students are unclear about these moves they may behave in ways the teacher finds unacceptable. Within this category of interaction there are probably beliefs about communication strategies concerning what it is or is not possible to ask the teacher. In Table 5.15 it can be seen that students indicate they feel they can disagree with the teacher but they disagree slightly that they could ask the teacher to change parts of the course they do not like.



Table 5.15 – Summary of findings for communication strategies with teachers -  
Questionnaire 1a: Likert scale

	Statement	Findings (mean scores are given below) Range of possible scores is 1-4. 2.5 is mid point between agree and disagree. <2.5=agree >2.5= disagree			
		1997 F6 CMI	1998 F6 CMI	1999 F6 CMI	Grand mean
14	I should never disagree with the teacher.	3.09	3.17	3.36	3.20 Comment – students disagree strongly with statement
15	I can ask the teacher to change parts of the course I don't like it.	2.65	2.66	2.45	2.59 Comment – students disagree slightly with the statement

The differences between the two statements, rather than being contradictory, could indicate two levels of interaction. One of these would be at the level of inter-relationship where teacher and student have equal inter-personal power within the relationship in the classroom, whereas the other would be at the level of knowing what is best for teaching and learning, where the teacher has greater knowledge and power. The findings in Table 5.16 are consistent with those in Table 5.15.

Table 5.16 - Summary of findings for communication strategies with teachers:  
Questionnaire 1b – Paired statement

Paired statements	Student % n=37	Teacher % n =47	Teacher as student % n=47
16.a) I should never disagree with the teacher.	16.2 a	0 a,b	19.1 b
b) I can disagree with the teacher.	83.8	100	80.9

a= significant difference between students' and teachers' beliefs where  $p < 0.05$  (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)

b= significant difference between teachers and what teachers think students believe where  $p < 0.05$  (McNemar Test)

In Table 5.16 the data shows that students strongly agree (83.8%, n=37) that they can disagree with the teacher, and all teachers agree that students can disagree with the teacher. Although in reality disagreement with the teacher may not be appreciated or readily accepted by the teacher. This was highlighted in the excerpt from the student teacher regarding concerns about students' behaviour and disrespect in Section 3,

specifically with respect to the manner in which students disagree with teachers (see Appendix 2).

Another aspect within linguistic roles concerns the appropriate rules for displaying knowledge, for example, hesitancy in answering questions (Wong, 1984 and Walker, 1997) and this could affect roles. As shown in Table 5.17 students indicated they believe that they should be hesitant when answering the teacher (mean 2.33) although they agree strongly (mean 1.93) that they should be enthusiastic to answer the teachers' questions.

Table 5.17 – Summary of findings for statements regarding behaviour in answering the teacher: Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale

	Statement	Findings (mean scores are given below) Range of possible scores is 1-4. 2.5 is mid point between agree and disagree. <2.5=agree >2.5= disagree			
		1997 F6 CMI	1998 F6 CMI	1999 F6 CMI	Grand mean
16	I should be hesitant when answering the teacher's questions.	2.52	2.24	2.25	2.33 Comment – Students agree with statement
26	I should be enthusiastic to answer the teacher.	1.83	1.97	1.96	1.93 Comment – students agree strongly with statement

Initially these findings seem contradictory, but they are focussed on different aspects of interaction. The first statement is complex, possibly involving reactions from peers, pressures for correctness and rehearsal of the answer, whilst the second statement is concerned with behaviour that might please the teacher. Viewed as such they are not necessarily contradictory but give information regarding beliefs and expectations about different aspects of answering behaviour. The interviews with the student teachers highlighted further possible explanations for answering behaviour with concerns such as value of the questions and whether the question was worth answering, (see Appendix 2).



The findings for students in Questionnaire 1b in Table 5.18 show a slight disagreement for the statement regarding hesitant behaviour when answering a teacher that appears again to contradict the findings in Questionnaire 1a.

Table 5.18 – Summary of findings regarding behaviour in answering teachers’ questions: Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements

Paired statements	Student % n=37	Teacher % n =47	Teacher as student % n=47
12.a) I should be hesitant to answer the teacher’s questions.	45.9% a	12.8% a,b	46.8% b
b) I should not be hesitant to answer the teacher’s questions.	54.1%	87.2%	53.2%

a= significant difference between students’ and teachers’ beliefs where  $p<0.05$  (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)

b= significant difference between teachers and what teachers think students believe where  $p<0.05$  (McNemar Test)

From the literature as noted in Section 3, Walker (1997) argues that in Hong Kong classrooms there are students who are hesitant when answering the teacher. This is perhaps illustrated in the data that shows neither students nor teachers reject the idea unanimously, with nearly half the students and teachers believing students should be hesitant. The change in questionnaires could, in part, explain the differences in findings between the two questionnaires with informants being forced to choose between two responses.

In summary, the findings for beliefs concerning interaction reveal that students have perceptions that reflect an active participatory role for interacting with the teacher. How much this can be observed in the classroom is another issue. Of interest is the difference in responses concerning who should do the most of the talking in class. Significantly more teachers than students indicate that they believed students think teachers should do most of the talking in class. This would appear to have implications for the organisation of classroom interaction and will be discussed in Section 6.

vi) Beliefs about learning preferences

The data from the questionnaires regarding learning preferences are presented in Tables 5.19 and 5.20. The statements all concern decisions about who decides what should be done in class.

Table 5.19 – Findings for statements concerning decisions for learning:  
Questionnaire 1a –Likert scale

	Statement	Findings (mean scores are given below) Range of possible scores is 1-4. 2.5 is mid point between agree and disagree. <2.5=agree >2.5= disagree			
		1997 F6 CMI	1998 F6 CMI	1999 F6 CMI	Grand mean
20	I prefer it when the teacher decides what to do in class.	2.06	2.14	2.07	2.08 Comment – students agree with statement but this contradicts 21. (This was one reason for Q1b – Paired statement questionnaire.)
21	I prefer it when I can decide what to do in class.	2.24	2.20	2.20	2.20 Comment – students agree with statement (see above).

The findings indicate that the students agree with both statements, but agree more strongly with statement 20. This problem of a lack of agreement between statements reflecting different aspects of a belief was, as explained in Section 4, one of the reasons for the development of the second Questionnaire 1b using the paired statements.

Table 5.20 – Findings for statements concerning decisions for learning:  
Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements

Paired statements	Student % N=37	Teacher % n =47	Teacher as student % n=47
10.a)I prefer to decide myself what I do in class.	27	23.4	25.5
b)I prefer the teacher to decide what I do in class.	73	76.6	74.5

For paired statements 10 a) and b), all sets of data agree they all prefer the teacher to decide what should be done in class. There was no significant difference between the three sets of data and the findings indicate a central role for the teacher in



deciding what to do in class. Although the findings for the second questionnaire are different from the first, it is suggested that pressurising students into choosing between the two statements could perhaps indicate students' truer preferences. The beliefs accessed here regarding preferences concerning who decides what to do in the classroom possibly indicate evidence reflecting cultural features of learning. The cultural features identified by Riley (1988) in his first representation and referred to in Section 2, specifically include the idea that specific cultural groups have different theories and beliefs about learning how to learn that could be central to perceptions of roles.

#### **vii) Beliefs about own behaviour**

The final category concerns beliefs about students' own behaviour in the classroom and probably affects roles. The statements under this sub-heading also reflect some of the other categories considered earlier in this section. These beliefs about asking the teacher questions, working in groups and behaviour in class, and the findings can be seen in Table 5.21 overleaf.

Table 5.21 – Findings indicating beliefs about own behaviour: Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale

	Statement	Findings (mean scores are given below) Range of possible scores is 1-4. 2.5 is mid point between agree and disagree. <2.5=agree >2.5= disagree			
		1997 F6 CMI	1998 F6 CMI	1999 F6 CMI	Grand mean
6	I find it easy to ask the teacher questions.	2.44	2.37	2.11	2.31 Comment – students increasingly agree with this statement over the three years. Significant difference between three groups where $p < 0.05$ (Kruskal Wallis Test)
9	I don't like it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class.	2.85	2.61	3.31	2.89 Comment – students disagree with this statement, but significant difference between three groups where $\text{diff.} = < 0.05$ (Kruskal Wallis Test), although all disagree
18	I find it difficult when I have to work in a group.	2.52	2.63	2.54	2.56 Comment – students slightly disagree with statement
19	I should sit and listen quietly when I am in class.	2.54	2.39	2.36	2.42 Comment – students tend to slightly agree with this statement

Students' responses (Table 5.21) indicate that they believe they find it easy to ask the teachers questions, do not mind when the teacher asks them a question and do not find it difficult to work in a group. In addition, students agree slightly that they should sit and listen quietly in class. This finding may indicate students' recognition that at times there is a need to sit and listen quietly in class and may not conflict with the findings for preferences for behaviour different from this. Alternatively these responses may reflect what teachers tell students to do and this is convergent with students' descriptions of what a student should do in class (see Section 3). From the table it is noted that responses for statement 6 show a move towards increasing agreement over the three years and may reflect general changes in beliefs regarding asking the teacher questions as there was a significant different in responses over



time. Again the same pattern is seen for statement 9. Table 5.22 shows the responses for paired statements 1 a) and b) and 4a) and b) are consistent with the findings for students in Questionnaire 1a on the previous page.

Table 5.22: Summary of findings for own questioning behaviour: Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements

Paired statements	Student % n=37	Teacher % n =47	Teacher as student % n=47
1.a) I find it easy to ask the teacher questions.	78.4 a	76.6	42.6 a
b) I find it difficult to ask the teacher questions.	21.6	23	57.4
4.a) I don't like it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class.	10.8 a, b	61.7 b	66.0 a
b) I don't mind it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class.	89.2	38.3	34.0
8.a) I do not like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions.	16.2 a, b	53.2 b	51.1 a
b) I like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions.	83.8	46.8	48.9

a= significant difference between students and what teachers think students believe, where  $p<0.05$  (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)

b= significant difference between students' and teachers' beliefs where  $p<0.05$  (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)

In summary, the findings for own questioning behaviour above indicate that for statements 1a) and 1b) more students find it easy to ask the teacher questions than teachers believe they do. There was a significant difference between the two sets of data. Teachers' responses may reflect their classroom experience of students with regard to students not answering them in class, resulting in 57% (n=47) of teachers concluding that students find it difficult to answer teachers' questions. There are also significant differences between the findings for paired statements 4a) and 4b). For these paired statements the majority (89.2%, n=37) of the students indicate that they do not mind when the teacher asks them a question whilst 66% (n=47) of the teachers indicate that they thought students did mind when they asked them a question. Again there is a difference between what students indicate and how teachers perceive the students.

With respect to statement 8a) and 8b) regarding volunteering to answer the teachers' questions, more students (83.8%, n=37) indicate a positive response to this than teachers. In contrast more teachers (51.1%, n=47) than students (16.2%, n=37) consider that students do not like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions. This significant difference between the two sets of data may reflect teachers' beliefs formed through experience and for students the response could indicate beliefs rather than their observable behaviour, consistent with Figure 2.2.

The responses for own group work behaviour are given in Table 5.23. Just over half of the teachers (55.3%, n=47) find it easy to work in groups, with slightly more (61.7%, n=47) indicating that they believe students find it easy to work in a group. The findings for the students confirm this more strongly with three-quarters of students (75.7%, n=37) agreeing that they find it easy to work in a group. Thus students indicate a more positive disposition to working in a group than teachers.

Table 5.23: Summary of findings for own group-work behaviour: Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements

Paired statements	Student % n=37	Teacher % n =47	Teacher as student % n=47
14.a) I find it easy when I have to work in a group.	75.7 b	55.3 b	61.7
b) I find it difficult when I have to work in a group.	24.3	44.7	38.3

b= significant difference between students' and teachers' beliefs where p<0.05 (Chi-squared test of homogeneity)

In summary, on examining the findings, several differences between the sets of data were observable. Such differences between beliefs illustrate that perceptions of roles may not be the same for all parties involved in the classroom. These beliefs probably influence the roles that students and teachers adopt and the roles that teachers enable, encourage or provide opportunities for students to adopt. The differences in the data also highlight the potential for mismatch between expectations and reality. The implications of such findings will be discussed in Section 6 with regard to relationships between students and teachers, language teaching approaches, policy



and teacher education. The findings for the longitudinal study and the other groups will now be presented and discussed.

**c) Longitudinal study: Findings and discussion**

As explained in the Research Narrative, Questionnaire1a-Likert scale was administered to 22 students in 1997 and 1998. The findings (Appendix 5.5) are similar to the findings for the three cohorts of Chinese medium of instruction students reported above. Over the year the findings indicate that students’ beliefs moved slightly towards beliefs and behaviour reflective of more communicative student centred teaching approaches. The data were subjected to the Wilcoxon sign rank test to check for significant differences between the first and the second data sets and a summary of statements with significant differences over the year is given in Table 5.24 overleaf.

Table 5.24 – Significant differences for longitudinal study: Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale

In English classes ...		Mean for 1997 n=22	Mean for 1998 N=22
3	I expect the teacher to correct all my mistakes. (More reflective of traditional classrooms)	1.32 Students agree with this statement	1.86* (significant difference between responses) After a year the students agreed less strongly with the statement
11	I am responsible for my own progress. (More reflective of contemporary ideas about learning)	2.45 Students agree slightly with this statement	1.64* (Significant difference between responses) After a year students agree more strongly with this statement
16	I should be hesitant when answering the teacher's questions. (More reflective of traditional classrooms in Hong Kong – ref. Wong (1984) and Walker (1997))	1.95 Students agree with this statement	2.95* (Significant difference between responses) After a year students disagree with this statement
17	Teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom. (More reflective of traditional classrooms)	1.82 Students agree with this statement	2.45*(Significant difference between responses) After a year students agree less strongly with this statement
19	I should sit and listen quietly when I am in class. (Reflective of more traditional ways of learning)	1.82 Students agree with this statement	2.68*(Significant difference between responses) After a year students disagree with this statement
20	I prefer it when the teacher decides what to do in class. (Reflective of preferences for more traditional learning preferences)	1.73 Students agree with this statement	2.18*(Significant difference between responses) After a year students agree less strongly with this statement

\* a significant difference between responses where  $p < 0.05$  (Wilcoxon signed rank test)

Mean scores are given above. Range of possible scores is 1-4. 2.5 is mid point between agree and disagree.  $< 2.5 = \text{agree}$   $> 2.5 = \text{disagree}$



From the responses the following trends were identified. These are that these students:

- agree less that they expect the teacher to correct all their mistakes (1997-100% agreed with statement with 68.2% strongly agreeing and 1998-86.3% agreed with statement 31.8% strongly agreeing)
- agree more that they are responsible for their own progress (1997-54.5% agreed with statement and 1998-100% agreed with statement)
- disagree that they should be hesitant when answering teachers questions (1997-72.7% agreed with statement and 1998-72.7% disagreed with statement)
- agree less strongly that teachers should do most of the talking in class (1997-77.3% agreed with statement and 1998-45.5% agreed with statement)
- disagree that they should sit and listen quietly when in class (1997-90.9% agreed with statement and 1998-36.4% agreed with statement)
- agree less strongly that they prefer the teacher to decide what to do in class (1997-95.5% agreed with statement and 1998-77.3% agreed with statement).

Overall these trends would appear to indicate that students are more positively disposed to taking an active role in the classroom and have more choice in classroom decision-making over time. Half of the statements for which there were significant changes in the data were concerned with the role for the teacher. There could be a number of factors influencing these changes. These include attendance at the British Council course where communicative methods were used for teaching, maturation and students' own perceived needs with respect to language learning and examinations. What the findings may additionally indicate is that beliefs may change as a result of experience or needs.

#### **d) Medium of instruction and age studies: Findings and discussion**

The groups involved in this study were two groups of English Medium of Instruction (EMI) students from Forms 1 and 3, and two groups of Chinese Medium of Instruction (CMI) students also from Forms 1 and 3. Questionnaire1b-Paired statements was given to these students. A summary of the findings can be found in Appendix 5.6. For these four groups the overall responses indicate that:

- half the students indicate they find it easy to ask the teacher questions
- nearly all the students believe that both the teacher and classmates can correct mistakes
- most students like to work in groups and find it easy to work in groups, with the exception of the CMI Form 3 students, for whom group work was less popular
- most students do not mind when the teacher asks them questions and indicate they like to answer the teacher's questions, with the exception of the EMI Form 3 students
- most students think they can learn English even if they do not speak to the teacher and believe the students should do most of the talking in the classroom, with the exception of the CMI Form 1 students
- most students believe they are responsible for their own progress and think it is their fault if they do not learn anything
- more lower form students believe talking should take place between the teacher and students, while the higher form students believe talking should take place between everyone in the classroom
- most students believe they learn best when they are active and can talk in class, with the exception of CMI Form 1 students
- most students believe they can disagree with the teacher, with the exception of the CMI Form 1 students.



Chi-squared tests of homogeneity were completed on the following combinations of sets of data to check for any significant differences:

- All CMI data (significant differences between groups for 7 pairs of statements)
- Form 3 CMI and EMI data (significant differences between groups for 5 pairs of statements)
- Form 1 CMI and EMI data (significant differences between groups for 1 pair of statements)
- CMI Forms 1 and 3 data (significant differences between groups for 5 pairs of statements)
- EMI Forms 1 and 3 data (significant differences between groups for 6 statements)
- CMI and EMI data (excluding CMI Form 6 students’ data) (significant differences between groups for 5 statements).

On completion of the tests only one significant difference between the sets of data for Form 1 students was identified, (as seen in Table 5.25). This concerned answering teachers’ questions. However, the homogeneity of the Form 1 respondents could reflect the similarity in the background of these students as they had all just moved into secondary school and would therefore have experienced similar primary school style education. Table 5.25 gives a summary of the statements for which significant differences were found when the checks between the other sets of data were completed.

Table 5.25 – Significant differences between groups of data for medium of instruction and age

Data groups	Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements questionnaire statements between which there was a significant difference
All CMI data	1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 15, and 16
Form 3 CMI and EMI data	3, 8, 12, 13, and 16
Form 1 CMI and EMI data	4
CMI Forms 1 and 3 data	3, 6, 11, 15, and 16
EMI Forms 1 and 3 data	6, 7, 8, 10, 15, and 16
CMI and EMI data (excluding CMI Form 6 students’ data)	4, 5, 12, 13, and 16

From Table 5.25 the most significant differences between groups were for statements 16 (I should be hesitant when answering the teacher's questions), 15 (I can ask the teacher to change parts of the course I don't like it), 4 (I would rather work on my own than in a group) and 3 (I expect the teacher to correct all my mistakes). There were not as many significant differences between the medium of instruction groups as had been anticipated. According to a study (Tsui, Aldred, and Marton, 1999), there appear to be different interaction patterns within different medium of instruction schools. From this study it was anticipated that students and teachers from schools using different mediums of instruction might adopt different classroom roles. One reason for this might be that the types of roles students and teachers experience in other content / subject lessons may then be transferable to second language learning situations.

On analysis of the data and differences between the groups, the profiles of the different groups reflect the following differences in beliefs and preferences. For CMI Form 3 (n=34) students, more students than those in other groups:

- would rather work on their own than in a group (47%)
- think it is more important to listen than talk when learning English (73.5%)
- think they should be hesitant when answering a teachers' question (67.5%)
- find it difficult to work in a group (35.3%).

For CMI Form 1 (n=31) students more students than those in other groups:

- believe they learn best when they can sit and listen to the teacher in class (67.7%)
- believe the teacher should do most of the talking in class (51.6%)
- believe talking should take place between teacher and student and not students and students (51.6%)
- do not like it when the teacher asks them a question (38.7%)
- believe they should not disagree with the teacher (48.4).



For EMI Form 3 (n=43) students, more students than those in other groups:

- do not like to volunteer to answer the teacher's questions (55.8%)
- prefer to decide what to do in class themselves (74.4%)
- believe they should not be hesitant to answer the teacher's questions (62.8%)
- believe they can disagree with the teacher (97.7%).

For EMI Form 1(n=41) students, more students than those in other groups:

- find it easy to ask the teacher questions (63.4%)
- like to work in a group (85.4%)
- do not mind when the teacher asks them a question (92.7%)
- think they cannot learn English if they do not speak to the teacher during class (39%)
- like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions (78%)
- prefer the teacher to decide what to do in class (56.1%)
- think it is more important to talk than listen in class (56.1%)
- find it easy when they have to work in groups (87.8%).

By analysing the findings it was possible to gain information about perceptions of roles that students may expect for both themselves and the teacher. For example for EMI Form 1 students, more than half the students want the teacher to decide what to do in class, but they like to work in groups. Such findings allow specific group profiles about perceptions of roles to be established. These could be useful for teachers in finding out about their classes and for student teachers during their teaching practice. The use of such findings and profiles will be discussed further in Section 6. In addition to the data collected above, Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements also asked students and teachers to state explicitly what they thought a teacher and a student should do in the classroom.

**e) What should a teacher / student do in the classroom? - Findings and discussion**

The data gathered in response to asking the informants what they thought students and teachers should do in the classroom was diverse and varied. The raw data can be found in Appendices 5.1 and 5.2. The three most commonly occurring responses are given below in Table 5.26.

Table 5.26 – What teachers and students should do in the language classroom.

Question	Students' three most commonly occurring responses		Teachers' three most commonly occurring responses		How teachers think students would respond: the three most commonly occurring responses	
		% n=37		% n=47		% n=47
What should a teacher do in the classroom?	Talk with students	16.2	Motivate	21.2	Motivate	23.4
	Motivate/ Help students to learn	13.5	Facilitate learning	21.2	Create good/ facilitate learning environment	17.0
	Fun	13.5	Care for needs	16.2	Teach	14.9
What should a student do in the classroom?	Listen /pay attention	40.5	Participate/ be involved	53.2	Participate/ be active	40.4
	Talk	24.3	Listen	40.4	Listen	32.3
	Ask questions	16.2	Ask questions	8.5	Ask questions	19

Although the variety of data made data categorisation difficult, differences between students' and teachers' perceptions of what students and teachers should be doing in the classroom were evident. There seems to be some agreement between all parties concerning what a student should be doing in class, indicating roles that included listening and asking questions, although only four (8.5%, n=47) teachers mention asking questions. One difference between students and teachers is that more teachers than students identify participation and active involvement as being an important aspect of what a student should do in the classroom. In contrast to this, the students do not explicitly identify this attribute, although they do identify talking, which could



perhaps equate with active participation. This difference will be interesting for comparison with the findings in Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions with regard to collectivism and individualism, as the scores for these power dimensions might, in part, help to explain the differences between the different informants’ responses for this study.

Regarding what a teacher should be doing, motivating appears as a commonly occurring response in all three sets of data. Another aspect the students mention is ‘fun’, in conjunction with both lessons and the teachers’ personality. A noticeable feature of the responses is the consistency between the sets of data for the behaviour of students compared with teachers. This may suggest that perceptions of what a student should do in the classroom are clearer for both students and teachers than perceptions of what a teacher should be doing, or that the teachers’ role can be so varied that the number of possible responses is greater for teachers than for students.

What is of interest here is how these descriptions relate to the findings for the belief statements. While the overall findings for the belief statements in the questionnaires indicate students have active perceptions of the different aspects of their roles in the classroom, the most frequent response to the explicit question regarding what a student should do in the classroom reflects listening and paying attention. It is not possible to know whether this could be due to limitations regarding expression or a reflection of the teachers’ classroom rhetoric, to ‘listen/pay attention.’

#### **f) Characteristics of a good teacher / student**

A further item in both the questionnaires for Attitudes and Beliefs asked informants via two open questions to identify three characteristics of a good teacher and student. The findings are given below in Tables 5.27 and 5.28. In the tables the three most popular responses are given as a percentage of the total number of possible responses for comparative purposes between the groups.

Table 5.27 - Characteristics of a good teacher; the three most popular descriptions

CMI Form 6 students – questionnaire 1a- Likert Scale questionnaire Number of responses= 115		CMI Form 6 students – questionnaire 1b – paired statement questionnaire Number of responses=74		Teachers – questionnaire 1b– paired statement questionnaire Number of responses=126		Teachers as Students– paired statement questionnaire Number of responses=129	
Characteristic	%	Characteristic	%	Characteristic	%	Characteristic	%
1.Knowledgeable	16.6	1.Responsible	17.56	1.Caring	13.49	1.Knowledgeable	13.95
2.Friendly	14.78	2.Friendly	14.86	2.Knowledgeable	10.32	2.Caring	9.3
3.Nice/Kind	14.78	3.Patient	10.8	3.Responsible	9.52	3.Responsible	6.97

What is of interest here is that for one group of students (CMI Form 6 questionnaire 1a informants), with regard to characteristics for teachers, the characteristic ‘responsible’ does not appear at all in the responses. However, for the other group of students (CMI Form 6 questionnaire 1b informants), the characteristic ‘knowledgeable’ is not mentioned in any of the responses. The most popular words seem to be connected with the professionalism aspect of the teacher while the second most popular characteristic concerns the pastoral role of the teacher. When the teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire as they thought students would complete it, the teachers give both of these characteristics. For teachers the most popular response is a pastoral characteristic followed by two professional characteristics. An interesting difference is the use of the word *friendly* by students and *caring* by teachers, perhaps reflecting a conceptual difference with regard to pastoral roles between the two groups. The findings regarding the characteristics for students are shown in Table 5.28.



Table 5.28 - Characteristics of a good learner; the three most popular descriptions

CMI Form 6 students – questionnaire 1a- Likert Scale questionnaire Number of responses=99	CMI Form 6 students – questionnaire 1b – paired statement questionnaire Number of responses=33	Teachers – questionnaire 1b– paired statement questionnaire Number of responses=113	Teachers as Students– paired statement questionnaire Number of responses=128
Characteristic %	Characteristic %	Characteristic%	Characteristic%
1.Work hard 26.3%	1.Work hard 60.6%	1.Active 18.6%	1.Active 16.4%
2.Active 24.24%	2.Active 39.4%	2.Work hard 12.4%	2.Work hard 12.5%
3.Listen 15.2%	3.Listen 33.3%	3.Motivated 11.5%	3.Listen 10.2%

With regard to the characteristics for students, the most popular choice of characteristics for all groups are *active* and *hard working*, although teachers appear to consider that being motivated is also a positive attribute. From these responses there seems to be some match between the choices of characteristics. These findings suggest some shared beliefs about the characteristics of good students and teachers perhaps reflecting the shared culture of learning identified by Cortazzi and Jin (1996) and previously referred to in Section 2. As the overall percentages are small, no conclusive information can be drawn from the data, but these characteristics do indicate that working hard and being active are considered good characteristics of students.

**g) Research critique I**

A future study with an adequate number of informants might usefully support an exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis with regard to the suggested and further categories. The data collected in this study though provided rich information that will be discussed further in Section 6.

Problems with the questionnaires were mainly concerned with wording. For example, the paired-statements 11a) ‘When learning English it is more important for

me to talk than listen in class' and 11b) 'When learning English it is more important for me to listen than talk in class', further examination of the statements revealed that the statements could have been interpreted as either talk or listen rather than more or less of one or the other. Thus it may have been better replace the first statement of the above pair with 'When learning English it is important for me to talk as well as listen in class.' Another problem was that at the time of writing Questionnaire 1b - Attitudes and Beliefs, it had been intended that the pairs of statements should reflect opposites. In retrospection during analysis sometimes these pairs did not appear opposites. For example, paired statements 16a and 16b -

'I should never disagree with the teacher.'

'I can disagree with the teacher.'

The first statement was considered to be reflective of more traditional classrooms. However, the use of use of two different modal verbs further complicated the situation as these different models meant that the statements were not direct opposites. Such weaknesses were noted for future research.

A further problem was that of using two questionnaires. The rationale for the second questionnaire seemed reasonable but resulted in a number of contradictions. For example with Questionnaire 1a – Likert scale, students agreed that teachers should do most of the talking in class, but in Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements, nearly three quarters of students believed they should do most of the talking in class. This difference may, in part, be the different response format. Thus the effect of changing the questionnaire part way through the research in an attempt to solve one problem only created a further difficulty. Another problem was that direct comparison between the two questionnaires was not always possible and the first questionnaire needed to be presented via means rather than percentages because there were more categories for the responses. Additionally, in the design of the second questionnaire, for example, the emphasis for error correction was slightly different from the first and so direct comparison between the two questionnaires was not always possible. This could have been avoided with more thorough cross-referencing between questionnaires. However, at the time of writing the questionnaires, information



about the concepts involved and the research questions were sought. It was only at the data analysis stage that the need for direct comparison of the responses to the two questionnaires was recognised, and this has been attempted as far as possible. To rectify this in a future study, more extensive piloting would also need to include analysis of data.

