

An Investigation into Potential Mismatches between
Teacher Intention and Learner Interpretation of Task

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Conversation Analysis
L2	Second Language
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TBL	Task-Based Learning

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ABSTRACT

Recently, task-based research motivated by a Vygotskian theoretical perspective has led to studies that demonstrate how the task-as-workplan is interpreted and reshaped by learners in actual performance (Coughlan and Duff, 1994). The ability of learners to set their own 'tasks' suggests that researchers need to investigate how individual students react to the tasks they have been asked to perform (Ellis, 2003). To date, there have been very few systematic studies on learner and teacher perceptions in this particular field. Four studies conducted by Kumaravadivelu (1989, 1991), Slimani (1989, 1992), Block (1994, 1996), and Barkhuizen (1998) have shed light on the learner and teacher perception of classroom events. This study has continued the investigation into how individual students react to the tasks they have been asked to perform. In particular, it has focussed on four potential mismatches between teacher intention and learners' interpretation of task, previously identified in a study by Kumaravadivelu (2003): instructional, pedagogic, procedural and strategic. The study aimed to look at teacher and learners' perceptions and therefore a qualitative approach was used to gather information. The study was triangulated on two levels, using a variety of data (data triangulation) and different methods (questionnaires and interviews) to collect the data (methodological triangulation).

Sixteen students studying for a Certificate in English at the School of Languages and Social Sciences at Auckland University of Technology, were asked to perform a task and then complete a questionnaire which was designed to elicit information regarding the four potential mismatches, between teacher intention and learner interpretation, referred to above. Four pairs of students participated in each of the two tasks. Four students, one from each pair was then interviewed in order to elicit more in-depth information regarding the four mismatches referred to above. The teacher was also interviewed after the task had been completed. The student answers from the questionnaires were compared with the data gathered from the student and teacher interviews. The findings seem to show that two mismatches between teacher intention and learners' interpretation were evident, namely instructional and pedagogic. There was no clear evidence of a strategic or procedural mismatch. Despite the small sample size, the study seems to show that mismatches are

identifiable. Given the importance of perceptual mismatches and the fact that they are part of the practice of everyday teaching, it is important that we try to identify as many mismatches as possible in future research. It is reasonable to assume that the narrower the gap between teacher intention and learner interpretation, the greater the chances of achieving learning and teaching objectives (Kuamaravadivelu, 2003).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Tasks hold a central place in current SLA research and also in language pedagogy. They have been used by researchers and teachers to elicit samples of language use that are representative of how learners perform when they are not attending to accuracy. These samples, it is believed, will provide evidence of learners' ability to use their L2 knowledge in real-time communication (Ellis, 2003). Researchers have recognised the importance of these samples to determine how learners structure and restructure their interlanguages over time. Teachers also recognise that it is important to provide learners with the opportunity to perform 'tasks' in order to develop the kind of L2 proficiency needed to communicate fluently and effectively. The language that is needed to perform the task has to be negotiated by the learner in the process of carrying out these tasks with, of course, help from the teacher whose job it is to facilitate learning opportunities in class (Kumaravadivelu, 1993).

It is up to the teacher to choose 'tasks' which suit particular learner needs but this can often prove difficult. It has been argued (Kumaravadivelu, 1993) that with task-based pedagogy no attempt is made to specify what the learners will learn, only how they will learn. As Kumaravadivelu (1993) has pointed out, the teacher's job as facilitator of learning opportunities through learner interaction and expression is complicated by the fact that tasks most often do not, on the surface, represent any scale of cognitive, communicative or linguistic complexity. Task-based methodologists have, however, made some useful suggestions for analysing tasks. These have been classified under four broad rationales: a communicative rationale (Krahnke, 1987), a pedagogic rationale (Long, 1985; Prabhu, 1987; Widdowson, 1987, 1990), a psycho-social rationale (Breen, 1989; Candlin, 1987) and an integrative rationale (Nunan, 1989). The communicative rationale is concerned with language learning tasks that treat classroom activity as a rehearsal for actual communicative behaviour in the real world.

The pedagogic rationale is concerned with language learning tasks that form the basis of classroom activities for students and teachers (these may be unrelated to communicative performance in the outside world). The psycho-social rationale involves tasks which are generally the outcome of a negotiated interaction between participants involved in the activities of the L2 classroom which is considered a mini-society with its own rules. The integrated rationale is concerned with tasks which bring together major characteristics of the other three rationales (Kumaravadivelu, 1993).