On analysis of the data collected for the studies into roles and medium of instruction and age, another problem became evident. The informant groups accessed were homogeneous in the sense that each informant group came from the same school. Thus the data collected provided profiles of those groups, but no conclusions could be drawn with regard to answering the information analysing questions about perceptions of roles according to medium of instruction and age. On the contrary the data collected raised questions about possible differences and patterns of difference. A much larger sample including students from several schools would be required to gain sufficient data to inform such questions. The data did though provide interesting profiles that could enhance knowledge about specific groups of students' perceptions of roles. These profiles could be used to understand more about students and the relationship between perceptions of roles and the teaching and learning process, and this is discussed further in Section 6.

## **h) Summary**

This sub-section has presented a discussion of the findings for Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs. It was noted that attitudes to English seemed positive among the Form 6 students. The beliefs section of the questionnaires indicated that students want to be interactive in the classroom, but that they also want teachers to adopt specific roles, such as taking responsibility for deciding what to do in class, reflecting Bruner's (1978) teacher as expert and scaffold. Differences were found between the beliefs of the students and teachers and between the beliefs that teachers thought students have, and these are summarised in Table 5.29 for Questionnaire 1b – Paired statement questionnaire.

Table 5.29: Summary of similarities and differences in students’ and teachers’ beliefs for Questionnaire 1b-Paired statements

Paired statements	Summary of similarity or difference
1.a)I find it easy to ask the teacher questions. b)I find it difficult to ask the teacher questions.	Significant differences between teachers’ beliefs of students and students’ beliefs
2.a)Only the teacher can correct my mistakes. b)The teacher and my classmates can correct my mistakes.	No significant difference between teachers’ beliefs of students and students’ beliefs
3.a)I would rather work on my own than in a group. b)I would rather work in a group than on my own.	Significant differences between teachers’ beliefs of students and students’ beliefs
4.a)I don't like it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class. b)I don't mind it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class.	Significant differences between teachers’ beliefs of students and students’ beliefs
5.a)The teacher is responsible for my progress. b)I am responsible for my progress.	No significant difference between teachers’ beliefs of students and students’ beliefs
6.a)Talking should take place between everyone in the classroom. b)Talking should take place between the teacher and students, not students and students.	Significant differences between teachers’ own beliefs and students’ beliefs
7.a)I can learn English if I do not speak to the teacher during the lesson. b)I cannot learn English if I do not speak to the teacher during the lesson.	Significant differences between teachers’ beliefs of student and student’s perception
8.a)I do not like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions. b)I like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions.	Significant differences between teachers’ beliefs of students and students’ beliefs
9.a)Students should do most of the talking in the classroom. b)Teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom.	Significant differences between teachers’ beliefs of students and students’ beliefs
10.a)I prefer to decide myself what I do in class. b)I prefer the teacher to decide what I do in class.	No significant difference between teachers’ beliefs of students and students’ beliefs
11.a)When learning English it is more important for me to talk than listen in class. (NT - Learning belief) b)When learning English it is more important for me to listen than talk in class.	Significant differences between teachers’ beliefs of students and students’ beliefs
12.a)I should be hesitant to answer the teacher's questions. b)I should not be hesitant to answer the teacher's questions.	Significant differences between teachers’ own beliefs and students’ beliefs
13.a)It is my fault if I do not learn anything. b)It is the teacher's fault if I do not learn anything.	Significant differences between teachers’ beliefs of students and students’ beliefs



14.a)I find it easy when I have to work in a group. b)I find it difficult when I have to work in a group.	Significant differences between teachers' own beliefs and students' beliefs
15.a)I learn best when I can sit and listen quietly to the teacher in class. b)I learn best when I am active and can talk in class.	Significant differences between teachers' beliefs of students and students' beliefs
16.a)I should never disagree with the teacher. b)I can disagree with the teacher.	Significant differences between teachers' own beliefs and students' beliefs

From the findings there appear to be more areas of difference than similarity, and from this further areas for research could be identified. The implications of these differences have been briefly discussed but will be discussed explicitly with respect to their implication for different aspect of teaching and learning in Section 6.

The findings for the longitudinal study suggest that beliefs may change over time and these changes could be associated specifically with the role for the teacher. Finally, the investigations into possible differences according to medium of instruction and age indicate that there are probably differences but that these were inconclusive due to restrictive sampling. It was possible though to gain profiles of the specific groups of students that could be useful for informing the teaching and learning process.

### Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions: Findings and discussion

#### a) Findings and discussion

The rationale for the use of a ready-made tool was explained in Section 4. The groups involved in the study were all the Form 6 students, the student teachers and the teachers. Once the data had been obtained, calculations were completed following Goodman’s (1994) analytical framework (see Appendix 4.3). The raw scores for each of the two dimensions for the different groups involved in the study are shown in Table 5.30.

Table 5.30 – Raw scores for all informant groups for Questionnaire 2 – Cultural dimensions

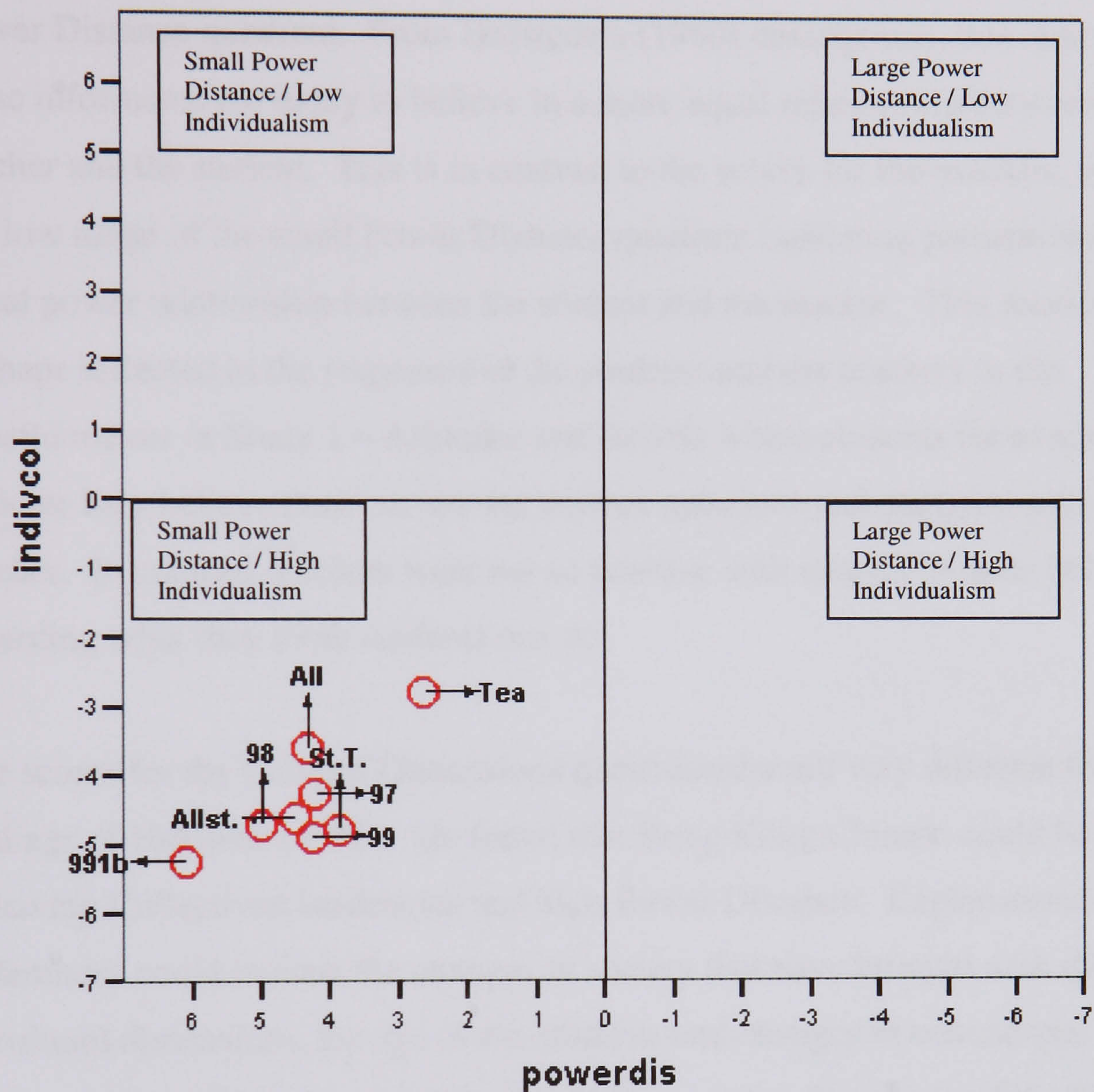
Group	Power Distance Score	Individualism Score
97 CMI Form 6 students (Likert Scale questionnaire) n= 54	4.220	-4.259
98 CMI Form 6 students (Likert Scale questionnaire) n= 56	4.964	-4.714
99 CMI Form 6 students (Likert Scale questionnaire) n= 56	4.250	-4.875
All of the above groups n= 166	4.482	-4.621
99 CMI Form 6 students (Paired statement questionnaire) n= 37	6.080	-5.243
Teachers n= 47	2.617	-2.790
Student Teachers n= 14	3.856	-4.786
All informants n= 264	4.331	-3.602

These raw scores were then plotted on a graph shown in Figure 5.1 page 181. Goodman’s (1994) scale ran from +12 to –12 on each axis to allow for the minimum or maximum possible scores. However, the scales for the graph showing the findings for this study run from +7 to –7 reflecting the nearest maximum and minimums scores found in this study. Overall the informants’ scores could all be placed within the small Power Distance-high Individualism quadrant as shown in Figure 5.1. A notable feature is all Form 6 students’ scores plus the student teachers’ scores are higher on the scales for small Power Distance and high Individualism than the teachers’ scores.



Figure 5.1 – Scores for Questionnaire 2 – Cultural dimensions

The scores for the students were plotted on the graph below. The graph shows the scores for the students on the two dimensions of power distance and individualism. The graph is divided into four quadrants by the power distance and individualism axes. The quadrants are labeled as follows:



Key

Group	Label
97 CMI Form 6 students (Likert Scale Q)	97
98 CMI Form 6 students (Likert Scale Q)	98
99 CMI Form 6 students (Likert Scale Q)	99
All of the above groups	Allst
99 CMI Form 6 students (Paired statement Q)	991b
Teachers	Tea
Student Teachers	St.T.
All informants	All

The findings indicate that the three cohorts of students over the three years have scores that move towards higher individualism over time. The student teachers' scores show approximately the same level of individualism as the students whilst the



scores for the teachers indicate a lower level of individualism than the other groups. For the power distance dimension there are also differences between the scores. All the scores for the students show them to be in the low-middle range of the small Power Distance quadrant. From Hofstede's (1980) descriptions, this indicates that these informants are likely to believe in a more equal relationship between the teacher and the student. This is in contrast to the scores for the teachers, which are in the low range of the small Power Distance quadrant indicating perceptions of a less equal power relationship between the student and the teacher. This relationship is perhaps reflected in the responses of the students and the teachers to the questionnaires in Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs where students for example indicate they believe they can ask the teacher questions and disagree with the teacher. In contrast teachers were not so positive with respect to these beliefs regarding what they think students can do.

The scores for the Cultural Dimensions questionnaire are very different from the findings of Hofstede (1986). He found that Hong Kong Chinese could be identified as having Collectivist tendencies and high Power Distance. Explanations for these differences could include the changes in society that have brought with them changes in cultural dimensions, the age of the students and changes in educational policy. These reasons will be discussed in detail below after a discussion of the findings for the CMI Form 6 student and teacher groups who completed Questionnaire 1b – Paired statements. On further analysis of the two sets of data for Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions for the two named groups above using a Chi-squared test of homogeneity, it was found that there were some significant differences between the responses. These were for:

- i) 4 pairs of statements regarding Individualism/Collectivism
- ii) 6 pairs of statements concerning Power Distance.

These differences are discussed below and a full summary of the responses can be found in Appendix 5.7.



For statements concerning the Collectivist/Individualist dimension, significant differences were found between the data gathered from the students and teachers for the pairs of statements shown in Tables 5.31, 5.32, and 5.33 respectively. Table 5.31 shows the responses for students and the teachers concerning the size of the group in which individuals will speak up.

Table 5.31 – Significant differences between responses for students and teachers for statements 19 and 20 (Collectivist/Individualist dimension)

Statements	St. % n = 37	T. % n = 47
19. Individuals will speak up in large groups. OR	67.6*	42.6*
20. Individuals will only speak up in small groups.	32.4*	57.4*

\* significant difference between students’ and teachers’ responses, where  $p < 0.05$  (Chi- squared test of homogeneity)

From the above, more students (67.6%,  $n=37$ ) consider individuals will speak up in large groups than teachers, with just over half the teachers believing that individuals will only speak up in small groups. The teachers also reflect this belief in the interview data. For example, comments from teachers (underlined to identify specific points) included:

Group 1 Teacher 1 – *My students are mostly not very motivated especially at F3 level. Their English is only of an average standard, average standard. The most difficult things is they are not willing to answer a question in front of the class. They feel ashamed of being teased by their peers of making mistake in spoken English and even if they are able to speak fluent English, they may be isolated by peers, they are seen as being proud, conceited, something like that. Showing off.*

Group 1 Teacher 4 – *But they are Chinese in that they’re unwilling to engage in mental or verbal combat, you know healthy debate within the class. So all Westerners will say they are passive, sitting there like lemmings, but actually even on the PCEd course when somebody is presented with a question everybody is absolutely quiet, somebody is presented with a question, there is a very intelligent answer at the end, but why people have to be pointed at to get an answer out of them is .....everybody says, oh it’s cultural, that is our culture.*

Group 1 Teacher 1 – *No one taking the initiative. Well actually at the beginning of the term, I tried, I waited until someone would speak up, I*

*waited and waited for at least five minutes, and in order not to waste so much time I had to resort to pointing out someone.*

Group 1 Teacher 2 – *[They] sit there quietly and have to ask the active ones.*

Group 3 Teacher 5 – *As they go up the school, they go quieter and quieter. The whole peer issue is a big thing.*

Group 3 Teacher 3 – *Silent. But depends the bright ones will answer.*  
(Appendix 1)

The quotes are reflective of the overall data and illustrate teachers' vociferousness in commenting on this aspect of student behaviour. One teacher comments that the same pattern of lack of response also occurs in the teacher-education classroom. From the questionnaire data and the interview data there appears to be a difference between what students claim in their questionnaire responses indicating that they believe individuals will speak up in large groups, and the teachers' comment that in reality students will not speak. However, reinforcing the students' questionnaire responses are their responses to statements 17 and 18, regarding whether individual students will speak up in class in response to a general invitation by the teacher or only when called upon personally by the teacher. Three quarters (75%) of the students (n=37) agree that they will speak up in response to a general invitation by the teacher and despite the comments above, over 60% of teachers (n=47) agree with this. These contradictory findings could be the result of different perceptions of roles (internal models) and reality but may also indicate that students are willing to respond to teachers in the classroom. However, within answering behaviour there are probably many other factors influencing interaction, and these may include:

- peer pressure (classroom culture) describe by Wong (1982-see section 4) and mentioned by the teachers such as not showing off and hesitation (not appearing eager to answer the teacher)
- the types of questions being asked
- the school culture



- the expectations the teachers have regarding students behaviour and consequently the types of opportunities for talking that are then given.

Connected with the speaking up in class are statements 23 and 24. The first of these states, ‘students may speak up spontaneously in class’ while the other states, ‘students speak up only when invited by the teacher.’ Further analysis of this pair of statements indicated that perhaps the inclusion of the modal verb ‘may’, could have influence the students’ decision. This usage enables students to select a response that indicates they are allowed to answer in class, but gives no indication whether they take up this option in reality and so their choice may not reflect the classroom situation. The responses for this pair of statements again show that more students than teachers believe students may speak up spontaneously in class.

To summarise this sub-section, there appear to be differences between the responses of students and teachers regarding answering behaviour and between the responses and reported reality. These differences appear to be consistent with the idea introduced in Section 2 that perceptions of roles may be different from actual roles observed in the classroom and expected roles. The notion of expected role further complicates the situation as expectations may lead to specific behaviour by students that may be problematic for teachers. In addition, there may be certain interaction patterns unique to specific cultures and information about these may not have been gained, as these interaction patterns might not be reflected accurately in the Collectivist/Individualist dimension or the Power Distance dimension used to explore students’ and teachers’ roles in this study.

Statements 31 and 32 were the next pair of statements for which there was a significant difference between the responses given by the students and the teachers. These statements concern maintenance or loss of face. In Asia maintenance of face is considered an important concept and often included in cultural awareness training. The responses for these two statements are shown in Table 5.32.

Table 5.32 – Significant differences between responses for students and teachers for statements 31 and 32 (Collectivist/Individualist dimension)

Statements	St. % n = 37	T. % n = 47
31.Neither the teacher nor any student should ever be made to lose face. OR 32.‘Face-saving’ is of little importance.	37.8*  62.2*	63.8*  36.2*

\* significant difference between students’ and teachers’ responses, where  $p<0.05$  (Chi- squared test of homogeneity)

The responses reflect opposite opinions, with more than 60% of students (n=37) agreeing that face-saving is of little importance, while more than 60% of teachers (n=47) consider that neither the students nor the teacher should be made to lose face. These differences perhaps reflect the teachers’ perceived need for control of the classroom, as loss of control might be considered to equal loss of face. If this is true then loss of face becomes a power issue. Alternatively, the differences might be a consequence of age, with loss of face associated with greater maturation. Differences in beliefs about loss of face may have implications for classroom roles and therefore implications for the teaching methodologies as well as the teacher student relationship and will be discussed further in Section 6.

The third pair of statements for which there were significant differences between the responses of the teachers and the students concerns the importance of acquiring certificates as opposed to acquiring competence as shown in Table 5.33.

Table 5.33 – Significant differences between responses for students and teachers for statements 43 and 44 (Collectivist/Individualist dimension)

Statements	St. % n = 37	T. % n = 47
43.Acquiring competence is more important than acquiring certificates. OR 44.Acquiring certificates is more important than acquiring competence.	86.5*  13.5*	66*  34*

\* significant difference between students’ and teachers’ responses, where  $p<0.05$  (Chi- squared test of homogeneity)



Both teachers and students agree that gaining competence is more important than certificates but more students (86.5%, n=37) than teachers (66%, n=47) indicate that acquiring competence is more important than certificates. These responses are surprising if the context of the education system with its pressures to perform is considered. For students, these findings are supported by the findings for statements 37 and 38 (see Appendix 6.4) where 67.6% of students (n=37) indicate they believe certificates have little importance. By contrast, for teachers, just over half of them believe certificates are important perhaps reflecting the pressures for students to pass examinations and their own situation of needing a certified and accountable to be a teacher.

Significant differences in responses for the Power Distance dimension were found for six pairs of statements. The first difference in responses concerns respect and independence and can be seen in Table 5.34.

Table 5.34 – Significant differences between responses for students and teachers for statements 5 and 6 (Power Distance dimension)

Statements	St. % n = 37	T. % n = 47
5.A teacher should respect the independence of his or her students. OR	91.9%*	70.2%*
6.A teacher merits the respect of his or her students.	8.1%*	29.8%*

\* significant difference between students’ and teachers’ responses, where p<0.05 (Chi- squared test of homogeneity)

These findings for statements 5 and 6 indicate that more students (91.9%, n=37) than teachers (70.2%, n=47) believe it is more important for teachers to respect the students’ independence than to earn their respect. These responses may indicate a preference for teaching approaches with a more student-centred approach to education rather than a teacher controlled one and roles that enable students to be independent. Another set of paired statements, (statements 11 and 12) asked informants directly whether student or teacher centred education is preferable. The majority of both students (94.6%, n=37) and teachers (89.4%, n=47) selected the student centred option, supporting the notion suggested previously.

The next pair of statements for which there were significant differences (Table 5.35) between the students’ and the teachers’ responses concerns initiation of communication.

Table 5.35 – Significant differences between responses for students and teachers for statements 13 and 14 (Power Distance dimension)

Statements	St. % n = 37	T. % n = 47
13.Students expect teacher to initiate communication. OR	29.7*	74.5*
14.Teacher expects students to initiate communication.	70.3*	25.5*

\* significant difference between students’ and teachers’ responses, where  $p < 0.05$  (Chi- squared test of homogeneity)

The teachers indicate they believe students expect them to initiate the communication while students indicate they feel the teacher expects them to initiate communication. With respect to perceptions of roles this difference in expectation may result in teacher or student roles in the classroom that reinforce expectations, for example teacher talk that dominates the classroom providing little opportunity for student talk. This could be further compounded by the apparent reluctance of students to participate, illustrated above in teachers’ comments with regard to answering behaviour. In addition, differences in beliefs could contribute to the many comments about the teacher domination of classroom talk as noted in the students’ descriptions of their English lessons. Comments included:

St.6 – *I do some exercise during an English lesson and then my teacher checks it and my English teacher like talking through the lesson.*

St.9 – *Boring but useful, teacher talks only. We have little chance to talk to the teacher and students.*

St. 10 – *Teacher do most of the talking. We talk when only we are doing an oral lessons. But during English lesson we speak more Chinese than English.*



St.30 – *Sometimes is boring because we’re passive. Teacher talks more than students. Always work on my own cannot cooperate with classmates unless in oral lesson and discussing.*

St. 37 – *Most of time English teacher do most of the talking and always teach us sentence structure and grammar etc. We have no more time to practise oral. It becomes boring when taking English lesson.*

St. 42 – *boring, the teacher always talking.* (Appendix 5.2)

The comments clearly illustrate the students’ dissatisfaction with the amount of teacher talk.

Statements 15 and 16 (Table 5.36) show the majority of students indicate they consider the teacher expects them to find their own paths and therefore be independent. The data did not seek and does not give any information to indicate approval of this or not. In contrast the response from teachers is split almost equally between the two statements. In view of the teachers’ comments in interviews this is surprising, as a high number of these suggest that students expect to be directed and consequently expectations of teachers’ responses to statement 16 might be expected to be higher.

Table 5.36 – Significant differences between responses for students and teachers for statements 15 and 16 (Power Distance dimension)

Statements	St. % n = 37	T. % n = 47
15.Teacher expects students to find their own paths. OR	83.8*	51*
16.Students expect teacher to outline paths to follow.	16.2*	49*

\* significant difference between students’ and teachers’ responses, where  $p < 0.05$  (Chi- squared test of homogeneity)

Statements 25 and 26 concern criticism of the teacher. Table 5.37 (overleaf) shows that 81.1% of students (n=37) indicate they feel they are allowed to contradict or criticise the teacher.

Table 5.37 – Significant differences between responses for students and teachers for statements 25 and 26 (Power Distance dimension)

Statements	St. % n = 37	T. % n = 47
25.The teacher is seldom contradicted and rarely criticised. OR	18.9*	42.6*
26.Students are allowed to contradict or criticise the teacher	81.1*	57.6*

\* significant difference between students’ and teachers’ responses, where  $p<0.05$  (Chi- squared test of homogeneity)

The findings appear to indicate that more students feel they are able to criticise the teacher than teachers. Again the teachers’ responses may reflect concerns about the need to control students and maintain power distance.

The findings for penultimate pair of statements concerning equality and respect show significant differences. These can be seen in Table 5.38.

Table 5.38 – Significant differences between response for students and teachers for statements 35 and 36 (Power Distance Dimension)

Statements	St.% n = 37	T. % n = 47
35.Outside class, teachers are treated as equals to the students. OR	75.7*	40.5*
36.Respect for teachers is also shown outside of class.	24.3*	59.5*

\* significant difference between students’ and teachers’ responses, where  $p<0.05$  (Chi- squared test of homogeneity)

Respect for the teacher probably reflects Confucian traditions. It is interesting to note here though that for statements 35 and 36 there is significant difference with respect to the power distance dimension between the students’ and teachers’ responses. Three quarters of the students (75.7%, n=37) believe teachers should be treated as equals outside the classroom, whereas over half of the teachers (59.5%, n=47) want to be respected. This again has implications for the school culture and educational change and the issue of power and is further discussed in Section 6.



Finally, the responses to statements 41 and 42 (Table 5.39) indicate that more students than teachers respect age but, for teachers, being liked is more important than respect. This difference possibly represents a contrast to the findings for statements 35 and 36 above.

Table 5.39 – Significant differences between responses for students and teachers for statements 41 and 42 (Power Distance dimension)

Statements	St. % n = 37	T. % n = 47
41.Older teachers are more respected than younger teachers. OR	37.8*	17*
42.Younger teachers are more liked than older teachers.	62.2*	83*

\* significant difference between students’ and teachers’ responses, where  $p < 0.05$  (Chi- squared test of homogeneity)

Although there are no significant differences between the following pairs of statements discussed below, there are other responses that are of interest. These include those for statements 27 and 28. For this pair of statements more students (51.4%, n=37) than teachers (38.3%, n=47) believe conflicts can be brought out into the open in the learning situation, whereas more teachers than students believe formal harmony in the learning situation should be maintained. Obviously these differences may have implications for maintaining harmony in the classroom connected with power issues and require further research. Another pair of statements of interest concerns the purpose of education (statements 33 and 34). The majority of both teachers (83%, n=47) and students (83.8%, n=37) agree that education is a way of improving one’s economic worth and self-respect based on ability and competence. This further supports the comments earlier in the thesis regarding the importance of education as a gateway to a better future in Hong Kong. Finally, the responses to statements 1 and 2 refer to whether tradition or new are best for society, indicate that the majority of both teachers (83%, n=47) and students (73%, n=37) consider that new is best for society.

The use of the Goodman (1994) questionnaire allowed for the overall values for both teachers and students regarding the dimensions of Power distance and Individualism

to be calculated and information about specific beliefs and values to be gained. The responses showed that there are differences between the scores for students and teachers within those dimensions with students indicating a smaller Power Distance and higher Individualism than teachers. In Section 6 these findings are discussed with reference to the research questions and other issues. Possible reasons for the differences identified above are considered in the next sub-section.

### **b) Possible factors influencing the findings**

The pictures of Hong Kong students and teachers emerging from the data indicate:

students with

- medium small Power Distance scores
- medium High Individualism scores

and teachers with

- low small Power Distance scores
- low High Individualism scores.

Both these pictures are different from those revealed in Hofstede's (1980) original research regarding the Hong Kong Chinese thirty years ago. Hofstede considered change in his longitudinal survey (1968 and 1972) with matched respondents for age (1980). In the earlier discussion in Section 2 regarding definitions of culture, it was proposed that stability of cultural patterns over long periods of time were in part due to reinforcement by the institutions, for example, government, economics, religion etc. These institutions were themselves products of value systems. It was also suggested that there is a feedback mechanism and that culture is in a continual dialectic (see Figure 2.2). Hofstede (1980), in his acknowledgement of change, considered that the rate of change has increased over the last two hundred years because of increased developments in science and technology including the mass media. He does not claim, though, that all societies will become similar but suggests 'that technological modernisation may even enlarge some cultural differences such as Power Distance between societies' (Hofstede, 1980:344). Such changes as there



have been in Hong Kong may in part account for the exploratory findings of this study.

Another finding in Hofstede's longitudinal study, highlighted by Hofstede and Bond (1988), was that as a country became wealthier in terms of per capita gross national product so individualism increased. From the analysis of the economic and social history of Hong Kong, her wealth and stability have increased over the last thirty years and, as so indicated individualism might have increased. The scores in this small study may reflect this trend, but this needs to be further tested with larger numbers of students and teachers. In addition to this increase in wealth and stability, there have been other changes in Hong Kong as noted in Section 3. For example, within the organisation of the family there has been a move from the extended family towards nuclear families with the number of children per family decreasing. This change in number of children perhaps has implications for the archetypal role of parent and child, as the parent is able to give more individual attention to the child. These influences may possibly transfer to the teacher-student role pair and again have influenced the findings.

A further change in Hong Kong concerns the employment situation. The development of Hong Kong as a financial/service centre has required less of the population to be employed in mass manufacturing or industrial situations. This has brought with it the development of a middle-class and more emphasis on individualism that again is perhaps reflected in the high scores for Individualism found in the data. Finally, the increase in education of the population of Hong Kong may be another factor that has increased the potential for individualism. Concurrent moves within the education system towards student-centeredness have additionally provided more opportunities for the development of individualistic tendencies. These changes are perhaps reflected in the findings for students, showing them to have middle high individualism scores. The findings for the teachers were lower, perhaps reflecting the social situation twenty years ago when the teachers were growing up before the changes referred to above. The teachers' scores may also be

explained by the influence of their own educational experience as discussed in Section 2.

With regard to power distance, Hofstede's longitudinal research also revealed a decrease in power distance throughout the 40 countries surveyed (Hofstede, 1980). In part he attributes this, again, to factors such as increased education, size of the middle classes and trend towards nuclear and smaller families as noted above. The identification of these factors within societal changes are perhaps useful in understanding the findings of both studies in this research. However, there may also be other factors influencing the findings, notably the size of the study compared to Hofstede's (1980).

As previously seen in Figure 5.1, students scored more highly on both scales for Individualism and Power Distance than teachers. With respect to age and referring again to Hofstede (1980), he attributes differences in values among respondents of different ages to four possible causes; maturation, seniority, generation or *Zeitgeist* (trends in society). As a result of maturation, values shift, and, with increased age, there is frequently increased conservatism or a desire to maintain existing cultural values. As a result of getting older, values shift because of seniority within an organisation and the perceived need to increase Power Distance. Seniority might have implications for the transition for a teacher from student teacher to possible head teacher. As a result of generation, Hofstede (1986) argues values are set in young people from a certain period and that these stay with that particular group through life. Finally, as a result of *Zeitgeist* Hofstede claims that some values change throughout a society or culture, regardless of age, seniority or generation (Hofstede, 1986). Increased wealth and individualism are examples of *Zeitgeist*. While it is impossible to ascertain which of the four possible causes are the most likely causes of the differences between the responses for the two groups in this study, it is possible to suggest that age and *Zeitgeist* are perhaps most influential because of a) the differences in age and b) the changes and trends in society in Hong Kong over the last thirty years.



### **c) Comparison of findings with other studies**

As noted above, when compared with Hofstede's (1980) original findings for the Hong Kong Chinese, there is a difference between the data of this initial small-scale study and his. Hofstede identified the Hong Kong Chinese as demonstrating middle collectivism and high power distance. This is in contrast to the findings of this study. It should be noted though that Hofstede's study involved a large number of informants compared to this study and so perhaps the differences found suggest further research. However, with regard to other studies, there are currently few other studies to compare these findings with, apart from one by Woodring (1995) completed in Japan with a similar number of Japanese University students as this study. Her findings give scores for the Japanese students that show small power distance and high individualism, similar to the findings here. Hofstede's (1986) original study showed Hong Kong and Japan both to be societies whose populations seemed to be collectivist in nature with a propensity for large power distance. This draws attention to the need for awareness regarding the effects of societal changes and for the use of caution when referring to such data as that provided by Hofstede (1986) and others (Redding, 1980). It would be interesting to repeat Redding's study to ascertain any changes. The influence of time and changes in society such as have been observable in both this Hong Kong study and the Japanese study (Woodring, 1995) may require the regular updating of such data. In addition, more cross-cultural studies with students would provide useful data for reference and for validating the findings from this study and Woodring's (1995) work. Larger studies would also enable more direct comparison with the work of Hofstede (1980).

### **d) Research critique II**

The questionnaire used in Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions sought to gain information that was not concerned with like or dislike. This was in contrast with the information obtained through Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs, and the data obtained provided a further perspective on roles. However, there were concerns regarding some of the statements during analysis. One concern was the vagueness of some of the

statements. An example of this is, 'A positive association in society is with whatever is rooted in tradition'. This is interpreted as tradition is a good thing in society but it is difficult to know if this was the interpretation made by the informants. Similarly the notion of preferential treatment could have various interpretations.

Another problem was the wording between statements, for example 25 and 26, where one reflects a situation, 'The teacher is seldom contradicted and criticised,' and the other reflects whether or not a situation is allowed, 'Students are allowed to contradict or criticise the teacher.' Perhaps these statements could be rephrased to gain better agreement between them thus, 'Students are not/are allowed to contradict and criticise the teacher'. For statements 37 and 38, (Diploma certificates are important and should be displayed on the wall and Diploma certificates have little importance) there is more information in the first statement than the second that might have affected choice of response.

Future research would include adapting and simplifying some of the statements. This would require administering the original questionnaire and the subsequent revised versions to a group and then adjusting and retrialling. However, if changes are made then a comparison with other studies using the same questionnaire would not be possible. Similarly cutting the statements would have caused the same problems.

### **e) Summary**

From the study, the information gathered shows that students and teachers have different scores for both Individualism and Power Distance dimensions indicating differences in beliefs that possibly influence perceptions of roles and underlie certain classroom behaviour. With respect to perceptions of roles this may mean that students are more likely to have perceptions, and perhaps expectations, of roles reflecting more individualistic tendencies in the classroom and less power distance.



The importance and implications of these findings in relation to perceptions of roles and understanding the findings of Study 1 will be discussed in Section 6.

### **Synopsis of findings**

The findings from both studies provide data that gives information about beliefs and attitudes that could influence roles and students' and teachers' perceptions of roles. Students appear to indicate beliefs that would support active and interactive roles in the classroom with positive indications for participating in group-work. They seem to expect a certain amount of equality in the classroom and opportunities for individuality. For students the role of the teacher appears to be one where the teacher is expected to decide what to do in the classroom. These traits may be reflective of Hong Kong society and consistent with changes over the last twenty years. Descriptions of classrooms and interviews provided further data that showed differences between reality and the data collected through the questionnaires in Study 1 and 2. These descriptions also highlighted some students' dissatisfaction with their own roles and the roles teachers were adopting. Teachers also expressed some dissatisfaction for the roles they were required to adopt in response to student behaviour. With regard to the teachers' beliefs about their own roles there seem to be similarities between their own beliefs and the students' but there appear to be more differences between the ones they have for the students and the students' own beliefs. Finally in Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions differences were found between students' and teachers' power distance and individualism scores. From the data presented here it is differences between the data for teachers and students that are of specific interest, as these would seem to have implications for roles. The findings and the differences will now inform the discussion of the research questions and issues in the final section.

## **Section 6: The Research Questions Revisited and Implications of the Findings for Teaching and Learning**

### **Introduction**

In Section 5, findings regarding students' and teachers' attitudes, beliefs and cultural values were presented. These findings offered insights into students' and teachers' perceptions of roles for themselves and each other. The initial part of this section summarises some of the contextual issues identified in the thesis and then explores the relationship between those issues, the findings and the research questions. General findings highlighted variations in perceptions of aspects of teaching and learning between the different participants in the educational process. While commonalities between teachers and students on some aspects of teaching and learning were indicated, perhaps more importantly differences between teachers' perceptions of their students and students' own perceptions were identified. Such similarities and differences are explored here in relation to how they might be used to question stereotypical images for roles. Additionally, the possible relationship between such beliefs and their influence on the relationship between teachers and students is considered. Ways in which this information can be used to inform the teaching and learning process are incorporated into the discussion with respect to teaching approaches, curriculum design and materials development. The management of educational policy and change, teacher education, and implications that the data might have for these areas are then considered.

The explanations given in this section are limited to possibilities and reflect the challenge in trying to understand and interpret the data. The main limitations of the research were due in part to the small size of the study and to the complexity of focussing on roles (Wright, 1987) with their influencing and sometimes hidden factors. It is these limitations, issues arising from the research and areas for further



research identified from the findings that are discussed in the next sub-section. The section concludes with a reflection on the research process.

## **Contextual Issues**

The thesis has highlighted the complexity of the Hong Kong educational context, with a variety of different pictures emerging regarding the interplay between the classroom participants. These seem to be influenced by the legacy of the colonial education system with its specific goals for the work force, the cultural influence of a Confucianist society, the education policy, issues such as medium of instruction, teacher education and classroom conditions. It was evident from reviewing the context that changes in society over recent years have resulted in shifts in underlying values that have also ultimately affected the classroom participants. It is within such a context that the findings are discussed in relation to the research questions.

## **The research questions**

The research questions were the starting point for the research as illustrated in Rossier's (1997) research cycle referred to in Section 2. The findings are now linked back to the research questions and the relationship between them explored with reference to the interplay between teachers and learners within the teaching and learning process.

### **Research question 1 - What are students' perceptions of their own roles in language classrooms in Hong Kong?**

Currently, many decisions are probably based on the premise of shared values, stereotypical images and experience of students' behaviour that may or may not match students' actual beliefs, expectations, desires or perceptions of roles. Hoyle (1969) and Wright (1987) argue that attitudes, beliefs and culture influence roles.

Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs sought to gather data on these dimensions. The findings indicated that students involved in the study were positive in their beliefs about learning English and the importance of learning English, despite feeling nervous when speaking. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) suggest that as attitudes predispose an action favourably, positive attitudes might influence perceptions of roles positively. Conversely, students' positive attitudes could be affected negatively if they are unable to adopt the role they would prefer. However, from the research there are indications that the situation is probably more complex, and from the findings in this small study it is only possible to state that students appear positive in their attitude about learning English and this could be a positive influence on their perceptions of roles.

In students' responses to the Questionnaire 1a-Likert scale students tended to show positive responses to the statements favouring characteristics of communicative approaches to learning including interaction, responsibility for own progress, working in groups and thinking they could learn best when they could be active. Such characteristics would appear to reflect elements of the constructivist learning theories (Bruner, 1996) previously referred to. However, students also indicated that they felt they could not ask the teacher to change parts of the course they did not like, which could reflect Confucianist values concerning respect for the teacher as expert. This explanation might also account for students' beliefs that they did not learn more when they spoke to other students than when they spoke to the teacher. A further finding is one that, according to Wong (1984) and Walker (1997) and noted in Section 3, is unique to Hong Kong classrooms and concerns hesitancy in answering the teachers' questions. A contradictory finding to the indications for otherwise active roles was that students agreed slightly that they should and sit and listen quietly when learning. Whether this is recognition of students' acknowledgement that it is sometimes necessary to behave in such a manner or whether this is a reflection of teachers' rhetoric is unknown, but this could be an area for further investigation.



From Questionnaire 1b-Paired statement, the general findings indicated that students again tended to choose the statement out of each pair that reflected more communicative behaviour. In the complementary data from students' descriptions of English lessons one general theme was identified. This was that students considered lessons at school were boring and that the teachers talked too much. According to the descriptions there also appeared to be little group work and students' roles were to sit and listen. Similar descriptions of roles were evident in students' ideas about what a student should do in the classroom, as the most commonly occurring response was 'listen and pay attention.' However, for responses concerning the characteristics of a good student the most popular response was that a good student should work hard, be active and listen. While there may appear to be contradictions within these sets of data it is suggested that the responses to what a student should do in the classroom may represent Biddle's (1979) explanation of expectations referred to in Section 2. The choice could also reflect what teachers say to the students, for example, 'listen / pay attention' as identified above. By contrast, in the teachers' interviews (see Appendix 1), teachers complained that in reality once students were of Form 5 or Form 6 level they were not willing to be interactive and did not volunteer to answer questions. From the descriptions, the interview data and questionnaire data differences emerged between the students' and teachers' beliefs concerning teaching and learning, and reality and this may highlight an area for investigation that could be of benefit in ensuring greater matches for perceptions of roles and classroom activities. Greater matches might provide for more satisfaction with roles for both students and teachers that might lead to more effective teaching and learning.

The exploration of the possible effects of medium of instruction and age on students' perceptions of roles indicated significant differences between the groups. However, overall the data again indicated that students believed they preferred active roles more reflective of communicative teaching methodologies. The responses in the longitudinal study indicated changes in preferences over time for more active roles in the classroom, more independence in learning and less teacher reliance.

In the findings for Study 2 – Cultural dimensions (Power Distance and Individualism) the informants' responses gave cultural value scores that were in the low power distance and high individuality quadrant. The students' scores for power distance indicate a preference for more equality in the distribution of power than the teachers' scores. In addition, the scores for students for individualism were higher than the teachers' scores. These scores supported the findings in Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs as they indicate preferences for student-centred education, learning how to learn and that students believed the effectiveness of learning is related to two-way communication. Again such beliefs would appear to be convergent with social constructivist models of learning (Bruner, 1996).

The findings provide information regarding students' preferences and expectations, and one use of such findings might be to inform curriculum and materials design. For example, from the responses to the questionnaires in Study 1, and scores for Power Distance and Individuality in Study 2, indications are found that group work, independent topic or task based work, opportunities to define and refine own tasks, and opportunities for negotiation might be effective techniques to incorporate into curriculum and material design. This might ensure a greater match between techniques and students' beliefs and values, perhaps leading to more effective learning. An excerpt from the interview data illustrates that one teacher is aware of the influence of materials on roles. She states:

Group 2 T. 4 – *I think they are active when they do something they want to do...since we started doing more task-based learning they are active, but when we use the textbook 'Get Ahead' or the comprehension, 'Let's read it together', then they get really, really bored. They just don't answer.*  
(Appendix 1)

The comment highlights the effect of materials on roles and students' non-participation might represent a rejection of the role apparently assigned through the materials. By gaining information about beliefs to learning, perhaps reinforced by observations, opportunities can be provided for material designers and teachers to learn more about students' preferences. This information can be utilised in making decisions about curriculum and materials.



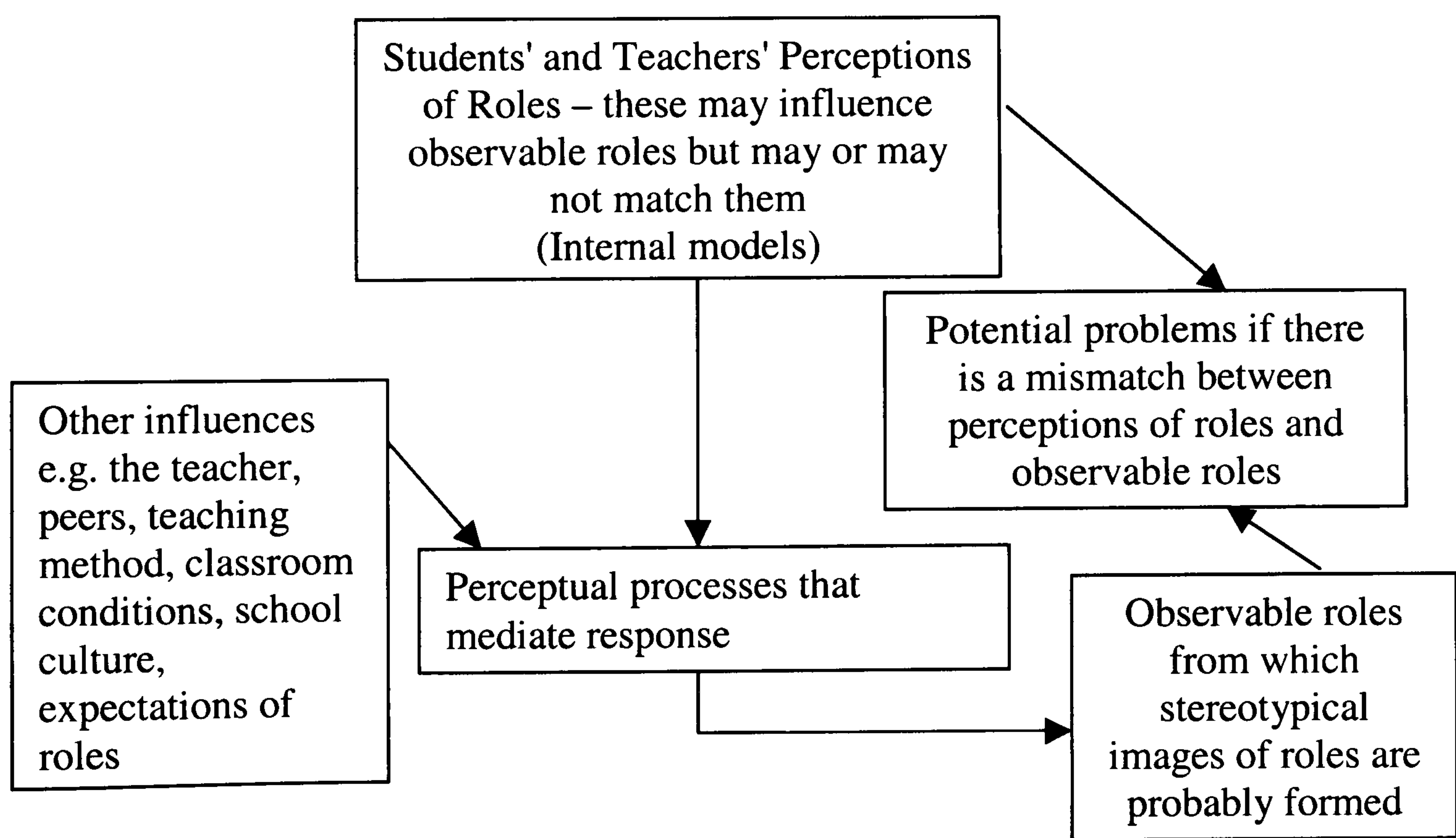
Students' indication of preferences for active / participatory roles in classrooms would appear to be reflective of personal experience of teaching students, part of the rationale for the research. These indications seem to challenge the stereotypical image of Hong Kong Chinese students as passive classroom participants. However, the literature on which this image was based focussed mostly on observable behaviour. There would thus appear to be a contradiction between this stereotypical image and the findings, and perhaps the findings may be more representative of internal models of roles. Consequently, the study highlights the importance of using alternative means to observation to investigate roles.

In their work in Hong Kong, Biggs and Watkins (1996) explore another dimension, referred to in Sections 2 and 3, and this has helped the exploration of the data in this study. They argue that in the learning process, specifically rote learning, there is, despite an apparent lack of physical activity, mental activity, and learners actually take a deeper approach than would seem apparent. Similar processing was identified in the comments of a student teacher in this study. She claimed that although she did not actively participate in the classroom and would not put up her hand to answer the teacher (Section 1), she did not feel she was passive as she was actively mentally engaged with what was happening in the classroom. Furthermore, in the descriptions of classrooms many students indicated that they were dissatisfied with the roles they felt able to adopt and complained that these were limited to sitting and listening quietly. Thus again, these data reflect personal perceptions of roles that appear to challenge roles representing physical passivity but whether these findings indicate perceptions of roles reflecting internal mental activity, or perhaps a desire for more active roles is a difficult question.

From the research, one area highlighted is that it would seem too simplistic to consider roles as only those that can be observed. As proposed in Figure 2.2 and supported by the findings it would appear that students and teachers probably have internal models of roles consisting of perceptions of roles that may or may not be reflected in classroom behaviour. Therefore it may be that stereotypical images are

formed from observable behaviour in classrooms and these become the expected norm. If there are mismatches between these expectations and internal models of roles, problems within the classroom might be anticipated. These problems could include non-participation, disruption or feelings of dissatisfaction as identified here. Inevitably such problems affect the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. By investigating perceptions of roles through attitudes and beliefs, attempts can be made to challenge stereotypical images of students and perhaps the roles that are observable. Such investigation might contribute to understanding more about the classroom with respect to roles that can then be related to the teaching and learning process. A version of Figure 6.1 below was first presented in Section 2. It has been adjusted to reflect formation of stereotypical images of roles and possible mismatches, and problems that might be reflective of the situation described above.

Figure 6.1 – Perceptions of Role



For the teaching and learning process, the relationship between students’ and teachers’ roles in the classroom and the possible influences of stereotypical



perceptions of students or teachers on the roles students and teachers adopt in the classroom has implications for classroom practice and the power relationships. The role relationship of the teacher and the learner will be discussed further in the discussion of Research Questions 3 and 4.

### **Research question 2 - What are students' perceptions of the teachers' role?**

The second research question concerned students' perceptions of the teachers' role. By seeking information about students' perceptions of the teachers' roles, greater understanding about students' classroom behaviour and their perceptions of roles was anticipated. However, in Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs the findings appeared to be slightly contradictory, with no clear picture emerging from the data except that the teacher should choose what should be done in the classroom and that the teacher should not do all the talking in the classroom. The first of these may again indicate respect for the teacher from a Confucian perspective. From the ideas regarding what a teacher should do in class, talking with the students, motivating and helping them to learn were identified. Thus it would appear that the students in this study want teachers to take a supportive role. Additionally, in Study 2 - Cultural Dimensions, the findings suggest that students expect the teacher to take a role that respects their independence and that they can criticise the teacher.

It is interesting to note that students seem to indicate perceptions of roles for themselves that reflect active participatory roles and yet they still appear to want the teacher to take a role to control what is happening in the classroom. Such information may reflect underlying cultural beliefs and previous classroom experiences. However, with moves towards autonomy in learning and self-access such data might inform educators regarding the ways that these approaches could be adopted and adapted to be aligned with the beliefs and expectations of both students and teachers. For example, from the findings here, one possible interpretation could be that students might initially prefer teacher direction or a teacher guided approach to self-access. The student, however, is only one of the classroom participants and the findings for teachers' perceptions of roles are now considered.

### **Research question 3 – What are teachers’ perceptions of their own roles in language classrooms in Hong Kong?**

To understand more about the interplay between students and teachers and the reports about what is happening in the classroom it was deemed important to explore teachers’ perceptions of their own roles in the classroom and what they thought their students believed their roles should be. For Questionnaire 1b - Paired statement, the teachers’ responses reflected beliefs about teachers’ roles more convergent with communicative behaviour. However, their responses concerning what they thought students believed teachers’ roles should be were very different from the students’ beliefs. Specifically, teachers indicated they thought students expected them to take a teacher-centred role in the classroom and do most of the talking in the classroom. These findings were supported by teachers’ scores for Power distance and Individualism, indicating slightly less preference for individuality and equality in the distribution of power than the students’ scores. Such responses might mean that teachers take on a role that is more teacher oriented than students might wish and organise the classroom to reflect this. This action may lead to student dissatisfaction and ultimately non-participation.

### **Research question 4 – What are teachers’ perceptions of students’ roles in language classrooms in Hong Kong?**

When teachers were invited to indicate perceptions of students’ roles they were more student-centred when they were responding for themselves compared to when they responded as they thought their students would respond. These responses reflected the teachers’ ideas that students had more preferences for traditional approaches than communicative ones. Specifically teachers indicated that they thought students believed students should sit and listen in the classroom, did not like to answer questions and that teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom. It would appear that these data indicate there are mismatches between students’ own responses and teachers’ perception of students. Such differences may have implications for the teaching and learning process and roles that teachers provide



opportunities for students to adopt with perhaps limited linguistic roles. As noted in Section 1, such interaction can shape and limit access to knowledge.

In Section 2 experience was identified as one factor in the establishment of teacher beliefs. Additionally, Woods (1996) has suggested language teachers create and maintain background networks of beliefs, assumptions and knowledge that influence their theory of teaching and learning and consequently their behaviour. Similarly Prabhu (1987:109) noted that there are many forces that influence practice, and these include:

- a desire to conform to prevalent patterns of teacher behaviour (for a sense of security)
- a sense of loyalty to the past, both to the pattern of teaching which the teacher experienced when he or she was a student and to the pattern of his or her own teaching in the past
- the teacher's self-image and a need to maintain status in relation to colleagues and authorities
- a relationship to maintain with a class of learners, involving factors such as interpretations of attitudes and feelings, anxieties about maintaining status or popularity, and fears about loss of face (Prabhu 1987:109).

Some of the above influences could be identified in the data. For example, in Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions, loss of face and the importance of not losing face was significantly more important for teachers (63.8%, n=47) than students (37.8%, n=37). Similarly to Prabhu (1987), Hoyle (1969) and Wright (1978) in their explorations of roles also recognise the influence of status and position as being important for teachers in their role relationship with students. Supporting this, in the findings of the Study 2 – Cultural dimensions, 59.5% (n=47) of teachers compared to 24.3% (n=37) of students thought that respect for the teacher should be shown out of class. Additionally, in the interview data (Appendix 1) teachers appeared conscious of their role as teacher, and teachers' perceptions of students' beliefs with their central role for the teacher could reflect a concern regarding gaining or maintaining status for themselves. As Cothran and Ennis (1997) argue, role authority and power are important to teachers, as these concepts are associated with automatic respect from

students. Such concerns probably affect the roles that teachers adopt in the classroom and the roles they enable students to adopt.

## Discussion

The information summarised above with respect to the research questions indicates the identification in the research of some of the complexities involved in understanding the role relationship between the student and the teacher. In his discussion of role relationships, Hoyle (1969:37) comments that ‘we base our behaviour towards the occupant of a particular position on the assumption that in general he will tend to conform to expectations and fulfil certain obligations.’ Using Hoyle’s (1969) definitions of role, supported by Biddle’s (1979) ideas about role expectations, analysis of the data appears to indicate the possible existence of patterns of behaviour that might be associated with position and expectations. For example, from the descriptions of English lessons and the interview data from teachers, it would appear that students seem to conform to certain behaviour in the classroom but indicate different beliefs and preferences reflecting more active roles in their questionnaire responses. An example of the possible influence of such beliefs is that a greater number of teachers (91.5%, n=47) than students (27%, n=37) believed students think it is more important to listen than talk in class (Statement 11b). This is reflected in the descriptions of English classes with students complaining of too much teacher talk. The descriptions below illustrate this situation:

*1997 St. 10 – Teacher do most of the talking. We talk when only we are doing an oral lessons. But during English lesson we speak more Chinese than English.*

*1997 St. 42 – Boring, the teacher always talking.*

*1998 St.17 – It is boring because the teacher like to talk to herself. When we don’t (I feel that) answer her question, she can continue with the lesson.*

*1998 St. 23 – Teacher talk all the time and we just listen. Sometimes it’s quite boring. We do some exercise in the lesson such as listening, talking,*



*writing...In our school (English lessons) I think there are not enough time. In order to we can just keep on to do such kind of exercise.*

*1999 St. 23 - At our school, my English teacher talk to us with too more Chinese. And the students have a few response to the questions of the teacher. The pace of learning is so slow not to catch the normal speed to teach us, in my opinion. Some of the students felt bored. Some don't like to listen teacher's word. Perhaps their English ability was so week. Indeed, I don't deny I am also the one.*

*1999 St. 48 - Boring. Only the teacher talking on the lesson.*  
(Appendix 3.1)

In contrast to this, teachers complained in the interviews that students' 'just sit there' and non-participatory behaviour was echoed further in discussions about questioning behaviour. These differences in questionnaire findings, the descriptions of English lessons and interview data there appears to be some indications that would seem to illustrate how teachers' beliefs and expectations might influence behaviour especially with respect to teacher talk. Hoyle's (1969) notion of conformity and Prabhu's (1987) forces could provide ways to understand these differences in findings. Students' non-participation might indicate that they would like active participatory roles in the classroom and could be a reflection of their dissatisfaction with their role.

However, again there are probably further complexities, and the data has highlighted that the non-participation identified by teachers is probably mostly linked to behaviour associated with answering questions. This is an area that could be investigated as it was noted in Section 2 that such linguistic interaction is one of the central features of language learning (Ellis, 1985; Bruner, 1996), depending on, and affecting, the role relationship between teacher and student. In the findings from Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs, significant differences were found between the students' beliefs regarding the answering of questions and those that teachers had for students and their behaviour. While students were positive about answering teachers' questions, with 89.2% (n=37) indicating that they did not mind when the teacher asked them a question in front of the class, the teachers believed that students were not so positive with 66% (n=47) believing students did not like it when the

teacher asked them a question. Such beliefs might be reinforced by the experiences of the teachers' classroom as described below by one teacher when she asked an open question.

Group 1 T.1 – *No one taking the initiative. Well actually at the beginning of the term, I tried, I waited until someone would speak up, I waited and waited for at least five minutes, and in order not to waste so much time I had to resort to pointing out someone.* (Appendix 1)

In this example, the teacher reverted to her experience to resolve the situation and used students' names. Similar situations may lead to teacher frustration and the need to develop strategies to encourage a response. These strategies might include simplifying the question more and more so that students perceive the value of the question as low and not worth answering. Use of such a strategy may result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, for students (see Student teachers' comments – Appendix 2) there could be many other reasons for this non-interactive behaviour and these could include:

- whether it is the responsibility of one student to answer the question for the whole class
- knowledge that everyone knows the answer anyway so there is no need to answer the teachers' question
- whether by answering a question a student might be perceived by other class members as showing off
- deliberate action on the part of the student to express dissatisfaction with their role.

Thus the perceived non-response of students is probably more multifaceted than originally anticipated and from the teachers' perspective, beliefs plus experience may combine to influence a teaching role that might provide fewer opportunities for students to respond than students would actually like. Again this research has highlighted data and findings that could contribute to better understanding of students' responses to teachers' questions.



Prabhu (1987:109) noted that even though a teacher may intend to follow specific teaching methods there are many other forces that influence practice, and some of these were highlighted in the last sub-section, including beliefs that teachers have for themselves and their students. In reality, the situation is probably further complicated by other factors and combinations of these factors that shape roles in specific ways. For example, implicit within the curriculum, materials design and textbooks are roles for students and teachers. The school culture may further influence roles. Another factor probably affecting the role relationships between students and teachers may be age, as it appears that students of different ages may have different perceptions of roles. Many teachers reported that students in the lower forms were more active and participatory in class than in higher forms, (see interview data – Appendix 1). This may reflect pressures in the higher forms for success in examinations. The summative nature of the examinations system in Hong Kong, perhaps more convergent with behaviourist learning, requires teachers to take on roles that reflect a more transmissive teaching style than perhaps teachers might like to adopt.