Another rationale, suggested by Kumaravadivelu (1993), is the classroom interactional rationale which is concerned with aspects of teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks. According to him, the match and mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks become crucial because of the importance given to interaction and negotiation in the task-based classroom. Learning-centred task-based pedagogy maximises the role of the teacher and the learner. They are only given general learning objectives which are jointly interpreted in the classroom as the interactional process evolves. There is therefore a heavy emphasis on learner/teacher perceptions of classroom aims and events which increases the potential for misunderstanding and miscommunication. It is therefore vital that the teacher is aware of a potential mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation. As Hosenfeld (1976) has pointed out, learners are adroit at redefining activities to suit their own purposes. Breen (1989) has pointed out that the 'task-as-workplan' may or may not match the 'task-as-process'. Coughlan and Duff (1994) highlighted how the 'official' task may be uniquely transformed by learners carrying it out.

Ellis (2003) noted that the ability of learners to set their own 'tasks' suggests that researchers need to investigate how individual students react to the tasks they have been asked to perform. He points out that to date, "researchers have typically evaluated learners' performance on a task solely in terms of the outcome specified by the task" (p.40). Samuda and Bygate (2008) note that the pedagogic and theoretical implications of how tasks are redefined and reinterpreted in action cannot be understood fully without also taking into account the perspectives of task users. They

also note that up to now, most of the empirical work relating to task reinterpretation has been based on researchers' interpretations of learners' reinterpretations of task (Coughlan and Duff, 1994), and very little has focused on the issue of reinterpretation from the learners' own perspective. Likewise, there has been very little work carried out on teachers' interpretations of tasks from their own perspective and this remains an under-explored aspect of task research.

In the early 1990's Kumaravadivelu (1991) attempted to identify sources of potential mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation by exploring learners' and teachers' perceptions of the nature, the goals, and the demands of a selected language-learning task. Based on the study he identified ten potential sources of mismatch which are as follows: cognitive, communicative, linguistic, pedagogic, strategic, cultural, evaluative, procedural, instructional and attitudinal.

Kumaravadivelu (1991) then derived three pedagogic insights from his study. These were as follows: mismatches are unavoidable; they are part of the practice of everyday teaching; mismatches are identifiable and distinct enough to be related to a particular source and that mismatches are manageable.

1.2 STUDY AIMS

The aims of this study are to investigate whether or not mismatches occur between the teacher's intention and the learners' interpretation of a task, and if they do, find their source. In particular I intend to focus on four of the potential sources of mismatches described above: pedagogic, strategic, procedural and instructional.

If teachers and learners are jointly responsible for managing learning in the classroom, then it is important that there is a considerable degree of understanding between them about the aims and activities, and the processes and procedures governing classroom learning and teaching. What could easily undermine their joint effort are potential mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation (Kumaravadivelu, 1991). The gap between teacher and learner perceptions of the aims and activities of classroom events can easily increase the gap between teacher input and learner intake. However, there have been very few systematic studies on learner

and teacher perceptions in the field of classroom L2 learning and teaching. Only recently have researchers attempted to investigate it (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

Furthermore, tasks are workplans that seek to specify how learners will respond. However, the task-as-workplan may or may not correspond to the task-as-process (Breen, 1987). The ability of learners to set their own 'tasks' suggest that researchers need to investigate how individual students react to the tasks they have been asked to perform. In 1991, Kumaravadivelu investigated two pairs of students performing a task and he also interviewed them. He uncovered ten sources of mismatch between the teacher's intention and the learners' interpretation of the task and claimed that the mismatches were distinct enough to be related to a particular source. However, as Ellis (2003) notes, this kind of study is rare.