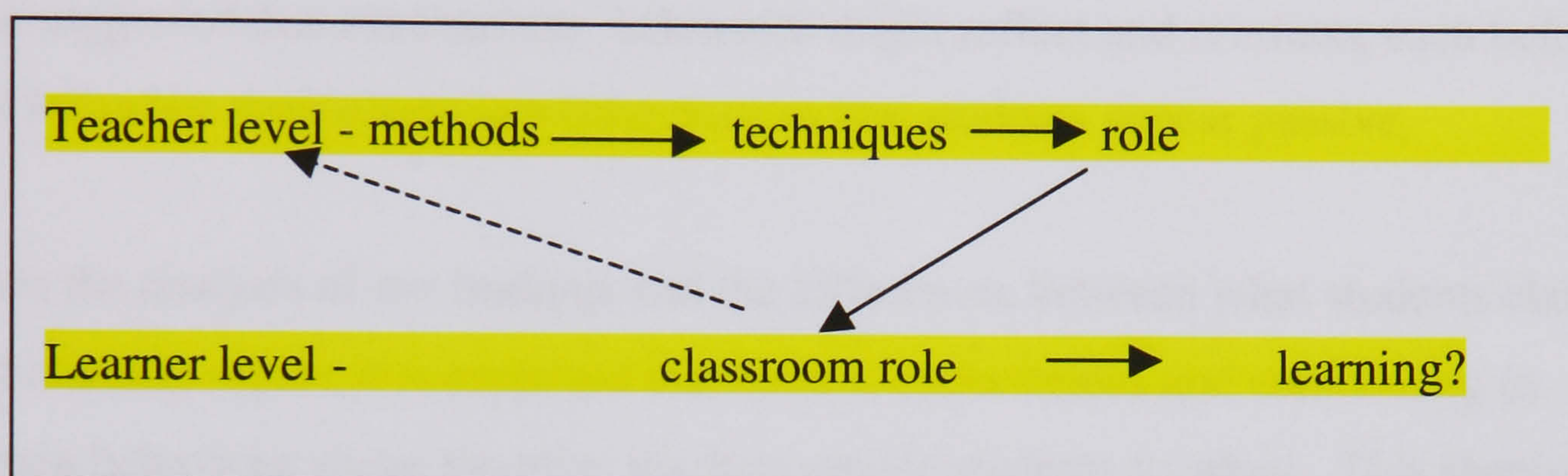
The contextual influences, the data and the descriptions of the Hong Kong classroom may indicate that teachers could be realising their beliefs about students' perceptions of roles and therefore taking on a role that includes most of the talking and perhaps fewer opportunities for answering questions. In addition, the forces described by Prabhu (1987) concerning the need to conform to prevalent patterns are perhaps further influencing the role relationship. The adoption of such roles begins to illustrate the power of beliefs on practice that could influence the activities and the roles teachers enable students to adopt. The result may be that students could be required to take on a less interactive role and perhaps because of the power relationship in the classroom students naturally conform to this role and appear to be passive in many situations in the classroom.



## Summary

From the literature reviewed in Sections 1 and 2, it seems likely that beliefs about and expectations of own and others' roles influence the teaching and learning relationship between teachers and students. The following figure illustrates a simplistic relationship between the teacher's and the student's roles with respect to teaching methodology.

Figure 6.2: Teacher and Learner Levels of teaching and learning



It is not assumed that the learner has no influence on the teacher's role, but it is ultimately the teacher who controls the method and techniques in the classroom. It was argued in Section 2 that different approaches within teachings methods affect classroom roles and are underpinned by specific beliefs about learning that give rise to certain characteristics. The analysis of communicative approaches to teaching in that section identified student centredness, an individual approach to learning, active participation, group work, interaction between all members of the class, student initiative and a focus on fluency and communication tasks as beliefs and features underpinning this approach. Current constructivist pedagogies where 'knowledge is seen as created rather than received, mediated by discourse rather than transferred by teacher talk, explored and transformed rather than remembered as a uniform set of ideas' (Holt-Reynolds 2001:271) would appear to be facilitated by communicative approaches. However, one of the problems within EFL literature is the lack of explicit links between language teaching methodologies and learning theories and it is therefore difficult to know how much learning theories influenced the development of communicative teaching methodology. The beliefs and features of communicative



approaches highlighted above would also seem to reflect the cultural dimensions of small power distance with equality of power and high individualism and an emphasis on student-centred learning rather than a collectivist lockstep approach. Convergent with these dimensions were the scores for both students and teachers on the cultural dimensions questionnaire (Study 2) for both Power Distance and Individuality, indicating that both students and teachers should be able to accommodate such teaching approaches. In contrast, the findings for Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs indicated that teachers' believed that students' perceptions for their own and the teachers' role were not always reflective of communicative approaches. From this it was suggested that the teachers' behaviour might reflect and reinforce such beliefs and influence their classroom behaviour so that students appear passive.

From the analysis of the findings and the differences between what students claim and teachers report, it is proposed that beliefs, expectations and conforming to certain behaviour shape the roles teachers enable students to adopt. This shaping may occur through the opportunities that teachers provide through, for example, interaction and group work. According to how the students perceive their own roles or learning, students may or may not take up the roles offered. By looking closely at beliefs and values in this study it was possible to find out more about the classroom participants and their beliefs, expectations and preferences that probably affect the relationship between the parties involved in the teaching and learning process.

The information gained in this research has led to a greater personal understanding of the beliefs the classroom participants bring with them to the classroom and how these might affect interplay between teachers' and students' roles. Such beliefs also affect the development and application of the teaching learning process and the information gained in this small study could be utilised to understand more about this process. Central to this is the identification of differences and mismatches between the perceptions of roles. The research has also provided a pathway to find out more about students and teachers by investigating layers within roles and relating these to the cultural dimensions of the classroom. Such information can be used to challenge

stereotypes, contribute knowledge to the teaching and learning process and inform materials and curriculum design. A further contribution of the research concerns the acknowledgement of the complexity within such issues as answering questions and the need to investigate beyond what can be observed. The teaching and learning process is, though, guided by the teaching approach and the approach will influence the roles that students and teachers can adopt. The situation in the classroom is however further complicated when the government enforces changes in curricula and materials and thus the findings will now be discussed below with respect to policy change.

### **The interface between education and politics**

As Fullan (1999:43) reminds us, changes in actual practice need to take place in three dimensions: materials, teaching approaches, and beliefs in what people do and think, and he notes that these are essential if the intended outcome is to be achieved. Fullan's (1999) third dimension regarding beliefs about what people do and think is perhaps the most important in the implementation process and yet it is probably the one which receives least attention from policy makers and education providers. With respect to the beliefs that teachers and students may have, it was noted in Section 2 that beliefs take a long time to change. This would seem to be problematic when change is required in a relatively short timeframe as in the implementation of a new teaching policy, and might indicate the need to consider longer timeframes for innovation in the teaching and learning process.

In addition, Ellis (1994) suggested that teaching methodologies represent encoded beliefs and values. This might mean that a different teaching method may not be convergent with the beliefs and expectations that teachers and students hold at the time of change, and the current teaching methods in use or the methods previously experienced. The work of Riley (1988) considered in Section 2, also indicated that different societies probably have different values regarding language and linguistic



roles as well as specific cultures of learning. Having considered the contextual issues prevalent in Hong Kong and the data in this small study, it may be reasonable to suggest that when communicative approaches were originally introduced into Hong Kong classrooms in the 1980's the beliefs and values of society may not have been convergent with such an approach. Such a notion is supported by Hofstede's (1980) findings that show that during the 1980's, Hong Kong Chinese demonstrated collectivist or low individualism and high power distance tendencies. There was much uncertainty in Hong Kong at this time with a small middle class and the majority of the workforce working in manufacturing and industry. Compounding the problems in implementing such an approach were probably the classroom conditions and school cultures. Within the education system, the number of trained teachers was low, physical classroom conditions were poor as schools struggled to meet the demands of an expanding education system with its emphasis on a summative examination system. Additionally, there were issues such as the medium of instruction debate that was central to teachers' everyday concerns. Consequently the climate for change may not have been ideal. All of the above possibly resulted in the impression, real or otherwise (see Section 1), of an apparent lack of implementation of communicative teaching approaches in the classroom.

Such a situation would seem to indicate the need to find ways to aid implementation of a new policy advocating changes in teaching methodology. This could involve an analysis of encoded beliefs, values, and cultures of learning of the target community that would enable discussions with teachers focusing on existing beliefs and values. In addition, an analysis of the beliefs and values encoded in the new teaching methodology would provide a method by which to identify possible matches and differences between the teaching method and the target community with respect to beliefs, values and cultures of learning. Information of this nature could be utilised by policy makers to identify possible problems in the implementation of new or different teaching practices and by teachers and educators to understand more about the challenges they might face.

With respect to change and the situation described above, the findings of this study indicate that both students' and teachers' perceptions of roles appear more convergent with the requirements for more communicative approaches than for the traditional classroom. These findings were supported by students' positive evaluation of the use of more communicative type activities in the descriptions of lessons and included:

1997 St. 34 – *Most funny because in each lesson teacher will do something different. For example we will have oral lesson, listening lesson, discuss lesson etc. We are not dull in the lesson. Students always active.*

1997 St. 45 – *That is fun! My teacher is very nice and work heat (hard?). She always want me to cut newspaper and study English...Sometimes we will group together and then talk to each other with one topic such as social issue.*

1998 St.37 – *Our teacher is interesting. In an English lesson he provides much time to us to speak more. Sometimes he also gives us a lot of good compositions which are in newspaper.*

1998 St. 52 – *In my school we have played some games in the English lesson and the students are very activity on the lessons. We are talking to each other in English.*

1999 St. 30 - *In an English lesson our teacher pick up some news articles for us to read together and then we discuss the topic. I think it's funny and student can get more chance to speak English. Play role play in the classroom and only use English to communicate between students and teacher.*

However, although students have beliefs that seem to be convergent with more active roles and from the excerpts above ready to adopt them, such descriptions were few, suggesting moves towards more communicative classrooms are possibly limited. One explanation might be that although the Hong Kong government made the changes in the language teaching policy in 1984, a considerable amount of time was required for a match between the values of society and the underlying features of the teaching methodology to become aligned. Again this perhaps highlights the need for research into beliefs and values as described above to become central in the process of change. The use of the data may have highlighted possible mismatches and potential gaps between theory and practice that might require specific support for



both teachers and students within the process of educational change. Such support might also include more effective explanations through workshops with reference to theory to provide evidence that would support the rationale for change.

In Section 2, one important consideration was noted in methodology change, that is, the shift in the power relationship that a change in teaching method may require. For example, a more interactive role with students asking questions or being involved in the decision making requires a more equal relationship in the classroom. Benson (1999) considers this is a very difficult shift for some of the parties involved, and it may be easier to make this shift as a younger, less experienced teacher and the difference in power distance scores for teachers and student teachers perhaps supports this notion. Such considerations may be important for policy implementation.

Other problems identified by Fullan (1999) in implementing new policy are in the opportunities for involvement, creativity, self-evaluation, explicit goals and strategies. Fullan (1999) considers these as areas in which teachers can contribute and which may make the process of change more acceptable to them. In this research questionnaires were used to find out about beliefs and this approach could perhaps be adapted and used by teachers and principals to find out about themselves and their students. From such investigations beliefs that appear to match the innovation could be identified, and, similarly, those areas where perhaps support might be required to adapt to the innovation might be highlighted. Principals have explicit ideas about how a school should be run, and finding out about their own beliefs, expectations and preferences could provide information to assist them in the process of change. An exploration of the school culture could also be included in attempts to ascertain how the school needs to adapt to accommodate change. With respect to change, finding out about students' beliefs would provide data that might provide insights into students' internal models of roles that may be different from the stereotypes portrayed by the literature, the teachers, and the behaviour of students in

the classroom. Such moves support the idea of support for research in implementing policy.

In Hong Kong, when a new teaching policy has been introduced materials have to be changed with Hong Kong publishers striving to produce materials reflective of the approved teaching policies. One accompanying problem recognised by teachers is the continued focus and pressure of a summative examination system. Another is that the teaching approaches are explained in tomes of notes that may or may not be accessible to the teachers either linguistically or culturally. In addition, the classroom or school culture may mean that implementation of materials and teaching approaches may be difficult or impossible. In Hong Kong, yet again the education system has faced another change in teaching policy with a new Target Oriented Curriculum implemented in September 2001 with a focus on task-based learning. There already seem to be some gaps between the preparations for this innovation and reality. In interviews one teacher highlighted the problem of these changes:

G.2 T. 4 – *Translating them to the classroom is the difficulty. People have different conceptions.* (Appendix 1)

This last comment illustrates one of the perceived difficulties that teachers see in adopting a new syllabus, namely, the gap between theory and practice. This highlights the problem of interpretation of a syllabus discussed in Section 2 and indicates the support this teacher might require.

In summary, despite the reports of students' passive classroom behaviour and teachers not using communicative teaching approaches, the findings from this limited study indicate that teachers and students demonstrate beliefs that do support communicative language teaching. These findings illustrate that there probably is less of a gap between the policy and teachers' and students' beliefs about teaching and learning but that other factors ranging from expectations of roles, classroom conditions and the interpretation of policy influence the implementation a new policy, and that change requires time. There is also the need to recognise that for some teachers, beliefs and practices will not change. Pepin (2000) notes that to assist



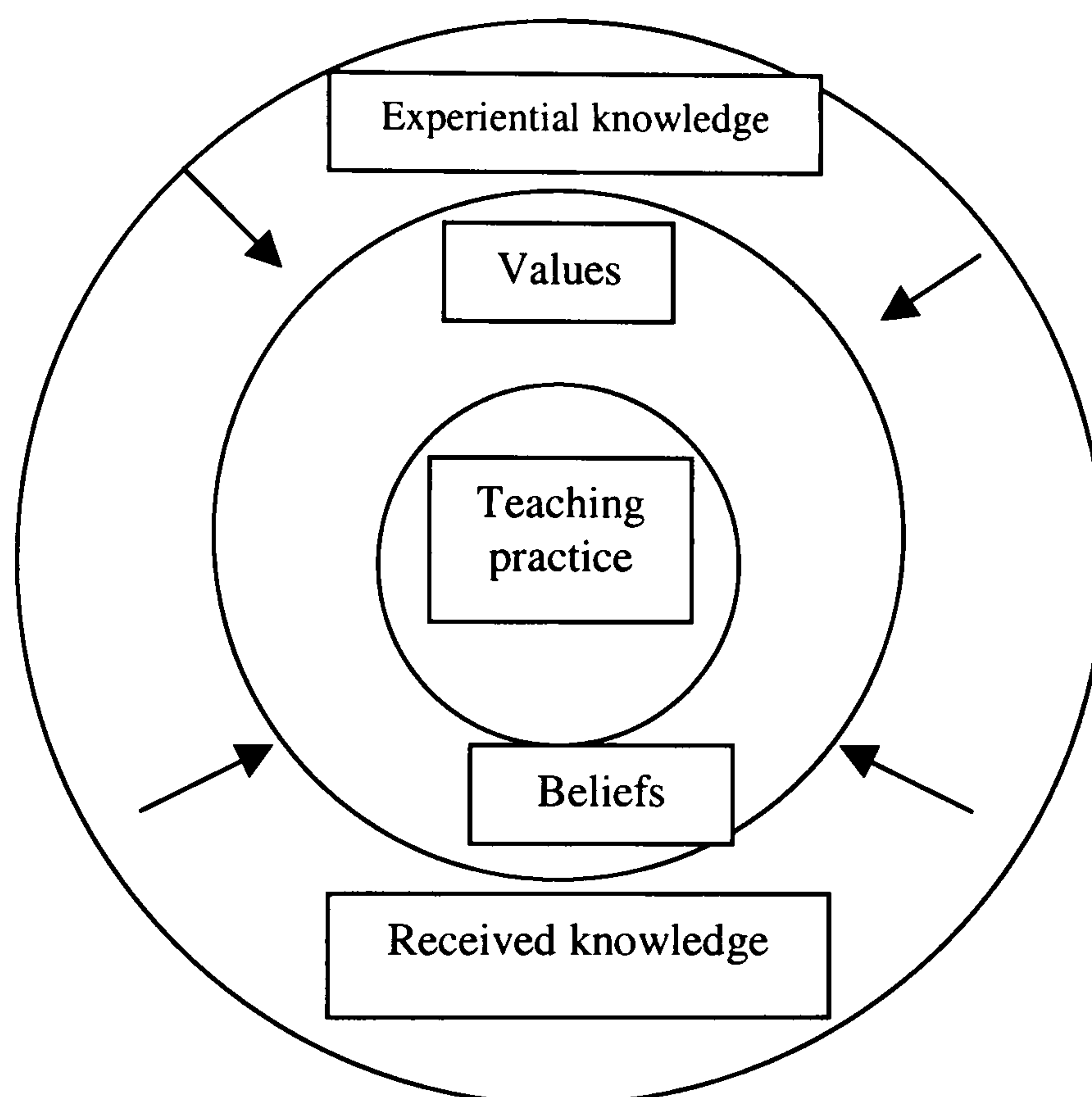
change there is a need to find out about teachers and students is necessary, as responsibility for change rests with teachers. From this it would seem that consideration of teachers' current practice and their beliefs is needed, as well as their perceptions regarding the benefits of change, and why change might be necessary or desirable. This might require workshops to address the issue, but one-off workshops are probably not enough as people change slowly and accommodating a new role is not a linear process of only applying new skills, it also a matter of aligning beliefs and values. In addition, the general atmosphere of change needs to support the innovation. Negative comments such as those cited on page 88 only serve to reinforce any fears and reservations that teachers, parents and students may have. One of the most important times of change is during teacher education programmes, and thus implications of this research for teacher education will now be outlined.

## **Teacher education**

One of the major challenges teacher educators face is equipping new teachers with as much knowledge as possible and then assisting them in transforming that theory into practice and vice versa. Currently, it is probable that new teachers go into the classroom during the initial years of their career with beliefs about roles for themselves and their students based heavily on their own perceptions of roles formed when they were at school and during their teaching practice. Within the education system as a whole there also seems to be a fear of asking fellow classroom participants about themselves and their perceptions, perhaps in the belief that negative feedback or criticism will be given. This situation should be redressed if education programmes are to assist student teachers in bridging gaps between theory and practice more comfortably and effectively. In order to achieve this, an element that appears to be missing from Hong Kong programmes and possibly others around the world is a consideration of the cultural aspects of language in Hong Kong and underlying belief and value systems. The model below (Figure 6.3) suggested by Kontra (1997:246), a modification of the Handal and Lauvås (1987) training model,

suggests that these values and beliefs have a substantial influence on teaching practice experience. Kontra (1997) argues that teaching practice is surrounded by values and beliefs, and success or failure is based on experiential and received knowledge, finding a way through to the middle circle via the appropriate changes in beliefs and values.

Figure 6.3 - Training model (Kontra 1997:247)



However, the use of this model is limited in the above form, as the accompanying text gives no definitions regarding beliefs and behaviour. Nor does it give information about how to find out about the elements involved in the model. For such a model to be made more useful, discussions based on questions that examine roles for students and teachers, personal theories and different teaching approaches could be used to identify what values and beliefs are held within different communities. Additionally, if tools such as the questionnaires in Study 1 and 2 are used in sessions with teachers following these discussions, information could be gained that could be incorporated into awareness raising sessions with the student teachers. Together these would inform the middle element with regard to values and beliefs in Kontra's (1997) model above with empirical data. This information could



also inform teacher educators with regard to the profiles of their students. Teacher educators, like many teachers, presumably develop stereotypical images of their students. The information from the student teachers might equally provide useful material for education programmes, particularly for discussions, debates, critical incidence problems (for example, non-participation of students) and when thinking about transferring theory to practice. Such approaches would link with theories of social constructivism and perhaps provide examples of the effectiveness of these activities that could be linked to methodologies being advocated for learners in schools.

On a wider scale, profiles of students and teachers in different countries could yield interesting data for comparative studies. By incorporating sessions into courses that focus on beliefs in their own teacher education programmes, student teachers might see the value and possible use of similar data and activities with their own students. Additionally the use of discussion and questions would provide student teachers with a means to investigate their own students' beliefs and expectations about learning and roles. Such actions may help student teachers bridge the sometimes difficult gap between the theory and the reality of the classroom.

Studies exploring beliefs about language and patterns of language use in society could also be incorporated into teacher education programmes. These types of explorations would be intended to bring with them the realisation that the patterns and use of language are ever changing. By including these areas student teachers may become more aware of their own beliefs about and attitudes to language, and those of the communities they will be joining. For example, if student teachers believe that English grammar is illogical, one influence on how they teach grammar might be to portray this belief to students or take a less systematic approach in presenting grammatical rules.

The incorporation of suggestions such as those above are perhaps moves towards ensuring student teachers begin to understand more about the variables that are

brought into the classroom and that classrooms do not exist in a vacuum. This may be of particular use for developing awareness during teaching practice and for understanding any mismatches between the teaching methods they are attempting to utilise and perhaps those that their students are accustomed to.

By taking such steps and incorporating more explicit elements of beliefs, knowledge about language and school culture into teacher education courses, new teachers could gain knowledge about how to access information about their students and perhaps understand more about the perceptions that they bring with them to the classroom. Additionally, awareness about the extent to which their previous experience in the class and school culture influence their own beliefs might then be highlighted. Awareness raising activities including discussions and workshops may enable the process of implementing a teaching methodology and teaching activities to be understood more fully or adjusted by individuals accordingly. The implications of the findings of the research have been discussed, but as Kaplan (1997) notes there are inevitably other areas that could be investigated to further inform the picture of roles, especially in exploratory studies. Such limits would also seem to be reflective of the need for a never-ending research cycle as first presented in Section 2, and Nicholson (1996:7) comments that ‘for qualitative researchers, the solution is an emergent construction.’ Having adopted this approach, the limitations of this research and further areas for research are now discussed.

### **Limitations and future research**

The research described here presented a way to explore perceptions of roles. The study, though, had limitations, and the first was the size of the study and the number of informants. In addition, for any further research the questionnaires could usefully be revised as outlined in Section 4. Although the studies and the analysis were designed to build up a picture regarding roles, it was never assumed that they would provide a complete one, and this became more evident as the research was expanded to include other areas for investigation. However, this expansion was not,



retrospectively, always a wise decision and the expansion in this research resulted in a large variety of data. As Kaplan (1997:118) advises, ‘all explanations at best leave something to be desired’ and a summary of his ideas about research is that it is:

- partial
- conditional
- approximate
- indeterminate
- inconclusive
- intermediate
- limited (summarised from Kaplan 1997:118)

The research presented in this thesis probably reflects many of the above, particularly the partial aspect as it has been observed many different and complex factors influence the roles that teachers and learners adopt in the classroom. The research though has perhaps increased a personal level of understanding about teachers’ and students’ perceptions of roles and the need to investigate phenomena by exploring on different layers and levels using a variety of analyses. The similarities and differences unidentified from Study 1 – Attitudes and Beliefs as summarised in Section 5, Table 5.28 could be used to identify areas for further investigation.

To a limited extent, the exploration of roles and the ideas of expectations and conformity have provided some explanations for the differences between students’ and teachers’ perceptions of roles. In addition, Study 2 – Cultural Dimensions also offered useful data regarding underlying values that might also influence roles. Together such influences may account for the differences between what is reportedly happening in English lessons and expressions of beliefs in the questionnaires. As this research was based in Hong Kong it was not an explicit intention that it should provide findings from which globally applicable generalisations can be drawn, although the research method, based on the exploration of a conceptual framework, may provide a pathway that could be used by others find out more about the classroom participants and the interplay between and within their roles. One aspect of this was the importance of investigating definitions to increase understanding of concepts within framework. However, the method was not straightforward as the concepts were complex and the investigations highlighted the need to draw on a

variety of fields including education, English language teaching, psychology, the business world and sociology.

For further research several areas were identified and highlighted from the findings. Firstly, a larger study would allow generalisations that might enable more patterns or trends to be identified. The inclusion of a larger number of informants would incorporate different groups of teachers to be investigated according to specific criteria. For example, future research could include groups of teachers older than those in the study here. From this group it might be possible to explore relationships between age and perceptions of roles. Secondly, teachers with various qualifications could be included in the study to investigate possible differences in perceptions of roles according to qualification. Additionally, data from Principals could perhaps indicate possible school cultures. Finally, larger groups of teachers according to mediums of instruction or subject might indicate specific perceptions of roles.

A study involving a larger number of students might enable generalisations to be made especially with regard to age and medium of instruction. With respect to this, the data gained through this research provided profiles of the groups of students rather than information that could be attributed to age or medium of instruction. Further investigation of these two areas would provide interesting extensions to this research. Perhaps this extension might enable the investigation of specific hypotheses. For example, 'Students whose medium of instruction is their mother tongue have perceptions of roles that include more active interaction patterns than students whose medium of instruction is L2.' Additionally, larger sampling would enable confirmatory factor analysis of questionnaire 1a – Likert scale to be undertaken that might lead to insights that could be considered to be more representative of perceptions of roles of Hong Kong students.

On examining the cultural dimensions of the informants involved in the research, it has also become evident that there are dangers in relying on the work of Hofstede (1980) for providing benchmarks. As noted here, the findings of Study 2 – Cultural



Dimensions indicated results very different from those of Hofstede. While the findings were from a very small group of informants compared to Hofstede's findings, there were differences that perhaps point to further research with larger numbers within this area. Such research would be convergent with Hofstede's (1980) awareness of the possibility of changes over time and the findings in this study might indicate such changes and the need for information of this nature to be updated over time. In addition, conducting research that examines the Confucian Dynamism, derived from the Chinese Value Survey, as recognised by Hofstede and Bond (1988), would provide a more holistic picture of the situation in Hong Kong. Such research might provide information about features recognised by Wong (1983) and Walker (1997) such as hesitancy in answering the teacher and other interaction patterns that they claim are unique to Hong Kong. In order to do further research new research tools might need to be developed the research tools used here would need to be refined, and the suggestions made in Research Critiques I and II in Section 5 regarding adjustments would need to be considered.

## **Conclusions**

On investigating the literature regarding roles, the notion that perceptions of roles might be different from the roles teachers and students adopt in the classroom was proposed. There appeared to be many factors that could influence perceptions of roles including attitudes, beliefs and culture and it was suggested that these probably affect the interplay between roles in the classroom. The exploration of these concepts informed decisions to analyse the social context, and investigate attitudes, beliefs and cultural dimensions with respect to roles via questionnaires and interviews. On another level the need to understand the culture of the classroom was also recognised, and from the education literature with specific reference to Fullan (1999), the culture of the classroom appears to be the product of what the teacher and learner bring to it with respect to knowledge, conceptions, and beliefs. The classroom was thus investigated through descriptions of English lessons and

interviews with comments from both teacher and student teachers (Appendices 1 and 2) highlighting the existence of a school and a classroom culture.

The research in its exploration of roles found indications that students stated that they would prefer to take an active role in the classroom. Also evident were differences between the role expectations teachers had for their students and those reported by the students. There was some indication from interview data from teachers that they considered students passive learners and thus again, differences between observable roles and reported perceptions of roles were identified. These findings would appear to support the idea that perceptions of roles may not be the same as the roles that are observable in the classroom situation. The investigation into cultural dimensions indicated that although all teachers and students demonstrated small power distance and high individualism tendencies, there were significant differences between the two groups. Again these differences gave some insights into the differences found in Study 1 and could possibly be considered to be reflective of the social and economic changes in Hong Kong over the past two decades.

What is evident from the data in both Study 1 and Study 2, is that it would appear that students do have beliefs, expectations, preferences, and opinions, and they can discriminate and make judgements between what they find acceptable or not based upon beliefs and experience. More importantly this rich source of valuable information is often ignored, yet it has the potential for informing the teaching and learning process. Specifically, the data accessed in this research concerning beliefs, expectations and preferences could be used to give teachers information to inform decisions regarding the approaches to take and the roles that students want opportunities to adopt in the classroom.

A further important realisation was that all the findings suggest that there is interplay between the roles of the various classroom participants, so that inevitably one role will impinge upon another. This interplay as discussed above is also affected by other influencing factors (Hoyle, 1967 and Prabhu, 1987), and could be considered to



be multifaceted. The multifacetedness includes expectations about another's role and conformity that may affect own or other's behaviour. The complexity of roles and the variations in perceptions were acknowledged. These complexities and variations were discussed with respect to change of teaching practice as this often requires shifts in roles and these shifts are vital in achieving successful change.

However, from these findings and Fullan's (1999) contribution to the discussion regarding change, there would seem to be little doubt that more knowledge and research about teachers and students is required to ascertain teachers' and students' current beliefs and perceptions of roles. From this, strategies can be developed to bridge differences between current roles and roles convergent with a new/different teaching methodology. A willingness to investigate such complex areas was identified in this research, as such studies of perceptions of roles may lead to more effective teaching and learning and such research methods as those adopted here could be applied. This research has led to a greater personal understanding of the beliefs the classroom participants bring with them to the classroom and has perhaps contributed to knowledge about roles and how they affect the teaching and learning process, especially with regard to similarities and differences. The differences and mismatches identified have provided areas for further investigation. The need to look beyond observational behaviour to understand more about roles has been highlighted and a method for research, that investigates beliefs and values, has been identified. The research has also provided an opportunity to develop a personal understanding of research processes and the realisation that there will always be further questions for investigation.

The rationale for the thesis was based on a personal perspective that attempted to understand differences in descriptions of students in classrooms and personal teaching experience, and to challenge stereotypes. Whilst some understanding has been gained regarding these differences and stereotyping processes, from another personal perspective much has been learned about the research process. Such learning includes the finding of pathways to explore roles, and the cyclical and

interpretative nature of an exploratory study. It has also been noted that researchers within the EFL field need to utilise other more established fields such as education, to aid the development theory within EFL, especially with respect to research methodology and grounding EFL teaching methodologies within models of teaching and learning. One of the main implications to emerge from the research was the need to appreciate the different perceptions held by all the different participants in the educational process and to realise students do have valid contributions to make to research data. Similarly, it was refreshing and exciting to explore the richness and complexity of teachers' and students' perceptions from which common issues, differences or concerns emerged. Ultimately the aim of such research is to inform the teaching and learning process and to a limited personal extent this has been achieved within the context of the study. However, because of the complexity of roles, the interplay between roles, and the influencing factors such as beliefs and cultural values that students and teachers bring with them to the classroom, there would appear to be much space for further research into perceptions of roles.



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Appendix 1: Interview data - Teachers

Transcript	Key
DA=interviewer                      T=teacher	words/ideas
<p><b>Group 1 – 4 teachers</b></p> <p>DA- How would you describe your students?</p> <p>T. 1 – My students are mostly not very motivated especially at F3 level. Their English is only of an average standard, average standard. The most difficult things is they are not willing to answer a question in front of the class. They feel ashamed of being teased by their peers of making mistake in spoken English and even if they are able to speak fluent English, they may be isolated by peers, they are seen as being proud, conceited, something like that. Showing off.</p> <p>T. 2 – Mostly come from Mainland China, that is why they are weak in English.</p> <p>T. 3 – They’re level is not good and I need to force them to learn.</p> <p>T. 4 – Lucky as I’m in a high band school, motivated – motivated by exams, principally so they can make money!</p> <p>DA- How do they behave in class? Are they active or passive?</p> <p>T. 4 – Really depends on what you define as active and passive, but I certainly think there is a lot going on behind the ears. So they’re actively thinking and there’s a lot going on there. But they are Chinese in that they’re unwilling to engage in mental or verbal combat, you know healthy debate within the class. So all Westerners will say they are passive, sitting there like lemmings, but actually even on the PCEd course when somebody is presented with a question everybody is absolutely quiet, somebody is presented with a question, there is a very intelligent answer at the end, but why people have to be pointed at to get an answer out of them is .....everybody says, oh it’s cultural, that is our culture.</p> <p>T.1 – No one taking the initiative. Well actually at the beginning of the term, I tried, I waited until someone would speak up, I waited and waited for at least five minutes, and in order not to waste so much time I had to resort to pointing out someone.</p> <p>T. 2 – [They] sit there quietly and have to ask the active ones.</p> <p>DA- Can you describe yourself in the classroom?</p> <p>T. 4 – I’m active, I realise that the more I speak I’m helping them with Section A, [HKAL] with the listening. So I don’t feel too bad when I’m speaking, whereas the RSA diploma would insist that they do the speaking. So you know I’m not necessarily in total fear of speaking too much. However, I will fold my arms and say, ‘right now it’s over to you. But then a large group of 30 or 40 in a class will always leave it to the one that permeates to the top, with the most confidence. This is a product, not the product of students being passive, it is the product of large groups...If it was smaller groups...say 10 or even 7 or 8 they’ll talk. It’s a function of the size of the group.</p>	<p>Not motivated Average level Not willing to answer / peer pressure /ashamed</p> <p>Weak</p> <p>Weak – force to learn High band-motivated by extrinsic motivation</p> <p>Problem in defining active/passive Chinese culture – unwilling to answer identified by Westerners as passive –same problem with adults Problem no initiative/ unwilling to answer – strategy pointing Unwilling to answer – strategy ask active ones</p> <p>Active / speak a lot Group behaviour – one who permeates to the top has most confidence - function of the size of the group</p>

<p>T.1 – I believe I am active in the classroom and when I dramatise something they laugh. The main point is that I’m not interacting with individuals, I’m interacting with the class.</p> <p>DA- Do they have any expectations of the teacher?</p> <p>T. 4 – They obviously do. There’s the tradition of you as the expert and there’s a difference in view of a native speaker and a panel head, say in my school, [the panel head] speaks very good English, but who isn’t a native speaker and the problem here is that if the panel head makes a grammatical mistake or in her speech she might say vocabularies or something like that, the students will pounce on her. If the native speaker makes a mistake the students are tolerant. Which is totally unfair...They do expect me to be an all knowing individual. They are not used to the idea that I can turn around and say ‘Oh, I don’t know the answer to that,’ ‘Does it really matter?’ ‘I don’t care...’ .....they always expect me to know the magical answer to a particular item.</p> <p>T. 1 – Most of my students expect me to pass the exam. They sometimes expect me to act like a tutor.</p> <p>T. 4 – They want lots of correcting. They expect you to correct every error...they have a clear notion of right and wrong.</p> <p>DA- What activities do they like?</p> <p>T.4 – They like to be well-briefed on a particular issue [grammar], that may come up in the exam.</p> <p>T. 2 – If they have a choice they like to sit and listen.</p> <p>T. 3 – Enjoy doing simple exercises and vocabulary. They like getting into groups to discuss things. They enjoy doing pair work.</p> <p>T.1 – My students like a mixture of doing games and being bored, they like, of course they like games in which they can speak and play, but they also like the importance of grammar in it, so they expect me to give them quizzes. That’s what they told me....I asked them to write a letter to me telling me their expectations, some of them told me to give them more quizzes on vocabulary and grammar items.</p> <p>T. 4 – They like tests. They do like doing proofreading. They love vocabulary lists.</p> <p>DA- What do they do when they don’t understand?</p> <p>T. 4 – They sit there and don’t understand. They don’t do anything.</p> <p>T. 1 – They ask questions in class and after the lesson. They will even come to me during lunchtimes.</p> <p>T. 4 – How much do they understand?</p> <p>DA- What do you think of the new syllabus?</p> <p>T. 4 – Don’t know much about it? Only way you are going to change the syllabus is by changing the exam syllabus, make the oral much more of the whole percentage. If they are good at oral, all the other skills will knock on.</p>	<p>Active</p> <p>Tradition of you as expert – difference between expectations of native speaker and local teacher All knowing person / expect answers</p> <p>Expect me to get them through exam / be tutor</p> <p>Lots of correcting</p> <p>Like exam related issues</p> <p>Sit and listen</p> <p>Exercises/vocabulary/discussions/pair work Games and being bored / grammar and vocabulary quizzes</p> <p>Tests / proofreading / vocabulary lists</p> <p>Sit there</p> <p>Ask questions</p> <p>Question?</p> <p>Don’t know much about it.</p>
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<b>Group 2 – 5 teachers</b>	
DA- How would you describe your students?	
T. 1 –Band 1 – quite capable of studying on their own.	Capable
T. 2 – Most of them are quiet, they keep silent and pay attention, so most of the time it is a quiet environment.	Quiet
T. 3 – If the class is noisy, we will be embarrassed and will be in trouble with the headmaster. The headmaster does not understand why students are making a noise. It he asked me I would explain, but he doesn't ask me. The policy is quietness.	Quiet-school policy
T.4 – If it is too quiet I say, 'Where's the noise?'	Strategy for noise
T. 1 – Some of them are very active in the lower forms, but when they get into the higher forms they get very exam orientated. So actually they are very anxious about exams, this influences our teaching because we have to make our lessons more exam orientated.	Active in lower forms, become exam oriented affects teaching
T. 4 – Lower forms accept any activity, they enjoy it, but as they come to the upper forms, the same things.....exams...they are always worried about their exams.	Enjoy all activities in lower forms/upper forms worry about exams
DA- Can you describe yourself in the classroom?	Teacher centred
T. 2 – I think I am teacher centred. I don't like noise. This is my attitude, as I think noise upsets. If there is noise I will just stop because I want the whole class to pay attention. So I think it is quite teacher centred. Maybe I am not confident enough to provide an interactive environment.	
DA- Do they have any expectations of the teacher?	
T. 1 – Make them pass the exams.	Pass the exam
T. 4 – The students I have, really expect me to get them somewhere.....also they are very smart, they look at you and wait a couple of weeks or months to decide whether you can deliver or not. I have noticed if they loose their trust, I don't know myself, but assume that if they loose their trust in you. They are not going to learn very much. As long as there are exams we have to prepare for them.	Pass the exam Students make judgements about the teacher
T. 2 – I'm not sure whether they have any expectations or not. Class size is too big, 45. My job is like a policeman. Most of effort and time and energy is controlling.	Job = policeman controlling
T. 3 – Inside the classroom I am a king. Outside a friend.	King
T. 5 – They see me as a mother figure.	Mother
DA- What happens when you ask them an open question?	
T.1 – Depends on the class, my own class, I'm their class teacher, so they are answering. The other class, they are not answering...they are just afraid.	Depends on class Own answer/other do not
T. 4 – This is one thing I can't get them to do. One class put up their hand for everything.	Will not put up hands
T. 3 – I think it is something called class culture too.	Class culture

T. 1 – Every class is different. F1 and F2 even if they don't know me they are ever ready. But once they come to F3 I don't know what happened, they just remain silent. Changes, physically as well.	Answering patterns change with age
T. 2 – Depends on the form...F3 students will not put up their hands.	Depends on class
DA- What do you think of the new syllabus?	
T. 2 – We don't have a thorough understanding of it yet.	Yet to understand
T.1 – Teachers don't know what it is about.	No knowledge
T. 4 – Translating them to the classroom is the difficulty. People have different conceptions.	Translating to classroom is problem
<b>Group 3 – 6 teachers</b>	
DA- How would you describe your students?	
T. 1 – Active, creative cos I teach primary school.	Active
T.2 – Shy especially when they are required to speak English.	Shy
T. 3 – Motivation very high.	Motivated
T. 4 – I think they are active when they do something they want to do...since we started doing more task-based learning they are active, but when we use the textbook 'Get Ahead' or the comprehension, 'Let's read it together', then they get really, really bored. They just don't answer.	Active when they want to be
T.3 – The topics in the textbook, not really useful.	Problem textbook
T. 5 – The junior forms are active, more active than the senior forms. When they are in F1 and F2 student they are not afraid of being laughed at by other students. But F3 students in fact they are concerned about this. Their superiority, if they say something wrong in English, then my classmates will laugh at me, so I don't want to be laughed at.	Active lower in school Answering culture
T. 4 – I do agree with that. In lower forms they are more active and can talk, but once they reach F4 they want you to sort of like spoonfeed them. They want information from you. They are more exam oriented.	Active in lower / Exam oriented
DA - Can you describe yourself in the classroom?	
T. 4 – Crazy.	Active
T.3 – A one man show sometimes. Anything they don't have to think. Have to do a lot of things to help them because they are so passive.	Active as students are so passive
T. 2 – Even if they don't understand they won't ask. So I have to be very active.	Active
T.1 – I'm active I guess. I'm on my feet all the time. Constantly monitoring.	Active
T. 4 – I think I am more easy going with the form 1's than 2's.	Change of behav. according to form
T. 5 – Sometimes like a monitor. Not have disruptive behaviour in the classroom.	Monitor



T. 6 – Just like a big brother – just to make sure they dare to talk to me.	Big brother
T. 5 – Inside the classroom just like a monitor outside the classroom maybe talk anything else, we can be friends – yes.	Two different roles inside and outside classroom
T. 2 – Actually I’m don’t know if I’m that much different, inside or outside. I think I’m pretty much the same, because outside they are excited to see me.	Same inside the classroom as outside
DA- Do they have any expectations of the teacher?	
T. 3 –One of the brightest girls wrote in a diary to me and asked me to be more strict with them...so that she could listen to me in class.	Student asked T to be more strict
T. 2 – Depends on the level. Again in examination classes they will expect you to give them more skills and information about the exams. In the lower classes they will expect you to give them more fun.	Depends on level
T. 5 – Expect care and attention.	Expect care and attention
T. 6 – Difference between each class.	Varies
T.4 – I don’t know what they expect really. I mean you give them one thing expecting that they need this. Then all of a sudden they will ask, well why aren’t you doing this. So you give them that and they say but it’s boring. Can you go back to the old way, they like the old way.....then there’s this whole balance between what they like and what they need.	Varies, like and need
DA- What activities do they like?	
T. 2. – Basically anything except homework. If I’m doing a passage they will participate. They might shout out in Chinese but they will participate.	Anything
DA – How do they react to open questions?	
T. 3 – Silent. But depends the bright ones will answer.	Silence, bright sts. will answer
T. 4 – You have to solicit a bit.	Solicitation needed
T. 5 – As they go up the school, they go quieter and quieter. The whole peer issue is a big thing.	Depends on level less as students get older
T. 2 – Depends on the level, even if I call their names and they stand up to answer, they usually just give a one word answer. You have to train them to give reasons, not just one word answers.	Depends on level
DA- What do they do when they don’t understand?	
T. 4 – Tell by their faces. They won’t say anything. They just sit there.	Won’t say anything
T. 3 – They ask the brightest in their own language and they will tell them.	Ask other students
T. 5 – They might ask me in Chinese. They will say Mr. Cheung will please say in Chinese again.	Ask in Chinese

Appendix 2: Interview data - Student teachers

Analysed Transcript	Key words/ideas
<p>Group 1</p> <p>DA-How would you describe your students?</p> <p>C – F3 Band 1 – I’m C. All of my students are form 3. They are band one students Some of them are quite naughty, motivated. They will ask questions,..... some of them keep quiet, they just keep quiet, some of them .....(D.A. About how many keep quiet? .....about50%/) 70% when I was talking, they kept quiet....they were .....Some of them, when I say are naughty, I mean they do not disturb other students, but when they are asked to do some activities they would have some tricks...eh....how I say they.....they would use something to make the whole class laugh. Some of them after the test some of them were eager to ask me questions. Asking why was this wrong, why was this not correct. They will fight for the marks.....those students were, most of the students that do well in the class were in my eyes sharp, quite smart, eager to ask questions and they will approach me after class.....those students.</p> <p>Y – F1 – The students’ abilities are very different. Some of them are primary 4 English standard and some of them F3 English standards. So...they are talkative so I need at the first week it took about the whole week to think of some discipline methods to start my lessons. They are not active, not motivated to learn English because they told me they hate English. Because this a CMI school they don’t need to learn English for any other subjects.</p> <p>W – F3 – They liked to have some interesting games. How do I know it. After teaching I gave them an evaluation sheet and they told me they wanted more interesting games. They found that they could learn a lot through games. So generally they want fun.</p> <p>DA-Were the students different to your expectations?</p> <p>C – Not really, but I do not have....You mean the expectation performance (DA- yes and their behaviour) difference from, but I did not have expectation... know already they are quite good because I had observed their lesson. They are responsible, because the English teacher is responsible...when she ask them to do homework she will remember it and ask them on the date they have to hand in their assignment.</p> <p>DA- Think back to before you started the course what were your expectations then? How did you expect them to behaviour?</p> <p>Y - What do you mean?</p> <p>DA – Well in Hong Kong there is the thought that students are passive, what do you think?</p> <p>Y – Agree they are passive – when you try to introduce something new, like activities, some tasks for them to meet certain objectives. They couldn’t get</p>	<p>Naughty, motivated, will ask questions, keep quiet, after class ask questions, want explanations and marks</p> <p>Discipline problems, but not active or motivated to learn English.</p> <p>Like games, want fun</p> <p>Similar to expectations</p> <p>Use different methods to their</p>



<p>use to the way I introduced the lesson. Like...They may have discipline problem because most of the teachers there would not use this kind of method to teach. They can't adjust themselves. I think it is a sense of novelty to them so they will get so excited and you try to, they will say they don't know what they have learned after the lesson. They don't feel secure about, they would prefer doing exercises.</p> <p>DA- But you said yours would prefer doing games.</p> <p>W – Mine are different, (DA- Same school?) Yeah, but part of my class they were very active in learning because my class has mixed ability, some of the very top and some not even usual standard. But because of the general atmosphere, they like to play games and fool around.....My own personal view of HK students are passive because when I was a student, my classmates were very passive.</p> <p>DA- But don't you think the students have changed?</p> <p>W – I hope so!</p> <p>C – When I was a school student I did not think in this way. I did not think, oh I was passive no, but I saw a lot of limitation in the classroom and I would not raise my hand even though I knew the answers. I wanted to answer the questions, but I would not raise my hand. [D – Why not?] The question I thought all the students knew the answer and I thought as they all knew the answers there was no need for me to answer it. Or the others would just think I showed off in front of the teacher.</p> <p>W – I had the same experience before I was a very active person, because like when I knew something I liked to answer, because it is normal for me to respond to a question if you knew the answer but many of my classmates were amazed with my behaviour, and I remember when I was in F3 I was actually being bullied because of this behaviour but I kept it that way. I didn't bother to change.</p> <p>DA- Would you answer the teacher when you were at school?</p> <p>Y – I wouldn't answer. Somebody will answer...because well there are 30 students in the class and all are so quiet. If you....I think it is the pressure....You don't have any motivation for you to answer the question. Because if you are wrong you will be scolded and if you are right, so what?</p> <p>W – But my school experience was not like that, because when I answer the question my teacher was very happy because she got some responses. It was just the pressure from my peer that I don't really feel very comfortable.</p> <p>C – I think the questions were not really meaningful sometimes. I think oh, all students could find the answer in the textbook. Not something really creative about myself. For example a story...</p> <p>DA- Are the classrooms then that you have been doing your teaching practice in different when you look back to your classrooms where you say everyone was quiet, are they different?</p>	<p>usual teacher – problematic,</p> <p>Mixed class but view of students is that they are passive, from own experience as a student</p> <p>Saw limitations in the classroom, would not volunteer</p> <p>Everyone knew the answer so there was no need to volunteer / showing off</p> <p>Used to respond and experienced bullying</p> <p>Someone will do it...No motivation to respond.</p> <p>Teacher was happy that someone responded</p> <p>Problem with the questions, not meaningful</p>
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<p>C – I don't know. I would see whether it is different, because you can see when I answer the first question about my own experience what I looked at was the inside....I was not passive when I say I was not passive when I was a secondary school student. So when I look at my students I knew I knew many of them know the answer, many of them might want to answer the question and many of them would like to participate. They all want to learn. It is my belief. But the point is whether my questions were good enough. Whether my activities motivated them. Whether I presented in a way they felt comfortable to answer my questions. And in one lesson I saw all of my students very active, talking and that was a lesson in which drama conventions were used. In pairs they developed a script, just on the site, they all, nearly all of them were talking except 2 students. They were the students who usually did not listen in my class and I tried to persuade them ...all students except two students were talking. Very Happily. They had a role in the small scale drama.</p> <p>Y – To solve this problem I try to use them a task. Instead of asking them questions and respond orally, I ask them to write down the answer or do something instead of speaking.</p> <p>W – My students are active if the task or the game can motivate them. I think the best, not the best, the motivation for the students in my school is when you tell them this will be for the examination they will be very, very attentive. You can see that very often, when I was teaching it was around the examinations, so they paid extra attention to my lesson and afterwards....after the examinations what happened then...they knew that this stuff would not be examination, so I tried some new stuff I found that they enjoyed it like writing poems.</p> <p>Y – What I am talking about is just last year during my first teaching practice the students were so motivated and so active. It was an Emi.</p> <p>DA – So band one school. What was the school culture like? Was it quiet don't make a noise or was it encouraging students to be active and individualistic?</p> <p>W – I think the school was generally quite free, but in the classroom it very much depended on the teacher. My class told me, they got used to a very quiet class. They won't do activities so they can't get used to my teaching. In general, the atmosphere that the principal tried to culture is active, learning happily, you know this kind of teaching. But while in the classroom it would be very different, because for different teachers, the students will have different expectations. Like for the music class the teacher will not allow them to speak even a word...(DA in the music class?) if they make any noise that's not necessary then they will be punished. The punishment will be copy the Chinese 100X so even the most misbehaved student will dare not to say a word. It's really different.</p> <p>C –Om, I do not see any clues showing the school tries to promote active or control, quiet, but in the classroom, I just could see the students, they seemed to me they were adapted to learn attentively, quietly, focussing on the teachers. Sometimes they very jokes, but most of the time they were adapted to focus on the teacher listening to them.</p> <p>DA – Did your students have any expectations of you?</p>	<p>Not passive inside and know the answer</p> <p>Was question good enough?</p> <p>Successful lesson where students all active</p> <p>Suggested solution to problem of no one answering</p> <p>Examination = attention</p> <p>Difference depends on level of students</p> <p>Classroom depended on the teacher = quiet Difference between ST and Teachers way of teaching But principal wanted active learning</p> <p>Example of music teacher</p> <p>Quiet, focused on listening to the teacher</p>
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<p>C- I talked with two students...I did not ask them this question, but they told me they expected teachers in TP were students, they come to learn and they accept those teachers to make mistakes, they accepted those teachers to not know something related to their subjects. But only for students. They did not accept their subject teachers to be like that.</p> <p>W – They did not expect me to be very fierce and they didn't expect me to punish them. Because I actually made some punishment scheme in case, just in case, some unexpected behaviour happened in the classroom. They wrote me that 'Oh I didn't like my punishment at all', because the image that I have in the class is very approachable. They didn't expect me to be such a stern teacher.</p> <p>DA- Sometimes you had to be, because you had a tough class didn't you?</p> <p>W – Yeah, so that's all really.</p> <p>Y- I guess my class expected me to be very straight teacher because they always ask me to punish other students, they tell me Ms. X or Mr. Y always punish people. You should punish people.....we won't listen to you. They found me friendly, maybe too friendly and then they test my baseline. At the first lesson they thought I was very strict.</p> <p>DA- How did your students behave when you asked them an open question, an open question?</p> <p>W – They would answer a model answer. But if you asked them something about themselves, like because I asked them about that when they were writing the poems....they are quite eager to answer questions.</p> <p>DA- This brings us back to your point again about whether it is worth answering a question. That's a really interesting point.</p> <p>C – I though where open question works or not depends on the atmosphere built up. I remember I asked an open-ended question sort of introduction but they did not answer very well. So I had to call them to answer my questions, but in that drama lesson when I asked them how, how they felt, the two roles, they would answer quite actively. But also the nature of the questions was different. One I asked them to introduce themselves and they didn't answer. The second I asked them about the roles. It was quite different, in the second one, had some background related to the roles not to them.</p> <p>Y – My class if I ask them an open question, if it requires an oral response they don't want to answer. If they are asked to write down the answer then they will be very honest. Very open. Something amazing.</p> <p>DA – What will they do when they do not understand?</p> <p>W- They will ask me. I have a break and go round.</p> <p>C – Grammar lessons they don't ask. Composition lessons they will ask vocabulary. They will ask me in the class but not openly. They will raise their hands.</p> <p>Y- They will ask me but not openly.</p>	<p>Do not accept mistakes from teachers</p> <p>Did not like punishment and students were surprised ST gave this</p> <p>Tested my baseline</p> <p>Model answer = one word answer / like talking about self</p> <p>Usual open questions will not answer, but role-play they answered.</p> <p>No response orally but will write</p> <p>Ask</p> <p>Depends on lesson, ask in class but not openly</p>
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<p>DA- Do you think there is a conflict between Chinese culture and Communicative language teaching methods?</p> <p>W- Culture is not conflicting but only if the teacher can promote the atmosphere-make a bridge. Most students are quite passive, actually they knew the answer and want to contribute and actually knew the answer and everything but because of the peer pressure if the teacher can help them they will perform a lot better.</p> <p>W – If you are talking about Confucius learning promotes interaction and asking questions. I didn't really find.</p> <p>C – I talked with the head teacher and he said students in China were eager to asked a native speaker questions. There are differences between China and Hong Kong.</p> <p>DA - Okay</p> <p>Group 2</p> <p>E – Last year I taught in an EMI school.</p> <p>DA- Can you describe what your students were like?</p> <p>E- The students some of them are quite noisy...they are quite out spoken and challenge the teachers, it is quite unexpected because in my day when I was a student, I never tried to challenge the teacher in front of the others. Not that I didn't want to be challenged, but sometimes when they challenge, it's their attitude I don't like.</p> <p>A (EMI school) – the students nowadays have changed they didn't show much respect to the teachers as I expected and as what E has just said, they sometimes challenge what I have just said. I think it is a good thing, the student challenge the teacher because they are thinking themselves but the way they challenge, it seems their attitude s the opposite way to challenge me. So sometimes it is quite upsetting. As a teacher I also need my dignity. Sometimes the students didn't listen to me if I asked them to say for example I asked them to stop talking themselves and they just keep on talking and told me about and so it is quite upsetting. Also the second thing, sometimes I find I really want to apply what I've learner in the University but sometimes I find it hard to put into reality, because there is a little bit difference between what I have learned and the true world.</p> <p>DA- Why do you think the students have changed?</p> <p>A- I think they are now secondary students not primary students they seek freedom, no longer children.</p> <p>DA – But before when you were at school and now?</p> <p>E – They get more knowledge from different sources, by watching TV, reading, the Internet. Also because they are sometimes affected by the teachers professionalism, some teachers to be honest the way the teachers treat the students makes the students disrespectful. Because now they [the students] are more knowledgeable and they can judge the teachers, this way of the teacher. My brother was at a school in Kowloon Tong and he wanted</p>	<p>Teacher needs to make a bridge</p> <p>Confucius philosophy promotes interaction and asking questions</p> <p>Difference between Mainland Chinese Students and HK students</p> <p>Noisy, and outspoken, challenge the teacher</p> <p>Did not like students behaviour regarding challenging the teacher</p> <p>Difference between theory and practice</p> <p>More independent than before</p> <p>More knowledgeable, times have changed</p>
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<p>to go to the toilet and the teacher would not let him. She made him cry in front of the whole class. He was only primary 4. What the teacher did is wrong you know. It not fair, for example. [DA - A difference now is that parents know their rights.] Then the students know their parents support them. In the old days we didn't know we just accept it, we never challenge the teacher. A very famous school and I feel very sad because he had to go to the psychologist, his whole self esteem suffered. Nowadays my parents could have asked the school to pay for the psychologist.</p> <p>A – Now a days parents know what their rights are so if parents [children] complain at home they will try to reflect what their children say no matter whether they are right or wrong.</p> <p>DA- How about the culture in your school?</p> <p>E-Culture for sitting quietly. Because we are new teachers fresh from University a lot of the time want students to say something and we've been very encouraging actually. And we try every different lesson and try to make it interesting. We never just read out what is inside the book a lot of the time we try to devise some activity and try to make the lesson more interactive. Sometimes, actually most of the time we are unsuccessful and then some of the time, when I spoke to the students at recess time and said why didn't you answer my questions, why are you so quiet, because when you are so quiet you're wasting the whole class time, and then a few students tell me, 'Oh, you don't know? It's not because I don't want to answer question – its because if I answer too many questions in the class, I being, how do I say that, the other students will not like me, they will say that I want to show off.' I think it is that kind of atmosphere that hinder the pupils. They don't want to speak up. Some teachers think it is good to have a quiet classroom, it's easy to control them. But I don't really agree.</p> <p>A –I think it largely depends on the mentor we have. Because her mentor is different to mine. Her mentor puts who answers on the black board. On one side she puts students names who answer her questions, on the other student's names who she nominates.</p> <p>DA – So what would you say your students are like?</p> <p>E – Passive they ask me questions, not in the class, but after the class. They feel afraid of being laughed at.</p> <p>DA – Did they like doing group work and pairwork?</p> <p>E - Say they like doing group and pairwork, we gave them a questionnaire two weeks before we started teaching. Most of them say they like activities, but when we try doing activities with them they are not very active. (One or two groups were off-task).</p> <p>DA- What kind of activities did they like?</p> <p>A- they like to imitate role-play but not very active.</p> <p>E –sometimes they challenge you. Sometimes they do not trust what you say.</p> <p>A-</p>	<p>and now students can judge the teachers</p> <p>Students know parents will support them. Know their rights</p> <p>Parents support students</p> <p>Conservative culture. We try new methods</p> <p>Unsuccessful</p> <p>Reason for not answering teacher</p> <p>Showing off Some teachers think it is good to have a quiet classroom</p> <p>Mentor's practice</p> <p>Ask questions after class</p> <p>Say they like doing pair and group work Not very active</p> <p>Like to imitate role-play (think this means dialogue) Challenge you</p>
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<p>DA- If you asked them a question were they eager to answer?</p> <p>A- At the beginning of the semester, at the beginning, but as the term went by they more passive.</p> <p>DA-What was their expectation of teachers</p> <p>E- On the questionnaire they said they expected the teacher to be understanding and approachable. Something like that...</p> <p>DA- Do you think the role of the teacher changed since you were at school?</p> <p>E – I think so because nowadays the teacher has the role of trying to help the students on other than academic, sometimes it is their private life or their family problem. We need to talk to them as a friend. I ask them why they are so quiet. Are you like that in other classes? They say, ‘Yeah, yeah, even in Chinese language class.’ So I don’t think it is really the language they don’t have. Sometimes I think it is that they’ve been trained by other teachers who like the students to be quiet in the class so they get used to it.</p> <p>DA- Do you think there is a conflict between Chinese Culture and CLT?</p> <p>A- I think so because in Chinese culture we tend to control the students, but for communicative approach we emphasise interaction so sometimes we want to make the activities more interactive but because of the school culture, the students, the school culture tends to be the Chinese culture- quite conservative, a very strong sense of Chinese culture, tend to control their students not make them interactive.</p> <p>E – The Chinese language teacher do not want to be challenged by the students even if they say in a very positive attitude. They will feel losing face. A very typical Chinese culture. Whereas I don’t mind. Especially the other Chinese teacher, they think that even if you are in a very positive attitude, if you say something opposite to what I say, then you are challenging me and they cannot accept.</p> <p>DA- What do students do when they don’t understand?</p> <p>E – Not many of them will ask, but you will see a lot of question marks above their heads. Then sometimes I will repeat it and paraphrase it and then sometimes I will talk to a few students after class you know those that are closer to me, and I will say, ‘Do you understand what I say before?’ If the smart students cannot understand then I know I have to repeat the item.</p> <p>A – Sometimes I didn’t know the students didn’t understand. So when I ask them to do the exercise, they keep reading the task without doing anything, so when I walked past them I found they were sitting reading the exercise without doing anything. So I asked them ‘do you understand?’</p> <p>DA- Okay thank you very much.</p> <p>Final Student</p> <p>R – last year I taught at a school band 4.8. Was an EMI before now CMI. Expect to be naughty, as the mentor told me their language proficiency is quite low. The top ten students their English is quite good and in general their behaviour is not as bad as I expected. Maybe because they are on HK island. Usually the students in the schools in the New Territories are much</p>	<p>Answering behaviour changes with time</p> <p>Role of teacher – understanding and approachable</p> <p>Role of teacher includes pastoral care</p> <p>Trained so they become quiet</p> <p>Chinese Culture control students</p> <p>Chinese teacher does not want to be challenged</p> <p>You can see when they don’t understand Ask when don’t understand</p> <p>Can not see if they understand</p> <p>Expectation – noisy Behaviour not as bad as expected</p>
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<p>naughtier.</p> <p>DA- How about their behaviour towards learning?</p> <p>R- Generally quite acceptable. But the weaker students simply switch off. I simply can't entertain all students. If I focus on the weaker students the better students will be bored. If I focus on the good students the weaker ones will not be able to follow. I try to get an equilibrium but I find it quite difficult to do that. And I notice they know what they are doing and their career future is not as good as normal students. So I asked them to write me a letter to see what kind of evaluation I would get. Comments from students. One the thing that happened on the first day I lost my temper because I could not deal with the different levels. But they said I was a 'tolerant teacher, tried to explain vocabulary.'</p> <p>DA- Were the students like you expected them to be?</p> <p>R-Some as naughty but more serious than I remember being. They had mobile phones and the girls put makeup on in class.</p> <p>DA- Why different now to when I was at school.</p> <p>R- When I was young I was motivated or forced to work hard to get a place in the sixth form. Social culture has changed, for example, we still respect teacher and we still obey the teacher during the lesson. But I wouldn't have used a mobile phone. But maybe the student's family background is much better than before. They have got a lot of money.</p> <p>DA- And the family background has changed?</p> <p>R- Yes for sure, for example when I was young. Parents still have superiority over the students. It is less now than when I was young. Students nowadays not willing to follow the rules.</p> <p>DA- What was the school culture like?</p> <p>R- I think in the classroom its quite tradition and don't want to move much...teacher are control oriented. But encourage students to participate in extra-curricula activities.</p> <p>DA- How would you describe your self in the classroom?</p> <p>R- A friend to them instead of a teacher as I think it is a much better way to communicate with such students 'cos this kind of students of course they need a teacher but I do think they rather need a friend to listen to them and help them solve their problems. And of course I can be described as a teacher, because I taught them in the class.</p> <p>DA- How did they expect you to behave?</p> <p>R- To be stricter because the first day I lost my temper...generally they don't expect me to correct actually just 5 to 10 expect that and give them explanation. For the rest of the students they just simply hand in homework no matter if it is copied or no. I correct it hand it back and they simply put it back into the school bag.</p>	<p>Problem with different abilities in class</p> <p>Naughty, examples given</p> <p>Different circumstances between now and when at school</p> <p>Changes in family background</p> <p>School culture traditional</p> <p>Teacher as friend</p> <p>Expected teacher to be stricter</p>
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<p>DA- How would you describe your students.</p> <p>R- Quite passive in learning actually, but quite in communicating with them.</p> <p>DA- Which activities did they like?</p> <p>R- Like student-centred, groupwork, but why I say passive because they got much chance to talk with each other than do their own work...passive I mean is they won't ask questions if they don't know the answer or don't know why. If they know the answer they simply sit there. Like active things-but quite passive in interacting with me. Passive to learn, ask questions, initiate.</p> <p>DA- What happened when you asked open questions?</p> <p>R- Silence-totally silent, mumble in Chinese at the back. And keep silent, actually I think they know the answer because I hear some voices at the back, but they just don't know how to express it in English...I have to initiate everything. Sometimes they may think my question is not worth answering. When I did evaluate my class with T, she did mention about that, 'cos what I asked them is not that useful or catch their interest. What I ask them its something like, 'Oh come on Mr. Lee, we already know the answer, but why do you ask us such a stupid question.' Even though the students had completed the task and some did quite well, when I asked for the answers no-one raised their hands and I have to nominate the student to give the answer. I will not just nominate the top student, I will randomly. But when I ask the weaker students sometimes they will just stand there and wait for me.</p> <p>DA- Do you think there is a conflict between Chinese Culture and CLT?</p> <p>R- Yes, yes, what I know about CLT is of course interactive and not only the teacher initiate activities and whatever the classis carrying out, it is can be students who are dominating the class. But in fact in traditional Chinese culture usually whatever they faced, they won't speak up, they won't tell teacher, they won't ask. They simply sit there, do the thing. It's tradition.</p> <p>Especially after I came back from Australia and see students over there. Very different, very, very different. For example I observed Australian class talk about literature book. The teacher asked them who did what and the students not only reported the name initially, they elaborate further and further. But the students in HK especially what I taught in the past is what ever they think, good or bad, they accept it and they keep silent for most of the thing and I think this is a kind of culture.</p> <p>Form 1 class is very different, considered as top students in that form. English level is quite good. Maybe my teaching style is not as active as T. Don't want to show off. They regard such action as reporting the answer as showing off. In fact in T's class it is very different. Over half the class raise hand. Even when it's an open question, some students still raise their hands, I think age is a factor, for the interaction in class.</p>	<p>Passive in learning</p> <p>Liked active activities, but passive to learn and in interaction with the teacher</p> <p>Do not answer, but is question worthy of being answered?</p> <p>Conflict between Chinese culture and CLT</p> <p>Comparison with Australia</p> <p>Style of teaching affects response from students</p>
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**Appendix 3: Descriptions of English lessons**  
**Appendix 3.1: Descriptions of English lessons (Questionnaire 1a-Likert Scale questionnaire) Analysis 1**