This study has therefore been conducted for a variety of reasons. First of all, more evidence needs to be gathered in order to substantiate the claims made by the few studies conducted so far. Perceptual mismatches may well be unavoidable given the number of participants and the varying perspectives they bring to bear on classroom events. However, if they are unavoidable, there is an important question to be answered and that is: are they identifiable? This study can help identify perceptual mismatches which could possibly be converted into a learning opportunity in class. This could help both teachers and learners understand that there is an underlying reason for the difficulties the learners may have encountered in making sense of a classroom event. Therefore, given the importance of perceptual mismatches, it is important that we try to identify them, understand them, and address them effectively in order to facilitate desired learning outcomes in the classroom.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THESIS

This thesis consists of six chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter Two reviews extant literature and research that motivates and generates the research question addressed in this thesis. It also reviews some important findings on the learner and teacher perceptions of classroom events. Gaps in previous research are subsequently identified and the research question is raised for investigation.

Chapter Three depicts the methodological approach adopted in the study. A qualitative approach was adopted in an attempt to record mismatches between teacher intention and student interpretation of tasks. The research instruments (student questionnaires, student and teacher interviews) are identified and the procedures followed in collecting and analysing data are stated.

Key findings from an analysis of the research data are presented in Chapter Four. These include results based on the qualitative research techniques.

Chapter Five includes a detailed account and interpretation of the findings of the study, with reference to the research question and in relation to previous relevant research findings.

Chapter Six summarises the study findings, focuses on both pedagogical and research implications of the study, and indicates its limitations.

The next chapter, Chapter Two, the Literature Review, provides a theoretical background to the research on SLA which is relevant to task-based learning.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

PART A – Second Language Acquisition Theories

2.1 Introduction

Our first and foremost duty as teachers is to maximise learning opportunities for our learners (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). How teachers achieve this aim in the classroom is a difficult question to answer in detailed practical terms. Questions also remain as to what constitutes a learning opportunity and whether both the teacher and learners are responsible for creating them. Clarification is also needed as to how teachers recognise learning opportunities created by learners and whether learners see learning opportunities as learning opportunities. Although the onus may be more on teachers than learners, both have a responsibility to create and use learning opportunities in class because this is one of the places where the success or failure of any attempt to generate learning opportunities may be decided. Allwright (1984) regards teaching as an interactive process whereby learning opportunities are created and utilised by teachers and learners, “we can no longer see teachers simply as teachers, and learners simply as learners, because both are, for good or ill, managers of learning” (p. 156).

Given that the main focus of my research is on exploring how teachers and learners perceive potential learning opportunities in the classroom, it is essential that second language theories relevant to the processes responsible for their creation are examined. In the first part of this Chapter (Part A), the importance of creating conditions for language acquisition is discussed (see section 2.2 below). In the second part of this Chapter (Part B) I will explain how task-based learning has been influenced by SLA theory. Recently, there has been an enormous growth of interest in task-based language learning and teaching. According to Ellis (2003) some of this interest has

been motivated by the fact that 'task' is seen as a construct of equal importance to second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and to language teachers.

As Kumaravadivelu (2003) points out, the gap between teacher and learner perceptions of the aims and activities of classroom events can easily increase the gap between input (input refers to the oral and written data of the target language which learners are exposed to and which they recognise as useful and usable for language learning purposes) and learner intake (that is, new language which has been processed sufficiently for it to become incorporated into the learner's developing second language system). According to Corder (1967), intake is what goes in and not what is available to go in. Kumaravadivelu (2003) notes that to a large extent what actually goes in may be determined by how learners perceive the usefulness of classroom events through which they are exposed to input. Therefore the definition of input and intake as well as how the Input Hypothesis and how second language learners acquire language through exposure to comprehensible input is discussed next (see section 2.3 below).

This is followed by a discussion of factors, including the Affective Filter, which might prevent second language learners from using learning opportunities that have been provided for them (see section 2.4 below). The role of output (see section 2.5 below) in terms of language acquisition is discussed next as well as the argument that learners need opportunities for meaningful use of their linguistic resources (the proposal that opportunities could be provided through a task-based learning approach is discussed in Part B of the Literature Review). Psychological theories concerning second language acquisition are considered next (see section 2.6 below) before I discuss how meaningful interaction might increase the possibility of a greater amount of input becoming available which could considerably enhance the opportunities to activate fundamental processes that are essential to the development of second language learning (see section 2.7 below).

The interactional process also requires the participant's own experiences to be taken into account as well as how they are capable of creating their own environment,

according to the Sociocultural theory of mind (see section 2.8 below). Sociocultural theory includes the possibility that individuals act according to their own intentions and so it is important to discuss how social activity allows individuals to exercise conscious control over mental activities in the classroom. Finally, I consider how motivational factors determine how people respond to a particular task and how Activity Theory predicts that second language learners with different motives will perform the same task in different ways (see section 2.9 below).