Key

+ve comments about lessons and teachers

-ve comments about lessons

Criticism of classmates

+ve comments about classmates

Comments about teachers talking too much / not enough opportunities for student talk

Criticism of teacher / problems

Comments about opportunities for group work

Comments about speaking Chinese in lessons

Interesting use of vocabulary

Activities

**1997- Form 6 CMI students**

St. no	Description	Activities
St. 1	Sometimes it's fun but too long. I's very tire after English lessons. Sometimes it's boring.	
St.2	The teacher's questions so boring. Teacher sometimes talk about not useful thing. At a lesson just half is good for our study.	
St.3	At my school it is not many chances for classmates to speak in English. Many times we will do the book exercise so it is not interesting. Repeatedly listen to the listening tape. It is not fun.	Exercises Listen to tape
St.4	My English lesson sometimes is so boring. My English teacher taught English language in so boring. But when he teach our Oral lessons, we feel not boring. So I would prefer to study oral lesson.	Oral
St. 5	We sometimes speak in Cantonese, some of classmates don't want to speak more English in this lesson. The teacher always is (locate?) in active.	
St.6	I do some exercise during an English lesson and them my teacher checks it and my English teacher like talking through the lesson.	Exercise / check
St.7	So boring on my school. Sometimes I don't know what is the teacher said or did.	



St.8	The English lesson at my school is very boring. And I find it difficult to study English.	
St.9	Boring but useful, teacher talks only. We have little chance to talk to the teacher and students.	
St. 10	Teacher do most of the talking. We talk when only we are doing an oral lessons. But during English lesson we speak more Chinese than English.	Oral
St.11	Teacher should do most of the talking in class.	
St. 12	In my school's English lesson, we will do all part of the UE[Use of English] exam, e.g. writing, speaking, listening... Sometimes we have a test in every week. Beside we will work in a group.	UE Exam – writing, speaking, listening, test
St. 14	Boring.	
St. 17	The teacher sometimes use the Chinese, when we don't know the meaning and sometimes playing the game to teach us. But I always don't know what my teacher teaching.	Game
St. 19	Boring.	
St. 24	Boring.	
St.25	Boring, noisy.	
St. 29	Just do exercises, but I can't know how to do it. The main point is that I can't improve my English level at the school.	Exercises
ST.30	Sometimes is boring because we're passive. Teacher talks more than students. Always work on my own cannot cooperate with classmates unless in oral lesson and discussing.	Oral Discussion
St.31	Lot of time use Chinese.	
St. 32	My classmates dislike learning English. They do not want to study. No one like speaking English. No body will ask and respond.	
St. 33	Sometimes is boring. Just do exercises.	Exercises
St. 34	Most funny because in each lesson teacher will do something different. For example we will have oral lesson, listening lesson, discuss lesson etc. We are not douth[?] in the lesson. Students always active.	Oral Listening Discussion
St.35	My classmates usually talk in the class. All of them are active. During listening, they are very attending. During oral they talk very much, no matter it's correct or wrong. And they dare to ask my teachers questions.	Listening Oral
St. 36	During the English lesson, we usually do some exercise about the UE such as practical skill but our teacher also pays attention to oral English, so we have more chances to speak in the class.	Exercises Oral



St. 37	Most of time English teacher do most of the talking and always teach us sentence structure and grammar etc. We have no more time to practice oral. It becomes boring when taking English lesson.	Grammar
St. 38	Student is boring in English lessons at my school. However in Oral lesson it is interesting and exciting.	Oral
St. 39	Boring sometimes.	
St.40	Boring and make me nervous.	
St. 41	To do exercises and oral in the classroom.	Exercises Oral
St. 42	Boring, the teacher always talking.	
St.43	Most of the times in English lesson at our school are boring. Of course, there are some fun in its, but it is just a bit. I just know I have to learn English, so I have to learn a lot of bored rules of English and practice a lot to make my English better. However, the English teachers always just teach us just English, not teach us how to use English. As a result, I have learned English for many years, but I don't know how to use it.	Grammar
St. 45	That is fun! My teacher is very nice and work heat (hard?). She always want me to cut newspaper and study English. Moreover, we always have test such as oral test and grammar test. Sometimes we will group together and then talk to each other with one topic such as social issue.	Newspaper activities Oral tests Grammar tests Discussion
St. 46	Very boring. My English teacher gave me many notes and she told me had to read them and spell the new work. We were 100 percent in the lesson, I feel very difficult and have many stress.	Notes spelling
St. 47	Very boring! But my English teacher work very hard in the English lesson. She make some materials for my class to study. And she force us to have a oral group. Although she work very hard, but I think I cannot improve my English, some of my classmates have not enough confidence to study English!	Oral
St. 48	Teacher and students do not all talk to each other. Teacher only talking with a few students.	
St.49	Funly!	
St. 50	I think an English lesson at my school is not enough. Moreover, my English teacher quantify (qualification?) is poor to teaching my good English, but the teaching machine in my school is quite good.	
St. 51	Doing exercises and check the answer.	Exercises / check
St.52	Boring. The teacher do most talking of the class. Doing passed examination papers all day.	Exam papers



St. 53	The teacher give some materials to the students for example tells them to do a group discussion, then the students sit in few groups to discuss their situation. They can talk in English. At last they can do the task.	Discussion
St. 54	Group discussion, presentation, doing pass exam papers. Composition. It is less to teach English grammar.	Discussion Exam papers Presentation Composition
St. 55	Doing exercises and check the answers. Boring and useless!	Exercises / check
St. 56	Boring.	

No response for students - 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 44,  
Total responses for descriptions were 44

### 1998 Form 6 – CMI students

St. no.	Description	Activity
St. 1	The teacher talk to us most of the time, any we have to finish most exercises after school. And also lots of test for us.	Exercises Tests
St. 2	It's good. The teacher sometimes gives us extra reading materials and discuss with us. He let us learn more vocabularies and grammar. Also she talks to us about the news which happen recently. It's interesting and not always talk around the language rules.	Reading Vocabulary Grammar
St.3	Boring, every lesson we just want to sleep.	
St. 4	Boring. Students do not talk to each other inside the classroom. Sometimes students sleep in the classroom.	
St.5	Boring and make me sleeping.	
St. 6	So boring, just sit here and listen the English teacher say.	Sit and Listen
St. 7	In my school, an English lesson was so freedom. My teacher always tells some English jokes to them and let me to do some homework in class. And she is always do most of the talking to me.	Homework
St. 8	A lot of works to do and improve the speaking, listening, writing and reading skill. Lot of stress come from teacher.	Speaking Listening Writing Reading
St. 9	My English lesson is very open. Every studies [student] would not seek the teachers' talking and teaching. The teacher did not speak English to her studies [students?].	



St.11	The teacher asked us to do a comprehension and he analysis some of the answers and then give us the correct answers.	Comprehension / check / correct
St. 12	It's boring because the teacher always request us to do exercise during the lesson. It reduces many opportunities to talk with my classmates or my teacher because I'm so enjoyable in chatting in English.	Exercise
St.13	Teacher always talk to each student all the time.	
St. 14	So boring we just sit in the classroom, then listen.	Sit and listen
St. 15	The teacher will teach us some vocabulary and teach us how to use these words. In addition, the teacher will point out our grammatical mistakes in the lesson.	Vocabulary Correct
St.17	It is boring because the teacher like to talk to herself. When we don't (I feel that) answer her question, she can continue with the lesson.	
St. 18	The teacher have talking all the time, students didn't have time to talking. And she didn't know what we need to learn.	
St.20	Students must do homework and take a dictionary to check the meaning after to correct the answer. Sometimes we may read the newspaper.	Correct homework Read newspaper
St. 21	In my school students must do exercise, including check the dictionary.	Exercise / check
St. 22	Teacher talk to each student most of the time.	
St. 23	Teacher talk all the time and we just listen. Sometimes it's quite boring. We do some exercise in the lesson such as listening, talking, writing...In our school (English lessons) I think there are not enough time. In order to we can just keep on to do such kind of exercise.	Exercises Listening Talking Writing
St.24	My English lesson is usually teaching the AL examination's skill and then we would do some oral practice to prepare my examination. Besides, we also do the listening exercise.	Exam skills Oral Listening
St. 25	Boring. A little chance to speak English. Not enough time to learn English the ways to learn English are wrong.	
St. 26	Boring, little chance to speak English.	
St.27	At my school, English lessons was very boring. The teacher just teach us some grammar and some new words or sentences. We haven't enough time to practice our oral and writing. The English lesson at school was very terrible.	Grammar Vocabulary
St. 28	Do a pile of English exercises. Do oral practice in my class for a group.	Exercises Oral



St. 30	The classmates are very quite [quiet]. My teacher always asks the students questions.	
St.31	Students are too silent and just the teacher 'talk' and teach in class. She or he also teaches the grammar and something like that.	Grammar
St. 32	Boring because the teacher is bored. Especially when he teachers grammar.	Grammar
St. 33	The English lesson in my school isn't very boring, but I can't learn a lot of English from it. Since my English teacher don't do enough exercises ( speaking, listening) to us. He always put more time to improve our writing and usage	Writing Usage
St. 35	Sometimes teacher gave us some exercise to do and taught us some grammar. Doing one composition per week.	Exercises Grammar Composition
St. 36	The teacher always talking English. But the students do not talking. They are listening carefully.	
St.37	Our teacher is interesting. In an English lesson he provides much time to us to speak more. Sometimes he also gives us a lot of good compositions which are in newspaper.	Speaking Composition / Newspaper activities
St. 38	Teacher train our to do exercise of English book. Teacher give past paper of English me to do them. We train listening once a week.	Exercise Exam papers Listening
St. 39	Teacher always talk a lot of interesting things e.g. travelling but the language medium is Cantonese. The atmosphere is funny. Teacher is friendly. We can express any opinion.	
St.40	The teacher sometimes said Chinese, sometimes said English during the lesson. The lesson is very boring. We usually practice grammar in class. There are only two lessons of listening every week.	Grammar Listening
St.41	The lesson is about the exam in HKALE.	Exam papers
St. 42	Give more the rule of the English and point out the different words have similar mean how to use it.	Grammar Vocabulary
St. 43	Just do exercise and practice, but not teaching us the technique of learning English.	Exercises
St.44	Teacher teaching and students answer. Do practices, exercises, test, exam, research the answers.	Exercises Tests Exam papers
St. 45	Almost just the teacher talks. Students talk very little. Exam is very important, so we are learning English under pressure. We can't enjoy when we are learning English.	
St. 46	Boring, less chance to speak, don't learn much.	
St.47	Boring. The teacher talks most of the time.	



St. 48	There is not enough chances for us to speak English in the lesson.	
St.49	In my English lesson, my English teacher always speak English and her uses some Cantonese in order to make our classmates to understand. If some classmate wants to ask some question they don't have confidence and feel anxious and shy to speak English.	
St. 50	Sit down and listen.	Sit and listen
St. 52	In my school we have played some games in the English lesson and the students are very activity on the lessons. We are talking to each other in English.	Games
St. 53	The teachers always order the students to do a lot of homework.	Homework
St. 54	My English teacher is not very good. During the lesson she always speaking in Cantonese. And she teaching way is boring. I want she can speaking more English during the lesson.	
St.55	Study for myself. I like doing English exercise or something like that.	Exercise
St. 56	My English lesson does not very special in the lesson, the teacher teach English and the student listen, sometimes some classmates were sleeping and talking.	
St. 57	Finish the textbook.	Textbook
St. 58	The classmates talk with Chinese loudly and the teacher always cannot continue.	
St.59	My classmate and I, we were not attention to study and didn't finish the homework and them we speak Chinese language in the English class.	
St.60	Unuseful, teacher just talking, student just listening.	Sit and Listen
St. 61	Boring, because most students didn't speak so mostly we do some grammar exercises and them checked them in class. However, during that time almost all the students have fall asleep and of course, I'm one of them.	Grammar exercises / check
St.62	Most of our classmates are sleeping when the English teacher is teaching.	

No response for students 10, 16, 19, 29, 34, 51

Total responses for descriptions were 55

### 1999 Form 6 – CMI students

St. no.	Description	Activities
St. 1	Formal boring.	
St. 2	Teacher talking very much. Do lots of exercises.	Exercises
St. 3	Nothing.	



St. 4	Very boring. In the English lesson classmates always want to sleep.	
St. 5	In my English lesson, we just concentrate on what we are going to cope with our exams. Also we have few chances to speak English in class no matter how poor English I have.	Exam practice?
St. 6	Sometimes are boring but sometimes are interesting.	
St. 12	Very boring. My teacher's pronunciation always wrong. Our lesson never speak in English with classmates.	
St. 17	The English lesson is boring because often just the teacher tell us. And also, there are no games to play. I think the interesting games can attract us, so it can improve our English and we can learn English actively.	No games
St.18	The teacher will sometimes ask us some question which isn't too difficult. Some of the student not willing to do or think only sleeping.	Questions
St.19	There are lots of texts. It is so difficult./In my school. All English lessons is very boring because it is that always teacher speaking. We are always listening, and there are no games. So I think that it is not interesting.	Reading Listening
St. 20	At our school, teachers will give more exercise to us to do. Beside, we have more test to do. Sometimes we must do listening, reading and so on.	Exercises Tests Listening Reading
St. 21	Listen to the teacher look at the blackboard.	(Look at blackboard) Sit and Listen
St. 23	At our school, my English teacher talk to us with too more Chinese. And the students have a few response to the questions of the teacher. The pace of learning is so slow not to catch the normal speed to teach us, in my opinion. Some of the students felt bored. Some don't like to listen teacher's word. Perhaps their English ability was so week. Indeed, I don't deny I am also the one.	
St. 24	Teacher speak English for us and ask some classmates to answer her questions. We also have discussion. In my school English lesson, the teacher teach us different sections everyday. She also ask us that must speak English in lesson. She teach us some skills when we study English.	Answer teacher's questions Discussion Skills

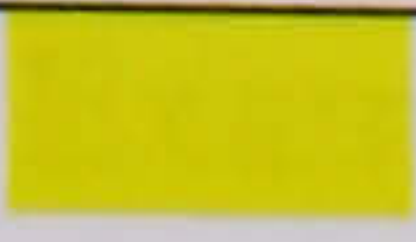










St. 30	In an English lesson our teach us pick up some news articles for us to read together and then we discuss the topic. I think it's funny and student can get more chance to speak English. Play role play in the classroom and only use English to communicate between students and teacher.	Reading Discussion Speaking Role-play
St. 31	Only doing exercises. Many students feel bored and hate English. We are afraid for speaking English.	Exercises
St. 32	We do lots of exercises and the teacher tell us the answers but he never explain that.	Exercises Answer teacher
St. 33	Just the teacher talks. The does not teach anything. We have less take part in the English class.	
St. 34	It is boring and everybody didn't like to study and English teacher speak herself. During the lesson some classmates sleep and they seem like to listen to the teacher and some classmates do another things themselves.	
St. 35	The teacher write down the answer of yesterday's homework and we copy them. Sometimes, we do oral exercise and listen to the tape. It is a boring lesson and no many chances to talk.	Check homework Oral exercise Listen to tape
St. 46	My English lesson in my school is the teacher talk more and the students just speak up when the teacher ask them a question.	Answer t's question
St. 47	Mr. Chung is our English teacher. One day he looked us very tired and bored. So he could not carry on. Finally he took us to went to TV Room watch English film.	(Watch film)
St. 48	Boring. Only the teacher talking on the lesson.	
St. 49	The classmates are willing to talk to each other in English. The teachers always solve our problems. The lessons sometimes are full of happiness but the classmates do not want to do if we encounter the difficult questions.	
St. 50	Most of the time the teacher talk to us. But we work together with four classmates frequently.	
St. 54	Examination orientation.	Exam papers

No response for students 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 51, 52, 53

Total responses for descriptions were 26



Category	1997 n=44	1998 n=56	1999 n=26
 +ve comments about lessons and teachers	34%	10.7%	11.5%
 -ve comments about lessons	54.5%	39.3%	50%
 Criticism of classmates	11.4%	23.2%	15.4%
 +ve comments about classmates	11.4%	1.8%	3.8%
 Comments about teachers talking too much / not enough opportunities for student talk	20.5%	30.3%	46.2%
 Criticism of teacher / problems	22.7%	21.4%	19.2%
 Comments about opportunities for group work	11.4%	1.8%	-
 Comments about speaking Chinese in lessons	6.8%	8.9%	7.7%
 Interesting use of vocabulary	St. 3/47	St. 21/38/53	-

#### Points of interest

Positive comments about lessons ranged from 34% to 10.5% of comments whereas negative comments were considerably higher ranging from 39.3% to 54.5% of comments.

Students were critical of classmates not participating whereas positive comments regarding classmates were much lower.

Comments about teachers talking a lot and complaints about not enough opportunities for student talk ranged from 22.7% to 46.2 %.

About 20% of all descriptions contained a negative comment about ability of teachers or other problems such stress or not understanding.

Group work received little or no mention while it was noted that Chinese was used in the classrooms.

Interesting vocabulary included force, train, repeatedly, order and must - all associated with assertion / power of teacher.

#### Activities

Activities	1997	1998	1999	Overall
Discussion / oral	12	5	3	21
Listening	3	5	3	11
Sit and Listen	-	4	3	7
Exercises	7	12	5	24
Reading	-	2	3	5



Writing	1	5	-	6
Newspaper Activities	1	2	-	3
Role-play	-	-	1	1
Exam papers/skills	2	4	2	8
Game	1	1	-	2
Grammar	3	8	-	11
Notes	1	-	-	1
Tests	1	2	1	4
Vocabulary	-	4	-	4
Homework	-	3	1	4
Textbook	-	1	-	1



Appendix 3.2: Descriptions of English lessons (Questionnaire 1a-Likert Scale questionnaire) Analysis II

- Key
- Affective responses
  - Green evaluative response class or teacher
  - Pink evaluative response of self

1997- Form 6 CMI students

St. no	Description
St. 1	Sometimes it's fun but too long. I's very tire after English lessons. Sometimes it's boring.
St.2	The teacher's questions so boring. Teacher sometimes talk about not useful thing. At a lesson just half is good for our study.
St.3	At my school it is not many chances for classmates to speak in English. Many times we will do the book exercise so it is not interesting. Repeatedly listen to the listening tape. It is not fun.
St.4	My English lesson sometimes is so boring. My English teacher taught English language in so boring. But when he teach our Oral lessons, we feel not boring. So I would prefer to study oral lesson.
St. 5	We sometimes speak in Cantonese, some of classmates don't want to speak more English in this lesson. The teacher always is (locate?) in active.
St.6	I do some exercise during an English lesson and them my teacher checks it and my English teacher like talking through the lesson.
St.7	So boring on my school. Sometimes I don't know what is the teacher said or did.
St.8	The English lesson at my school is very boring. And I find it difficult to study English.
St.9	Boring but useful, teacher talks only. We have little chance to talk to the teacher and students.
St. 10	Teacher do most of the talking. We talk when only we are doing an oral lessons. But during English lesson we speak more Chinese than English.
St.11	Teacher should do most of the talking in class.
St. 12	In my school's English lesson, we will do all part of the UE[Use of English] exam, e.g. writing, speaking, listening... Sometimes we have a test in every week. Beside we will work in a group.
St. 14	Boring.



St. 17	The teacher sometimes use the Chinese, when we don't know the meaning and sometimes playing the game to teach us. But <b>I always don't know</b> what my teacher teaching.
St. 19	<b>Boring.</b>
St. 24	<b>Boring.</b>
St.25	<b>Boring</b> , noisy.
St. 29	Just do exercises, but <b>I can't</b> know how to do it. The main point is that <b>I can't improve</b> my English level at the school.
ST.30	Sometimes is <b>boring</b> because <b>we're passive</b> . Teacher talks more than students. Always work on my own cannot cooperate with classmates unless in oral lesson and discussing.
St.31	Lot of time use Chinese.
St. 32	My classmates <b>dislike</b> learning English. They <b>do not want</b> to study. No one <b>like</b> speaking English. No body will ask and respond.
St. 33	Sometimes is <b>boring</b> . Just do exercises.
St. 34	<b>Most funny</b> because in each lesson teacher will do something different. For example we will have oral lesson, listening lesson, discuss lesson etc. We are <b>not douth[?]</b> in the lesson. Students always active.?
St.35	My classmates usually talk in the class. All of them are active. ? During listening, they are very attending. During oral they talk very much, no matter it's correct or wrong. And they dare to ask my teachers questions.
St. 36	During the English lesson, we usually do some exercise about the UE such as practical skill but our teacher also <b>pays attention</b> to oral English, so <b>we have more chances</b> to speak in the class.
St. 37	Most of time English teacher do most of the talking and always teach us sentence structure and grammar etc. We have <b>no more time</b> to practice oral. It becomes <b>boring</b> when taking English lesson.
St. 38	Student is <b>boring</b> in English lessons at my school. However in Oral lesson it is <b>interesting</b> and <b>exciting</b> .
St. 39	<b>Boring</b> sometimes.
St.40	<b>Boring</b> and <b>make me nervous??!</b>
St. 41	To do exercises and oral in the classroom.
St. 42	<b>Boring</b> , the teacher always talking.



St.43	Most of the times in English lesson at our school are <b>boring</b> . Of course, there are some <b>fun</b> in its, but it is just a bit. I just know I have to learn English, so I have to learn a lot of <b>bored?</b> rules of English and <b>practice a lot to</b> make my English better. However, the English teachers always just teach us just English, <b>not teach us</b> how to use English. As a result, I have learned English for many years, but I <b>don't know how</b> to use it.
St. 45	That is <b>fun</b> ! My teacher is <b>very nice</b> ??and <b>work heat??</b> (hard?). She always want me to cut newspaper and study English. Moreover, we always have test such as oral test and grammar test. Sometimes we will group together and then talk to each other with one topic such as social issue.
St. 46	<b>Very boring</b> . My English teacher gave me many notes and she told me had to read them and spell the new work. We were 100 percent in the lesson, I <b>feel very difficult</b> and <b>have many stress</b> .
St. 47	<b>Very boring!</b> But my English teacher work <b>very hard</b> in the English lesson. She make some materials for my class to study. And she force us to have a oral group. Although she work very hard, but I think I <b>cannot improve</b> my English, some of my classmates have <b>not enough confidence</b> to study English!
St. 48	Teacher and students <b>do not all talk</b> to each other. Teacher <b>only talking</b> with a few students.
St.49	<b>Funly!</b>
St. 50	I think an English lesson at my school is <b>not enough</b> . Moreover, my English teacher <b>quantify (qualification?) is poor</b> to teaching my good English, but the teaching machine in my school <b>is quite good</b> .
St. 51	Doing exercises and check the answer.
St.52	<b>Boring</b> . The teacher do most talking of the class. Doing passed examination papers all day.
St. 53	The teacher give some materials to the students for example tells them to do a group discussion, then the students sit in few groups to discuss their situation. They can talk in English. At last they can do the task.
St. 54	Group discussion, presentation, doing pass exam papers. Composition. It is less to teach English grammar.
St. 55	Doing exercises and check the answers. <b>Boring and useless!</b>
St. 56	<b>Boring</b> .

No response for students - 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 44,  
Total responses for descriptions were 44



### 1998 Form 6 – CMI students

St. no.	Description
St. 1	The teacher talk to us most of the time, any we have to finish most exercises after school. And also lots of test for us.
St. 2	It's good. The teacher sometimes gives us extra reading materials and discuss with us. He let us learn more vocabularies and grammar. Also she talks to us about the news which happen recently. It's interesting and not always talk around the language rules.
St.3	Boring, every lesson we just want to sleep.
St. 4	Boring. Students do not talk to each other inside the classroom. Sometimes students sleep in the classroom.
St.5	Boring and make me sleeping.
St. 6	So boring, just sit here and listen the English teacher say.
St. 7	In my school, an English lesson was so freedom. My teacher always tells some English jokes to them and let me to do some homework in class. And she is always do most of the talking to me.
St. 8	A lot of works to do and improve the speaking, listening, writing and reading skill. Lot of stress come from teacher.
St. 9	My English lesson is very open. Every studies [student] would not seek the teachers' talking and teaching. The teacher did not speak English to her studies [students?].
St.11	The teacher asked us to do a comprehension and he analysis some of the answers and then give us the correct answers.
St. 12	It's boring because the teacher always request us to do exercise during the lesson. It reduces many opportunities to talk with my classmates or my teacher because I'm so enjoyable in chatting in English.
St.13	Teacher always talk to each student all the time.
St. 14	So boring we just sit in the classroom, then listen.
St. 15	The teacher will teach us some vocabulary and teach us how to use these words. In addition, the teacher will point out our grammatical mistakes in the lesson.
St.17	It is boring because the teacher like to talk to herself. When we don't (I feel that) answer her question, she can continue with the lesson.



St. 18	The teacher have talking all the time, students <b>didn't have time</b> to talking. And <b>she didn't know</b> what we need to learn.
St.20	Students must do homework and take a dictionary to check the meaning after to correct the answer. Sometimes we may read the newspaper.
St. 21	In my school students must do exercise, including check the dictionary.
St. 22	Teacher talk to each student most of the time.
St. 23	Teacher talk all the time and we <b>just</b> listen. Sometimes it's <b>quite boring</b> . We do some exercise in the lesson such as listening, talking, writing...In our school (English lessons) I think <b>there are not enough</b> time. In order to we can just keep on to do such kind of exercise.
St.24	My English lesson is usually teaching the AL examination's skill and then we would do some oral practice to prepare my examination. Besides, we also do the listening exercise.
St. 25	<b>Boring</b> . A <b>little chance</b> to speak English. <b>Not enough time</b> to learn English the <b>ways to learn English are wrong</b> .
St. 26	<b>Boring</b> , <b>little chance</b> to speak English.
St.27	At my school, English lessons was <b>very boring</b> . The teacher just teach us some grammar and some new words or sentences. <b>We haven't enough time</b> to practice our oral and writing. The English lesson at school was <b>very terrible</b> .
St. 28	Do a pile of English exercises. Do oral practice in my class for a group.
St. 30	The classmates are <b>very quite</b> [quiet]. My teacher always asks the students questions.
St.31	Students are <b>too silent</b> and just the teacher 'talk' and teach in class. She or he also teaches the grammar and something like that.
St. 32	<b>Boring</b> because the teacher is bored. Especially when he teachers grammar.
St. 33	The English lesson in my school <b>isn't very boring</b> , but I <b>can't learn</b> a lot of English from it. Since my English teacher <b>don't do enough</b> exercises ( speaking, listening) to us. He always put more time to improve our writing and usage
St. 35	Sometimes teacher gave us some exercise to do and taught us some grammar. Doing one composition per week.



St. 36	The teacher always talking English. But the students do not talking. They are listening carefully.
St.37	Our teacher <b>is interesting</b> . In an English lesson he provides much time to us to speak more. Sometimes he also gives us a lot of good compositions which are in newspaper.
St. 38	Teacher train our to do exercise of English book. Teacher give past paper of English me to do them. We train listening once a week.
St. 39	Teacher always talk a lot of <b>interesting</b> things e.g. travelling but the language medium is Cantonese. The atmosphere is <b>funny</b> . Teacher is <b>friendly</b> . We <b>can express</b> any opinion.
St.40	The teacher sometimes said Chinese, sometimes said English during the lesson. The lesson is <b>very boring</b> . We usually practice grammar in class. There are only two lessons of listening every week.
St.41	The lesson is about the exam in HKALE.
St. 42	Give more the rule of the English and point out the different words have similar mean how to use it.
St. 43	Just do exercise and practice, but <b>not teaching us</b> the technique of learning English.
St.44	Teacher teaching and students answer. Do practices, exercises, test, exam, research the answers.
St. 45	Almost just the teacher talks. Students <b>talk very little</b> . Exam is very important, so we are learning English <b>under pressure</b> . We <b>can't enjoy</b> when we are learning English.
St. 46	<b>Boring</b> , <b>less chance</b> to speak, <b>don't learn much</b> .
St.47	<b>Boring</b> . The teacher talks most of the time.
St. 48	There <b>is not enough</b> chances for us to speak English in the lesson.
St.49	In my English lesson, my English teacher always speak English and her uses some Cantonese in order to make our classmates to understand. If some classmate wants to ask some question they <b>don't have confidence</b> and <b>feel anxious and shy</b> to speak English.
St. 50	Sit down and listen.
St. 52	In my school we have played some games in the English lesson and the students are very activity on the lessons. We are talking to each other in English.
St. 53	The teachers <b>always order</b> the students to do a lot of homework.



St. 54	My English teacher is not very good. During the lesson she always speaking in Cantonese. And she teaching way is boring. I want she can speaking more English during the lesson.
St.55	Study for myself. I like doing English exercise or something like that.
St. 56	My English lesson does not very special in the lesson, the teacher teach English and the student listen, sometimes some classmates were sleeping and talking.
St. 57	Finish the textbook.
St. 58	The classmates talk with Chinese loudly and the teacher always cannot continue.
St.59	My classmate and I, we were not attention to study and didn't finish the homework and them we speak Chinese language in the English class.
St.60	Unuseful, teacher just talking, student just listening.
St. 61	Boring, because most students didn't speak so mostly we do some grammar exercises and them checked them in class. However, during that time almost all the students have fall asleep and of course, I'm one of them.
St.62	Most of our classmates are sleeping when the English teacher is teaching.

No response for students 10, 16, 19, 29, 34, 51

Total responses for descriptions were 55

### 1999 Form 6 – CMI students

St. no.	Description
St. 1	Formal boring.
St. 2	Teacher talking very much. Do lots of exercises.
St. 3	Nothing.
St. 4	Very boring. In the English lesson classmates always want to sleep.
St. 5	In my English lesson, we just concentrate on what we are going to cope with our exams. Also we have few chances to speak English in class no matter how poor English I have.
St. 6	Sometimes are boring but sometimes are interesting.
St. 12	Very boring. My teacher's pronunciation always wrong. Our lesson never speak in English with classmates.



St. 17	The English lesson <b>is boring</b> because often just the teacher tell us. And also, there are no games to play. I think the interesting games can attract us, so it can <b>improve our English</b> and we can <b>learn English actively</b> .
St.18	The teacher will sometimes ask us some question which isn't too difficult. Some of the student <b>not willing to do</b> or think only sleeping.
St.19	There are lots of texts. It is <b>so difficult</b> ./In my school. All English lessons is <b>very boring</b> because it is that always teacher speaking. We are always listening, and there are no games. So I think that it is not <b>interesting</b> .
St. 20	At our school, teachers will give more exercise to us to do. Beside, we have more test to do. Sometimes we must do listening, reading and so on.
St. 21	Listen to the teacher look at the blackboard.
St. 23	At our school, my English teacher <b>talk to us with too</b> more Chinese. And the students have a <b>few response</b> to the questions of the teacher. The pace of learning is <b>so slow</b> not to catch the normal speed to teach us, in my opinion. Some of the students <b>felt bored</b> . Some <b>don't like</b> to listen teacher's word. Perhaps their English ability was so week. Indeed, I don't deny I am also the one.
St. 24	Teacher speak English for us and ask some classmates to answer her questions. We also have discussion. In my school English lesson, the teacher teach us different sections everyday. She also ask us that must speak English in lesson. She teach us some skills when we study English.
St. 30	In an English lesson our teach us pick up some news articles for us to read together and then we discuss the topic. I think <b>it's funny</b> and student can get <b>more chance</b> to speak English. Play role play in the classroom and only use English to communicate between students and teacher.
St. 31	Only doing exercises. Many students <b>feel bored</b> and <b>hate</b> English. We are <b>afraid for speaking</b> English.
St. 32	We do lots of exercises and the teacher tell us the answers but he <b>never explain</b> that.
St. 33	Just the teacher talks. The does <b>not teach</b> anything. We have <b>less take</b> part in the English class.
St. 34	It <b>is boring</b> and everybody <b>didn't like to study</b> and English <b>teacher speak herself</b> . During the lesson some classmates sleep and they seem like to listen to the teacher and some classmates do another things themselves.



Appendix 4: Questionnaires  
 Appendix 4.1: Questionnaire 1a – Likert Scale Questionnaire  
 Please answer the following questions. Do not worry about being right or wrong.  
 It is not a test, but a questionnaire to find out what you think.  
 Please try to write your answers in your own words.

St. 35	The teacher write down the answer of yesterday's homework and we copy them. Sometimes, we do oral exercise and listen to the tape. It is a boring lesson and no many chances to talk.
St. 46	My English lesson in my school is the teacher talk more and the students just speak up when the teacher ask them a question.
St. 47	Mr. Chung is our English teacher. One day he looked us very tired and bored. So he could not carry on. Finally he took us to went to TV Room watch English film.
St. 48	Boring. Only the teacher talking on the lesson.
St. 49	The classmates are willing to talk to each other in English. The teachers always solve our problems. The lessons sometimes are full of happiness but the classmates do not want to do if we encounter the difficult questions.
St. 50	Most of the time the teacher talk to us. But we work together with four classmates frequently.
St. 54	Examination orientation.

No response for students 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 51, 52, 53  
 Total responses for descriptions were 26



Appendix 4: Questionnaires

Appendix 4.1: Questionnaire 1a – Likert Scale Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions. Do not worry about spelling or grammar, it is not a test, but a questionnaire to find out about your thoughts and ideas.

Please try to write your answers as honestly as possible. Thank you.

- 1. Why are you doing this course?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. What do you think the main functions of English in Hong Kong are?
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. I speak English outside the classroom. Yes / No
- 4. I prefer not to learn English. Yes / No
- 5. I feel anxious when I learn English. Yes / No
- 6. English is difficult for me to learn. Yes / No
- 7. I should not speak unless I know I will be correct. Agree / Disagree
- 8. It is important for me to be able to speak English well. Agree / Disagree
- 9. English is useful to me now. Agree / Disagree
- 10. English will be useful to me in the future. Agree / Disagree

Please choose the answer which you think is best to finish the statement. (Please ✓)

- The best way to learn English is to
- a) study the rules of the language
  - b) repeat after the teacher
  - c) memorize chunks of language
  - d) do talking activities with classmates
  - e) watch English/American films/videos
  - f) other \_\_\_\_\_

- In English classes
- a) the teacher should do most of the talking
  - b) the students should do most of the taking
  - c) students should talk to each other most of the time
  - d) students and teachers should all talk to each other
  - e) other \_\_\_\_\_

What characteristics make a good teacher?

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

What characteristics make a good learner?

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

Describe an English lesson at your school

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Below are some statements. Decide if you agree/ disagree with them and tick the box.  
(Annotation of teaching approach these statements are perhaps more reflective of are in italics)

In English classes .....		agree	slightly agree	slightly disagree	disagree
1	I should not speak unless I am spoken to.	<i>Traditional approach: Interaction belief</i>			
2	I should not ask the teacher questions.	<i>Traditional approach: Interaction belief</i>			
3	I expect the teacher to correct all my mistakes.	<i>Traditional approach: Learning belief</i>			
4	I would rather work on my own than in a group.	<i>Traditional approach: Learning preference</i>			
5	I would rather work in a group than on my own.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning preference</i>			
6	I find it easy to ask the teacher questions.	<i>Communicative approach: Interaction belief</i>			
7	It is my fault if I don't improve my English.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning belief</i>			
8	It is more important for me to talk than listen in order to learn.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning belief</i>			
9	I don't like it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class.	<i>Traditional approach: Interaction preference</i>			
10	Talking should take place between teacher and students and not students and students.	<i>Traditional approach: Interaction belief</i>			
11	I am responsible for my own progress.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning belief</i>			
12	I prefer to work in a group because we can help each other.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning preference</i>			
13	I don't feel I learn anything unless I talk to the teacher during class.	<i>Traditional approach: Learning belief</i>			
14	I should never disagree with the teacher.	<i>Traditional approach: Interaction belief</i>			
15	I can ask the teacher to change parts of the course I don't like it.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning belief?</i>			
16	I should be hesitant when answering the teacher's questions.	<i>Traditional approach: Interaction belief</i>			
17	Teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom.	<i>Traditional approach: Learning belief?</i>			
18	I find it difficult when I have to work in a group.	<i>Traditional approach: Learning preference</i>			
19	I should sit and listen quietly when I am in class.	<i>Traditional approach: Learning belief</i>			
20	I prefer it when the teacher decides what to do in class.	<i>Traditional approach: Learning preference</i>			
21	I prefer it when I can decide what to do in class.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning preference</i>			
22	I learn more when I speak with other students than when I speak to the teacher.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning belief</i>			
23	I like it when other students correct my mistakes.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning preference</i>			
24	I have more opportunities to learn when I work in a group than when I work by myself.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning belief</i>			
25	I learn best when I am active and can talk.	<i>Communicative approach: Learning belief</i>			
26	I should be enthusiastic to answer the teacher.	<i>Communicative approach: Interaction belief</i>			



## Appendix 4.2: Questionnaire 1b-Paired Statement Questionnaire

Please read the pairs of sentences and circle the statement that you most agree with.  
There is no right or wrong answer.

(Annotation of statements in italics– C= more reflective of communicative approaches  
/ T=more reflective of more additional approaches)

1. a) I find it easy to ask the teacher questions. (*C - Interaction preference*)  
b) I find it difficult to ask the teacher questions. (*T - Interaction preference*)
2. a) Only the teacher can correct my mistakes. (*T - Learning belief*)  
b) The teacher and my classmates can correct my mistakes. (*C - Learning belief*)
3. a) I would rather work on my own than in a group. (*T - Learning preference*)  
b) I would rather work in a group than on my own. (*C - Learning preference*)
4. a) I don't like it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class. (*T - Interaction preference*)  
b) I don't mind it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class. (*C - Interaction preference*)
5. a) The teacher is responsible for my progress. (*T - Learning belief*)  
b) I am responsible for my progress. (*C - Learning belief*)
6. a) Talking should take place between everyone in the classroom. (*C - Interaction belief*)  
b) Talking should take place between the teacher and students, not students and students. (*T - Interaction belief*)
7. a) I can learn English if I do not speak to the teacher during the lesson. (*C - Learning belief*)  
b) I can not learn English if I do not speak to the teacher during the lesson. (*T - Learning belief*)
8. a) I do not like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions. (*T - Interaction preference*)  
b) I like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions. (*C - Interaction preference*)  
IF YOU CHOSE a) please say why \_\_\_\_\_
9. a) Students should do most of the talking in the classroom. (*C - Interaction belief*)  
b) Teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom. (*T - Interaction belief*)
10. a) I prefer to decide myself what I do in class. (*C - Learning preference*)  
b) I prefer the teacher to decide what I do in class. (*T - Learning preference*)
11. a) When learning English it is more important for me to talk than listen in class. (*C - Learning belief*)  
b) When learning English it is more important for me to listen than talk in class. (*T - Learning belief*)



12.

a) I should be hesitant to answer the teacher’s questions. (T - Interaction belief)

b) I should not be hesitant to answer the teacher’s questions. (C - Interaction belief)
13.

a) It is my fault if I do not learn anything. (C - Learning belief)

b) It is the teacher’s fault if I do not learn anything. (T - Learning belief)
14.

a) I find it easy when I have to work in a group. (C - Learning preference)

b) I find it difficult when I have to work in a group. (T - Learning preference)
15.

a) I learn best when I can sit and listen quietly to the teacher in class. (T - Learning belief)

b) I learn best when I am active and can talk in class. (C - Learning belief)
16.

a) I should never disagree with the teacher. (T - Interaction belief)

b) I can disagree with the teacher. (C - Interaction belief)

Describe what you do in an English lesson at your school.

- What characteristics make a good teacher?

i.

ii.

iii.
- What characteristics make a good leaner?

i.

ii.

iii.

What should a teacher do in the classroom?

What should a student do in the classroom?



## Appendix 4.3: Questionnaire 2-Cultural Dimensions Questionnaire

**Please read the pairs of sentences and circle the statement that you most agree with. Do this as quickly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers.**

- 1.A positive association in society is with whatever is rooted in tradition.
- 2.A positive association in society is with whatever is 'new'.
- 3.Impersonal truth is stressed and can, in principle, be obtained from any competent person.
- 4.Personal wisdom is stressed and is transferred in the relationship with a particular teacher.
- 5.A teacher should respect the independence of his or her students.
- 6.A teacher merits the respect of his or her students.
- 7.One is never too old to learn; continual education.
- 8.The young should learn; adults cannot accept a student role.
- 9.Students expect to learn how to do.
- 10.Students expect to learn how to learn.
- 11.Student-centred education(value is placed on student initiative)
- 12.Teacher-centred education(value is placed on teacher-ordered learning).
- 13.Students expect teacher to initiate communication.
- 14.Teacher expects students to initiate communication.
- 15.Teacher expects students to find their own paths.
- 16.Students expect teacher to outline paths to follow.
- 17.Individual students will speak up in class in response to a general invitation by the teacher.
- 18.Individual students will only speak up in class when called upon personally by the teacher.
- 19.Individuals will speak up in large groups.
- 20.Individuals will only speak up in small groups.
- 21.Large classes are split socially into smaller cohesive subgroups based on particular
- 22.Subgroupings in class vary from one situation to the next based on universalist criteria (e.g. task at hand)
- 23.Students may speak up spontaneously in class.
- 24.Students speak up spontaneously in class only when invited by the teacher.
- 25.The teacher is seldom contradicted and rarely criticised.
- 26.Students are allowed to contradict or criticise the teacher.
- 27.Confrontation in learning situations can be beneficial, conflicts can be brought into the open.
- 28.Formal harmony in learning situations should be maintained.



29. Effectiveness of learning is related to the excellence of the teacher.
30. Effectiveness of learning is related to the amount of two-way communication in class.
31. Neither the teacher nor any student should ever be made to lose face.
32. 'Face-saving' is of little importance.
33. Education is a way of improving one's economic worth and self-respect based on ability and competence.
34. Education is a way of gaining prestige in one's social environment and joining a higher status group.
35. Outside class, teachers are treated as equals to the students.
36. Respect for teachers is also shown outside of class.
37. Diploma certificates are important and displayed on walls.
38. Diploma certificates have little importance.
39. In teacher-student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the student.
40. In teacher-student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the teacher.
41. Older teachers are more respected than younger teachers.
42. Younger teachers are more liked than older teachers.
43. Acquiring competence is more important than acquiring certificates.
44. Acquiring certificates is more important than acquiring competence.
45. Teachers are expected to give preferential treatment to some students (e.g. based on ethnic affiliation or on recommendation by an influential person).
46. Teachers are expected to be strictly impartial.



Appendix 4.4: Calculation details for Questionnaire 2 – Cultural Dimension questionnaire

List of statement numbers for each category

Statements reflecting Collectivism Score (CS)

1            8            9            18            20            21            28            31            34            37            44            45

Statements reflecting Individualism Score (IS)

2            7            10            17            19            22            27            32            33            38            43            46

Statements reflecting small Power Distance (SP)

3            5            11            14            15            23            26            30            35            39            42

Statements reflecting large Power Distance (LP)

4            6            12            13            16            24            25            29            36            40            41

(CS+IS+SP+LP should equal 23)

CS – IS = Collectivism / Individualism Score

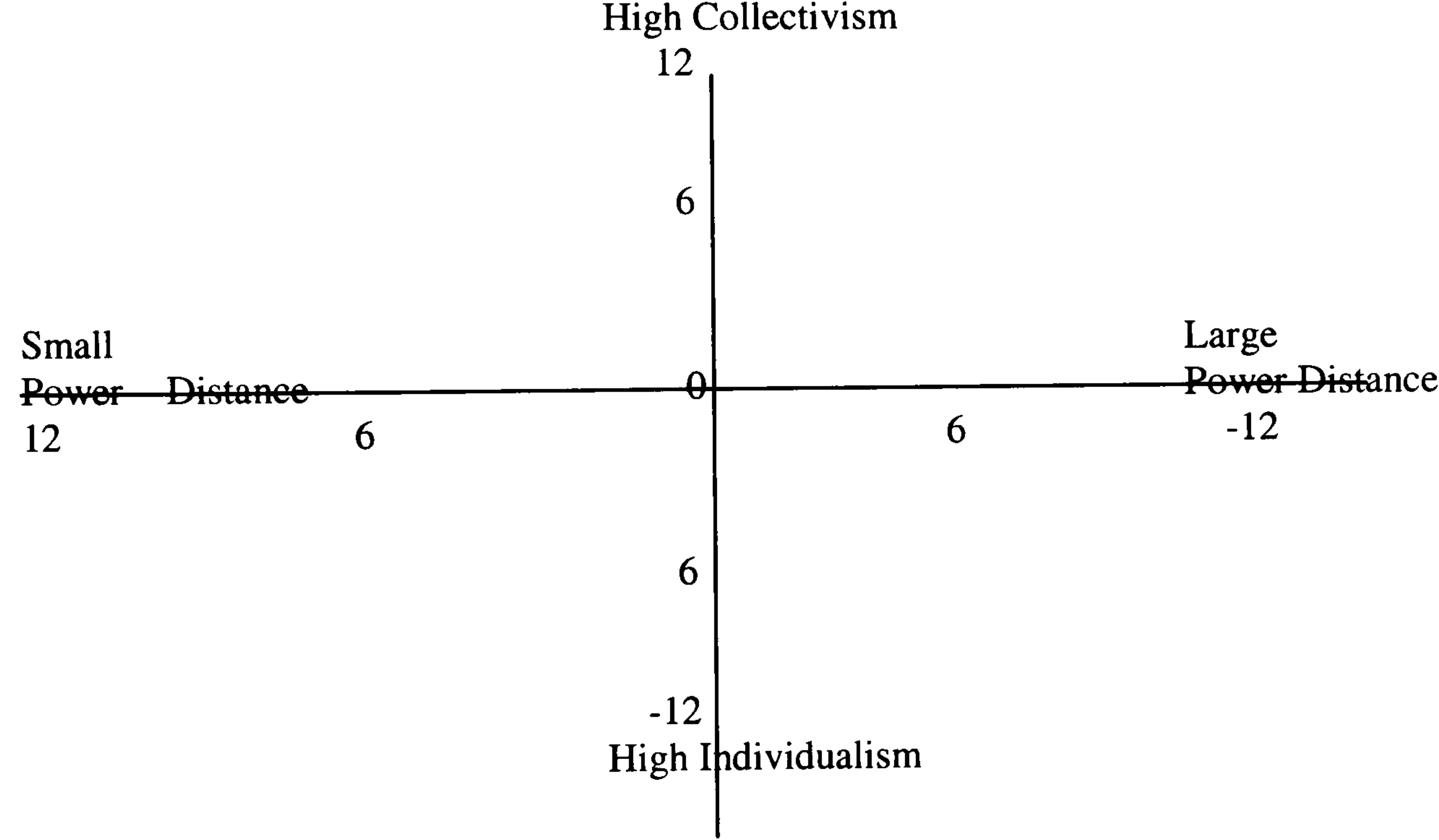
SP – LP = Power Distance Score

The scores for each group were calculated by dividing the each of the score for Power Distance and Individualism by the number of informants in each group to give the group mean

Plot on graph as below

Collectivism /Individualism score on Y axis

Power Distance score on X axis (X axis reverse scale)



Reference Goodman 1994:131



## Appendix 5: Findings

### Appendix 5.1: Data from teachers - Study 1 - questionnaire 1b - Paired statement questionnaire

T. no.	What I think a teacher should do in the classroom?	What I think a student should do in the classroom.	What I think a student thinks a teacher should do in the classroom.	What I think a student thinks he/she should do in the classroom.
1.	Initiate the students, giving support to the students.	Be active, take the initiate.	Initiate the students to talk or participate in the class activity.	Be active.
2.	Show concern to the progress of the students.	Listen attentively.	-	-
3.	Involve as much students as possible. (Comment – answer for st. is more informative)	Be active.	Teach, give instructions, create a good learning environment.	Be nice to the teacher, obey her instructions, ask questions when I’ve got a problem. Learn on my own.
4.	Facilitate learning	Listen / participate	Facilitate learning	Active participation.
5.	- (Comment maybe not enough time to complete as all other answers very full).	-	Motivate and inspire. Find out the strengths and weaknesses of the students. Help students succeed. Encourage students to try things on their own.	Contribute ideas. Be ‘present’ in the classroom. Be involved-follow instructions and ASK when unclear.
6.	Promote interest in subject. Develop good learner – not necessarily good results though.	Be a good listener. Ask when they are unsure. Be involved.	Use different games and activities to teach us things.	Listen to the teacher.
7.	Facilitate learning.	Participate in classroom	Teach, enhance students’ learning.	Participate in classroom



		activities.		activities.
8.	Direct the students. Point out special things.	Listen to the teacher. Obey the teacher. Think before agreement.	Teaching, giving information which cannot be found in book.	Attentive, don't talk or turn around.
9.	Set goals for her st. and try her best to ensure these goals are reached.	Be as responsive as possible.	-	Concentrate fully on the lesson and participate as much as possible.
10.	Facilitate and teach and listen.	Listen and express and question.	Teach and motivate students to learn.	Learn actively, question and revise when I go back home.
11.	Help students learn with the background knowledge and engage them to think deeper in other aspects.	-	Asking questions introduce new concepts, reinforce what the students have learnt.	Listen attentively, ask if they don't know what is going on.
12.	As a facilitator, encourage students to learn. Teach them how to learn.	Actively involve in activities. Responsive.	Communicate with students. Make it easy for students to learn.	Grasp every chance to learn, response as fast as his/her can. Involve as much as his/her can.
13.	Inspire students to think and facilitate activities.	Participate and try.	Teaching.	Listening to the teacher.
14.	To lead the class. To share the knowledge.	To voice their opinions. To analyse.	-	-
15.	Handle the class, teach what he/she is supposed to, arouse student's	Listen to the teacher's instructions, try to absorb the most out of the	Teaching what is within the syllabus, communicating with students, arousing their interest in learning.	Do what the teacher tells us.



	interest in learning.	lecturing, think independently about what he/she has learnt. (Comment – note use of word lecturing)		
16.	Present the lesson in a lively way which is unforgettable.	Feedback	Teach knowledge.	Paying attention to what the teacher teaches.
17. (NS)	Facilitate or set tasks.	Engage in task appropriate behaviour.	Set tasks, explain procedure and facilitate completion.	Talk together and work on stuff.
18.	Arouse students interest in learning on their own.	Give feedback to teacher what they know and what they don't know.	Teach students how to learn.	Learn the necessary skills to have self-learning.
19.	Encourage the students to ask questions if they don't understand anything. Encourage the students to use the language as frequently as possible.	Listen to the teacher, talk when allowed and participate.	Try to make sure the objectives of the lesson are achieved. Help students to use the language as much as possible in class.	Participate. Ask questions if he doesn't understand something.
20.	Be patient, understanding and teach.	Listen, participate as much as possible.	Smile and explain and give examples and help individual students as they can.	Learn from other students, listen to the teacher, ask questions.
21.	Create a good learning atmosphere.	Participate / involved in the lesson.	Make a good learning environment.	Take part in activities. Listen carefully.
22.	Motivate students to participate and	Listen to instructions and work	Teach us in a fun manner so that we learn but also have fun.	We talk when we are allowed to and listen



	learn.	together.		when we have to.
23.	Teach students and provide them with example information. Also they should encourage students to learn.	Listen carefully and participate as much as they can.	Help students learn. Make students participate.	Follow teacher's instructions. Participate actively. Work hard.
24.	To facilitate students to learn.	To participate in activities actively and listen carefully.	Motivate a student to learn.	Be attentive and active.
25.	Consider everything concerning students.	Try their best to be involved in the classroom.	Get involved.	Get involved.
26.	Be aware of students needs.	Help each other.	Stand there and talk.	Sit there and talk.
27.	Facilitate the students to learn.	Students should participate in as many activities as possible.	Facilitate student learning.	Participate in all activities, suggest what they want, read and research.
28.	A teacher should facilitate.	A learner should participate.	Involve students in active learning.	Students should willing involved themselves in learning.
29.	Engaging students in learning. Making them enjoy and feel interested in the language.	Pay attention and actively participate in the activities, ask teacher questions.	Motivate students to learn English, explain things clearly, give clear instructions.	Be active in the classroom.
30.	Helper.	To play and learn.	Takes care of every student. Instantly checks whether the student understand. Manages the classroom properly.	Be more active. Listens carefully and pays enough attentions to teacher.



31.	Teaching and sharing the life with students.	Be well-behaved, ask questions and make appropriate responses.	Let students have more participation.	Follow instructions and learn attentively.
32.	Motivate students to learn.	Co-operate with the teacher.	Teach.	Listen to the teachers, do what the teachers want us to.
33.	Establish rapport with students. Inform students what they are going to learn /do. Try to present learning points as interestingly and clearly as possible. Give appropriate amount of follow-up work.	Listen and talk in appropriate time. Do the best in their learning.	Show ways to learning and inspire students to talk them.	Listen attentively and ask questions for queries.
34.	-	-	Explain everything clearly. Communicate with students well, always willing to attend their problems.	Have to be eager to learn. Be attentive during lessons.
35.	Teaching and evaluating.	Attentive, participate actively in an appropriate time, learning.	The teacher conduct the lesson in an interesting and meaningful way allowing practices and testing students to see if they understand.	Listen attentively. Do whatever they are told. Asking questions.
36.	Arouse student's interest in learning. Give them knowledge. Be a friend to	Listen and make response.	Keep communicating with the students.	Listen and respond to what the teacher said.



	the students.			
37.	Encourage students to learn and participate.	Be attentive and actively participate.	Motivate learning. Joke a bit to make them at ease then start the lesson and observe their understanding/reactions.	Listen to the teacher, answer questions when asked. Speak in Chinese to my friends when I don't understand.
38.	Look at the needs to the students and their abilities.	Be active to ask and think. Don't just listen and receive everything.	-	-
39.	Teach answer and listen.	Taking part.	He/she should teach, listen and discipline.	He/she should listen, learn ask and participate.
40.	Look at everyone, try to let them feel he/she cares. Be like a friend.	Be friendly and encouraging.	Tell jokes. Observe student's response. Don't drag anything. Be brief and precise.	Respect other especially those who are talking to them, e.g. teacher/students presenting. Try to participate and let the teacher know that response.
41.	He should keep the classroom discipline and create a joyful atmosphere when having a lesson.	He should listen to the teacher and pay attention when the teacher is teaching.	Teach according to the teaching schedule in a vivid way. Of course the discipline of the students should be under his control.	He should listen to the teacher and obey his rules.
42.	Giving freedom, demonstrating and listening.	Listening, doing exercises.	Facilitate learning.	Participate actively.
43.	Be responsive to students needs.	Take part in activities actively.	Be sensible to students responses and individual needs. Be encouraging.	Participate actively in the classroom learning.
44.	To make sure that the	Stay attentive and listen to	Give clear instructions to the students. Teach	Be attentive. Keep thinking



	students are learning something from the lesson.	the teacher. Do as what the teacher instructs them to do.	students something new.	about what is being taught. Do what is instructed.
45.	Motivate the students, teach them knowledge.	Contribute to the lesson (e.g. be responsive)	He/she should observe the students' ability and response. He/she should encourage students to speak and interact.	He/she should respond to the teacher's questions and ask questions if he/she encounters problems.
46.	Help the students to learn how to learn.	Try the best to learn, learn by trial and error.	Help the students learn how to learn. Take care of every student. Give a well-prepared lesson.	Be open-minded and active. Be creative. Be attentive.
47.	Care for students need.	Be attentive in the classroom.	To convey information and knowledge to students. To learn from teachers actively.	



**Appendix 5.2: Data from F6 CMI 1999 - Study 1 - questionnaire 1b - Paired statement questionnaire- What students and teachers should do in class.**

Student number	What should a teacher do in the classroom?	What should a student do in the classroom?
1.	Funny	Work hard
2.	Being a nice person who can teach English.	Pay attention in the classroom.
3.	Teacher need to know everyone who have own different to learn.	Work hard and do the best.
4.	The teacher should tell the students how to improve English and try his/her best to answer the students.	Listen to the teacher quietly. Ask the teacher if the student has questions.
5.	Leader us to talk more English.	Listen and talking.
6.	Try her(his) best to make students learn something.	Listen and talk to each other more.
7.	A teacher should correct student's mistakes and talk more to each other.	A student should talk more, ask more and obey.
8.	Let students learn more in different ways.	Talk more.
9.	Teach more skills for the examination.	Talk more English and listen to the teacher.
10.	No opinion.	Concentrate on the lesson.
11.	Teaching students.	Listening to the teacher. Pay attention.
12.	Lead the student to talk about something.	He/she can speak more English and actively answer teacher's questions.
13.	Talk more. Help the students to understand the things.	Answer questions and talk more in class.
14.	Doing some exercises and talking with the students.	Join into the class.
15.	Teachers should teach us how to solve the problem, not only talk us the answer.	Students should pay attention to teachers and study hard every time.
16.	Communicate with the students.	Go to school on time and keep silent when the teacher teach something to us.
17.	To index us to learn.	Pay attention to listen.
18.	Put their mind to teach the students.	Put all their mind in studying. Finish the teacher's homework.
19.	-	A student should be active to learn and pay attention in the classroom.
20.	Teach any skill for me.	Talk with the teacher.
21.	A teacher should make the lesson more fun.	A student should active to learn anything.



22.	Teaching the HKAL syllabus.	I do not know what student should do in the classroom.
23.	Motivate students to learn things.	Students should be an active listener. For example, students should tell the teachers if they are do wrong.
24.	Concern the students, help them to solve the difficult problems.	Also pay attention in class, don't be lazy, and get good friendship.
25.	Teaching.	Learning.
26.	-	-
27.	Respect for students and help the students how to learn.	Formal harmony in learning and respect for teachers.
28	Teaching = make fun, present new language.	Learning = keep quiet (Teacher wrote beside this – written by a very noisy student!)
29	Teaches skills and should usually ask students questions. And train students how to think to get the answers. Make fun.	Ask questions if don't understand. Don't worry about making mistakes.
30.	Teacher often collect (correct?) answer and teach some topic. Sometimes teachers asked us do exercise.	Listen teachers said, and speak English with teachers and classmates.
31.	Listening to the student what they are talking, to be a leader and help the students to solve the problem.	Concentrate in class. Listen to the teacher what they are teaching. Hard-working.
32.	Communicate with students as much as possible.	Must be actively and concentrate, and if I got question must ask the teacher.
33.	Teach and talk with students.	Do classwork and listen to the teacher.
34.	Talk with students.	Ask questions to teachers when don't know.
35.	Teach the students the knowledge and how to learn of the subject.	A student should listen the teacher carefully and ask the teacher if you have some problem.
36.	Can take care all student progress.	Care and attention teacher said.
37.	Assure that everyone understand what he teach in the classroom.	To do his best to learn what the teacher teaching about.



**Appendix 5.3: Summary of findings for questionnaire1a-Likert Scale questionnaire (Informants = Form 6 CMI students)**

In English classes ...		Grand mean of three cohorts over three years
1	I should not speak unless I am spoken to. (Reflective of more traditional teaching approaches)	Grand mean – 2.57 Comment – students tend to slightly disagree with the statement
2	I should not ask the teacher questions. (Reflective of more traditional teaching approaches)	Grand mean – 3.34 Comment – students strongly disagree with this statement
3	I expect the teacher to correct all my mistakes. (Reflective of more traditional teaching approaches)	Grand mean – 1.52 Comment – students strongly agree with this statement
4	I would rather work on my own than in a group. (Reflective of more traditional ways of learning)	Grand mean – 2.95 Comment – students strongly disagree with this statement
5	I would rather work in a group than on my own. (Reflective of more communicative approaches)	Grand mean – 1.89 Comment – students strongly agree with this statement
6	I find it easy to ask the teacher questions.  (Reflective of more communicative approaches)	Grand mean – 2.31 Comment – students increasingly agree with this statement over the three years. Significant difference between three groups where $p = <0.05$ (Kruskal Wallis Test)
7	It is my fault if I don't improve my English. (Reflective of more communicative approaches, with students' accepting responsibility for learning)	Grand mean – 1.71 Comment – students strongly agree with statement
8	It is more important for me to talk than listen in order to learn. (Reflective of more communicative approaches with an emphasis on talking while learning)	Grand mean – 2.39 Comment – students slightly agree with this statement
9	I don't like it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class. (Perhaps reflective of more traditional classrooms)	Grand mean – 2.89 Comment – students disagree with this statement, but significant difference between three groups where $p = <0.05$ (Kruskal Wallis Test),



10	Talking should take place between teacher and students and not students and students. (Reflective of more traditional classroom patterns of interaction)	Grand mean – 2.83 Comment – Students disagree with statement
11	I am responsible for my own progress. (Reflective of more communicative approaches)	Grand mean – 1.80 Comment – students strongly agree with this statement reinforcing findings for statement 7
12	I prefer to work in a group because we can help each other. (Reflective of more communicative approaches)	Grand mean – 1.65 Comment – students strongly agree with this statement reinforcing findings for statement 4
13	I don't feel I learn anything unless I talk to the teacher during class. (Reflective of more traditional ideas about learning)	Grand mean – 2.79 Comment- students disagree with statement
14	I should never disagree with the teacher. (Reflective of more traditional ideas about learning with teacher as superior)	Grand mean – 3.20 Comment – students disagree strongly with statement
15	I can ask the teacher to change parts of the course I don't like it. (Reflective of more communicative approaches – student can take a role in decisions about the course)	Grand mean – 2.59 Comment – students disagree slightly with the statement
16	I should be hesitant when answering the teacher's questions. (Perhaps more reflective of traditional classroom patterns of interaction in Hong Kong – Wong (1984) and Walker (1998))	Grand mean – 2.33 Comment – Students agree with statement
17	Teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom. (Reflective of more traditional classroom patterns of interaction)	Grand mean – 2.17 Comment – students agree with statement
18	I find it difficult when I have to work in a group. (Because of perceived difficulty, perhaps reflective of preference for more traditional ways of learning)	Grand mean – 2.56 Comment – students slightly disagree with statement
19	I should sit and listen quietly when I am in class. (Reflective of more traditional ways of learning)	Grand mean – 2.42 Comment – students tend to agree with this statement



20	I prefer it when the teacher decides what to do in class. (Reflective of preferences for more traditional learning preferences)	Grand mean – 2.08 Comment – students agree with statement but this contradicts 21, one reason for Q2
21	I prefer it when I can decide what to do in class. (Reflective of preferences for more communicative approaches to learning)	Grand mean – 2.20 Comment – students agree with statement see above
22	I learn more when I speak with other students than when I speak to the teacher. (Reflective of beliefs concerning more communicative approaches to learning than traditional)	Grand mean – 2.66 Comment – students slightly disagree
23	I like it when other students correct my mistakes. (Reflective of more communicative approaches for learning preferences)	Grand mean – 1.76 Comment – all students strongly agree with statement. Significant difference between three groups where $p = <0.05$ (Kruskal Wallis Test)
24	I have more opportunities to learn when I work in a group than when I work by myself. (Reflective of more communicative approaches to learning)	Grand mean – 1.66 Comment – students strongly agree with statement
25	I learn best when I am active and can talk. (Reflective of more communicative approaches to learning)	Grand mean – 1.37 Comment – students strongly agree with statement
26	I should be enthusiastic to answer the teacher. (Reflective of more communicative interaction beliefs)	Grand mean – 1.93 Comment – students strongly agree with statement



**Appendix 5.4: Summary of results for questionnaire 1b-Paired statements questionnaire**

Paired statements	St. n=37	St. %	Teachers. n =47	Teachers %	Teacher. as Student n=47	Teacher As Student %
1.a)I find it easy to ask the teacher questions.	29	78.4%	36	76.6%	20	42.6%
b)I find it difficult to ask the teacher questions.	8	21.6%	11	23%	27	57.4%
2.a)Only the teacher can correct my mistakes.	5	13.5%	1	2.1%	14	29.8%
b)The teacher and my classmates can correct my mistakes.	32	86.5%	46	97.9%	33	70.2%
3.a)I would rather work on my own than in a group.	7	18.9%	20	42.6%	21	44.7%
b)I would rather work in a group than on my own.	30	81.1%	27	57.4%	26	55.3%
4.a)I don't like it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class.	4	10.8%	29	61.7%	31	66.0%
b)I don't mind it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class.	33	89.2%	18	38.3%	16	34.0%
5.a)The teacher is responsible for my progress.	16	43.2%	17	36.2%	28	59.6%
b)I am responsible for my progress.	21	56.8%	30	63.8%	19	40.4%
6.a)Talking should take place between everyone in the classroom.	25	67.6%	41	87.2%	40	85.1%
b)Talking should take place between the teacher and students, not students and students.	12	32.4%	6	12.8%	7	14.9%



7.a)I can learn English if I do not speak to the teacher during the lesson.	20	54.1%	37	78.7%	25	53.2%
b)I cannot learn English if I do not speak to the teacher during the lesson.	17	45.9%	10	21.3%	22	46.8%
8.a)I do not like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions.	6	16.2%	25	53.2%	24	51.1%
b)I like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions.	31	83.8%	22	46.8%	23	48.9%
9.a)Students should do most of the talking in the classroom.	27	73%	25	53.2%	4	8.5%
b)Teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom.	10	27%	22	46.8%	43	91.5%
10.a)I prefer to decide myself what I do in class.	10	27%	11	23.4%	12	25.5%
b)I prefer the teacher to decide what I do in class.	27	73%	36	76.6%	35	74.5%
11.a)When learning English it is more important for me to talk than listen in class. (NT - Learning belief)	18	48.6%	27	57.4%	8	17.0%
b)When learning English it is more important for me to listen than talk in class.	19	51.4%	20	42.6%	39	83.0%
12.a)I should be hesitant to answer the teacher's questions.	17	45.9%	6	12.8%	22	46.8%
b)I should not be hesitant to answer the teacher's questions.	20	54.1%	41	87.2%	25	53.2%
13.a)It is my fault if I do not learn anything.	36	97.3%	25	53.2%	27	57.4%
b)It is the teacher's fault if I do not learn anything.	1	2.7%	22	46.8%	20	42.6%



14.a)I find it easy when I have to work in a group.	28	75.7%	26	55.3%	29	61.7%
b)I find it difficult when I have to work in a group.	9	24.3%	21	44.7%	18	38.3%
15.a)I learn best when I can sit and listen quietly to the teacher in class.	8	21.6%	10	21.3%	24	51.1%
b)I learn best when I am active and can talk in class.	29	78.4%	37	78.7%	23	48.9%
16.a)I should never disagree with the teacher.	6	16.2%	0	0%	9	19.1%
b)I can disagree with the teacher.	31	83.8%	47	100%	38	80.9%



**Appendix 5.5: Summary of results for questionnaire1a-Likert Scale  
questionnaire (Informants = Form 6 Chinese Medium of Instruction students  
Longitudinal Study)**

In English classes ...		Mean for 1997 n=22	Mean for 1998 n=22
1	I should not speak unless I am spoken to.	2.91 Students disagree with this statement	3.18 After a year students disagree more strongly with this statement
2	I should not ask the teacher questions.	3.23 Students disagree with this statement	3.64 After a year students disagree more strongly with this statement
3	I expect the teacher to correct all my mistakes.	1.32 Students agree with this statement	1.86* (significant difference between results) After a year the students agreed less strongly with the statement
4	I would rather work on my own than in a group.	3.09 Students disagree with this statement	3.23 After a year students disagree more strongly with this statement
5	I would rather work in a group than on my own.	2.05 Students agree with this statement	1.77 After a year students agree more strongly with this statement
6	I find it easy to ask the teacher questions.	2.23 Students agree with this statement	1.86 After a year students agree more strongly with this statement



7	It is my fault if I don't improve my English.	2.18 Students agree with this statement	2.00 After a year students agree more strongly with this statement
8	It is more important for me to talk than listen in order to learn.	2.00 Students agree with this statement	2.27 After a year students agree less strongly with this statement
9	I don't like it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class.	3.41 Students disagree with this statement	3.36 After a year students disagree less strongly with this statement
10	Talking should take place between teacher and students and not students and students.	2.68 Students disagree with this statement	3.14 After a year students disagree more strongly with this statement
11	I am responsible for my own progress. about learning)	2.45 Students agree slightly with this statement	1.64* (Significant difference between results) After a year students agree more strongly with this statement
12	I prefer to work in a group because we can help each other. (More reflective of contemporary approaches to learning)	1.55 Students agree with this statement	1.45 After a year students agree more strongly with this statement
13	I don't feel I learn anything unless I talk to the teacher during class. (More reflective of traditional ideas about learning)	2.82 Students disagree with this statement	2.77 After a year students disagree less strongly with this statement



14	I should never disagree with the teacher.	3.09 Students disagree with this statement	3.41 After a year students disagree more strongly with this statement
15	I can ask the teacher to change parts of the course I don't like it.	2.55 Students disagree with this statement	2.91 After a year students disagree more strongly with this statement
16	I should be hesitant when answering the teacher's questions.	1.95 Students agree with this statement	2.95* (Significant difference between responses) After a year students disagree with this statement
17	Teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom.	1.82 Students agree with this statement	2.45* (Significant difference between responses) After a year students agree less strongly with this statement
18	I find it difficult when I have to work in a group.	2.77 Students disagree with this statement	3.05 After a year students disagree more strongly with this statement
19	I should sit and listen quietly when I am in class.	1.82 Students agree with this statement	2.68* (Significant difference between responses) After a year students disagree with this statement



20	I prefer it when the teacher decides what to do in class.	1.73 Students agree with this statement	2.18*(Significant difference between responses) After a year students agree less strongly with this statement
21	I prefer it when I can decide what to do in class.	2.27 Students agree with this statement	2.27 After a year there is no change in agreement with this statement
22	I learn more when I speak with other students than when I speak to the teacher.	2.86 Students disagree with this statement	2.95 After a year students disagree more strongly with this statement
23	I like it when other students correct my mistakes.	1.55 Students agree with this statement	1.55 After a year there is no change in agreement with this statement
24	I have more opportunities to learn when I work in a group than when I work by myself.	1.59 Students agree with this statement	1.59 After a year there is no change in agreement with this statement
25	I learn best when I am active and can talk.	1.59 Students agree with this statement	1.36 After a year students agree more strongly with this statement
26	I should be enthusiastic to answer the teacher.	1.82 Students agree with this statement	2.23 After a year students agree less strongly with this statement

\* A significant difference between responses where  $p < 0.05$  (Wilcoxon signed rank test)



**Appendix 5.6: Summary of results for questionnaire1a-Paired-statement questionnaire (Informants = English Medium of Instruction and Chinese Medium of Instruction students from Forms 1, 3, and 6)**

Key  
 EMI = English Medium of Instruction  
 CMI = Chinese Medium of Instruction  
 F6 = Form 6 / F3 = Form 3 / F1 = Form 1

Paired statements	F6 CMI St. n=37		F3 CMI St. n=34	F3 EMI St. n=43	F1 CMI St. n=31	F1 EMI St. N=41
1.a)I find it easy to ask the teacher questions. b)I find it difficult to ask the teacher questions.	29 78.4% a 8 21.6%		17 50% a 17 50%	23 53%  20 46.5%	16 51.6% a 15 48.4%	26 63.4%  15 36.6%
2.a)Only the teacher can correct my mistakes. b)The teacher and my classmates can correct my mistakes.	5 13.5%  32 86.5%		2 5.9%  32 94.1%	2 4.7%  41 95.3%	3 9.7%  28 90.3%	3 7.3%  38 92.7%
3.a)I would rather work on my own than in a group. b)I would rather work in a group than on my own.	7 18.9% a 30 81.1%		16 47% a b d 18 53%	11 25.6% b 32 74.4%	5 16.1% a d 26 83.9%	6 14.6%  35 85.4%
4.a)I don't like it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class. b)I don't mind it when the teacher asks me a question in front of the class.	4 10.8% a 33 89.2%		7 20.6% a f 27 79.4%	7 16.3% f 36 83.7%	12 38.7% a f c 19 61.3%	3 7.3% f c 38 92.7%
5.a)The teacher is responsible for my progress. b)I am responsible for my progress.	16 43.2% a 21 56.8%		1 2.9% a f 33 97.1%	3 7% f 40 93%	1 3.2% a f 30 96.8%	7 17.1% f 34 82.9%
6.a)Talking should take place between everyone in the classroom. b)Talking should take place between the teacher and students, not students and students.	25 67.6%  12 32.4%		26 76.5% d 8 23.5%	35 81.4% e 8 18.6%	15 48.4% d 16 51.6%	23 56.3% e 18 43.9%



7.a)I can learn English if I do not speak to the teacher during the lesson.	20 54.1%		26 76.5%	36 83.7%	24 77.4%	25 61%
b)I cannot learn English if I do not speak to the teacher during the lesson.	17 45.9%		8 23.5%	7 16.3%	7 22.6%	16 39%
8.a)I do not like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions.	6 16.2%		10 29.4%	24 55.8%	12 38.7%	9 22%
b)I like to volunteer to answer the teachers' questions.	31 83.8%		24 70.6%	19 44.2%	19 61.3%	32 78%
9.a)Students should do most of the talking in the classroom.	27 73%		24 70.6%	28 65.1%	15 48.4%	25 61%
b)Teachers should do most of the talking in the classroom.	10 27%		10 29.4%	15 34.9%	16 51.6%	16 39%
10.a)I prefer to decide myself what I do in class.	10 27%		19 55.9%	32 74.4%	19 61.3%	18 43.9%
b)I prefer the teacher to decide what I do in class.	a 27 73%		a 15 44.1%	e 11 25.6%	a 12 38.7%	e 23 56.1%
11.a)When learning English it is more important for me to talk than listen in class.	18 48.6%		9 26.5%	19 44.2%	16 51.6%	23 56.1%
b)When learning English it is more important for me to listen than talk in class.	19 51.4%		25 73.5%	24 55.8%	15 48.4%	18 43.9%
12.a)I should be hesitant to answer the teacher's questions.	17 45.9%		23 67.6%	16 37.2%	15 48.4%	18 43.9%
b)I should not be hesitant to answer the teacher's questions.	19 51.4%		f b 11 32.4%	f b 27 62.8%	f 16 51.6%	f 23 56.1%
13.a)It is my fault if I do not learn anything.	36 97.3%		34 100%	37 86%	31 100%	39 95.1%
b)It is the teacher's fault if I do not learn anything.	1 2.7%		b 0 0%	b 6 14%	0 0%	2 4.9%
14.a)I find it easy when I have to work in a group.	28 75.7%		22 64.7%	34 79.1%	25 80.6%	36 87.8%
b)I find it difficult when I have to work in a group.	9 24.3%		12 35.3%	9 20.9%	6 19.4%	5 12.2%



15.a)I learn best when I can sit and listen quietly to the teacher in class.	8 21.6% a		11 32.4% a d	12 27.9% e	21 67.7% a d	20 48.8% e
b)I learn best when I am active and can talk in class.	29 78.4%		23 67.6%	31 72.1%	10 32.3%	21 51.2%
16.a)I should never disagree with the teacher.	6 16.2% a		6 19.6% a b d	1 2.3% a b e	15 48.4% d	12 29.3% e
b)I can disagree with the teacher.	31 83.8%		28 82.4%	42 97.7%	16 51.6%	29 70.7%

- a significant differences between CMI groups  
b significant differences between Form 3 students  
c significant differences between Form 1 students  
d significant differences between CMI 1 and 3 students  
e significant differences between EMI 1 and 3 students  
f significant differences between CMI and EMI 1 students (excluding CMI Form 6 students)



### Appendix 5.7: Findings for Questionnaire 2 - Cultural Questionnaire

Statements	St. n = 37	St. %	T. n = 47	T. %
1.A positive association in society is with whatever is rooted in tradition.	10	27%	8	17%
2.A positive association in society is with whatever is 'new'	27	73%	39	83%
3.Impersonal truth is stressed and can, in principle, be obtained from any competent person.	33	89.2%	38	80.9%
4.Personal wisdom is stressed and is transferred in the relationship with a particular teacher	4	10.8%	9	19.1%
5.A teacher should respect the independence of his or her students.	34*	91.9%	33*	70.2%
6.A teacher merits the respect of his or her students.	3*	8.1%	14*	29.8%
7.One is never too old to learn; continual education.	33	89.2%	44	93.6%
8.The young should learn; adults cannot accept a student role.	4	10.2%	3	6.4%
9.Students expect to learn how to do.	13	35.1%	21	44.7%
10.Students expect to learn how to learn.	24	64.9%	26	55.3%
11.Student-centred education(value is placed on student initiative)	35	94.6%	42	89.4%
12.Teacher-centred education(value is placed on teacher-ordered learning)	2	5.4%	5	10.6%
13.Students expect teacher to initiate communication.	11*	29.7%	35*	74.5%
14.Teacher expects students to initiate communication.	26*	70.3%	12*	25.5%
15.Teacher expects students to find their own paths.	31*	83.8%	24*	51%
16.Students expect teacher to outline paths to follow.	6*	16.2%	23*	49%
17.Individual students will speak up in class in response to a general invitation by the teacher.	27	73%	29	61.7%
18.Individual students will only speak up in class when called upon personally by the teacher.	10	27%	18	38.3%
19.Individuals will speak up in large groups.	25*	67.6%	20*	42.6%
20.Individuals will only speak up in small groups.	12*	32.4%	27*	57.4%



21.Large classes are split socially into smaller cohesive subgroups based on particular criteria (e.g. ability)	21	56.8%	23	48.9%
22.Subgroupings in class vary from one situation to the next based on universalist criteria (e.g. task at hand)	16	43.2%	24	51.1%
23.Students may speak up spontaneously in class.	23	62.2%	25	53.2%
24.Students speak up in class only when invited by the teacher.	14	37.8%	22	46.8%
25.The teacher is seldom contradicted and rarely criticised.	7*	18.9%	20*	42.6%
26.Students are allowed to contradict or criticise the teacher	30*	81.1%	27*	57.6%
27.Confrontation in learning situations can be beneficial, conflicts can be brought into the open.	19	51.4%	18	38.3%
28.Formal harmony in learning situations should be maintained.	18	48.6%	29	61.7%
29.Effectiveness of learning is related to the excellence of the teacher.	7	18.9%	9	19.1%
30.Effectiveness of learning is related to the amount of two-way communication in class.	30	81.1%	38	80.9%
31.Neither the teacher nor any student should ever be made to lose face.	14*	37.8%	30*	63.8%
32.‘Face-saving’ is of little importance.	23*	62.2%	17*	36.2%
33.Education is a way of improving one’s economic worth and self-respect based on ability and competence.	31	83.8%	39	83%
34.Education is a way of gaining prestige in one’s social environment and joining a higher status group.	6	16.2%	8	17%
35.Outside class, teachers are treated as equals to the students.	28*	75.7%	19*	40.5%
36.Respect for teachers is also shown outside of class.	9*	24.3%	28*	59.5%
37.Diploma certificates are important and displayed on walls.	12	32.4%	24	51.1%
38.Diploma certificates have little importance.	25	67.6%	23	48.9%
39.In teacher-student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the student.	23	62.2%	23	51.1%
40.In teacher-student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the teacher.	14	37.8%	24	48.9%



41.Older teachers are more respected than younger teachers.	14*	37.8%	8*	17%
42.Younger teachers are more liked than older teachers.	23*	62.2%	39*	83%
43.Acquiring competence is more important than acquiring certificates.	32*	86.5%	31*	66%
44.Acquiring certificates is more important than acquiring competence.	5*	13.5%	16*	34%
45.Teachers are expected to give preferential treatment to some students	0*	0%	5*	10.6%
46.Teachers are expected to be strictly impartial.	37*	100%	42*	89.4%

\* significant difference between students’ and teachers’ responses, where p<0.05 (Chi squared test of homogeneity)