The importance of creating conditions for language acquisition will now be discussed.

2.2 The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

According to Krashen (1982) there are two ways for adult second language learners to develop knowledge of a second language: 'acquisition' and 'learning'. Acquisition is the result of natural interaction with the language via meaningful communication.

Learning, however, is the result of classroom experience, in which the learner is encouraged to focus on form and to learn about the linguistic rules of the target language. For Krashen (1982), acquisition is the more important process. He asserts that only acquired language is readily available for natural, fluent communication.

Krashen (1982) maintains that there is an important difference between meaningful communication, which can take place inside the classroom and will trigger subconscious processes similar to those in first language acquisition and conscious attention to form which can take place in naturalistic settings. Although he has been criticised for his vague definition of what constitutes conscious rather than subconscious processes, the contrast between acquisition and learning has been influential especially among second language teachers (Mitchell and Myles, 1998).

As a means of language learning, conversation may not be a causal factor in language acquisition, but it is considered to be a priming device that sets the stage for acquisition to take place (Gass, 1997). According to Krashen (1982) acquisition is the result of natural interaction with language via meaningful communication. Learning is

the result of the 'classroom experience'. He also claims that the focus of language teaching should be on creating conditions for 'acquisition' rather than 'learning'. Krashen (1982) argues that many speakers are fluent without ever having learned rules, while other speakers may 'know' rules but do not apply them when focusing their attention on what they want to say more than on how they are saying it (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). Krashen (1982) claims that exposure to comprehensible input is necessary and sufficient for SLA to occur (see section 2.3 below).

2.3 Input Hypothesis and Intake

The Input Hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982) also forms part of his Monitor Model of second language acquisition. He regards the Input Hypothesis as the single most important concept in SLA in that it attempts to answer the critical question of how learners acquire a language. He maintains that the ability to communicate in a second language cannot be taught directly, but emerges on its own as a result of building competence through comprehensible input.

According to Krashen (1982), one acquires language by exposure to comprehensible input. He claims that language is acquired only through understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is defined as second language input just beyond the learner's current second language competence (in terms of its syntactic complexity). Krashen (1982) points out that if learners are to effectively process the input made available to them, their Affective Filter (see section 2.4 below) must be down. Krashen (1982) claims that input alone is sufficient for SLA to occur.

Kashen (1982) identifies main ways in which input is made comprehensible. Speakers use 'simplified registers' when speaking to learners. These ensure that the input is 'roughly tuned' i.e. pitched at a level that enables the learner to understand but also containing some linguistic forms that the learner has not yet acquired. Learners can also use the contextual information to help them decode input containing unknown linguistic forms and therefore be able to comprehend them and acquire them.

The hypothesis therefore claims that language acquisition is input-driven. Acquisition is defined as the subconscious process of internalising new linguistic forms and their meanings. If the input contains forms and structures just beyond the learners' current level of competence in the language (what Krashen calls 'i + 1') then both comprehension and acquisition will occur. All that is needed for L2 acquisition is comprehensible input made available in an environment that does not create high anxiety for the learners. Not all researchers agree with Krashen's (1982) view that input alone is sufficient for acquisition.

According to Ellis (2003), intake is that portion of input that learners notice and therefore take into temporary memory. Krashen's (1982) early Monitor Model was concerned with intake and he emphasised that the main role of the L2 classroom was to provide intake for learners. Krashen argued that intake was input that was understood. Gass (1997) describes intake as the process of assimilating linguistic material and argues that the probability of input becoming intake depends on the level of linguistic analysis (the deeper the analysis, the more likely that input will become intake).

Although it is generally agreed that comprehensible input is necessary for SLA, there is considerable debate about the sufficiency of input in promoting L2 acquisition. According to Skehan (1999), earlier views of the role of input within second language research (e.g. Long, 1985) now seem to be unnecessarily limited. He believes that they suggested that 'quality' input in some way triggers the operation of acquisitional processes and drives interlanguage development forward.

However, several interactional studies have questioned Krashen's claim that linguistic input can be made comprehensible without any active participation on the part of the learner (Gass, 1997). Conversation and its role in language learning gained more importance. Two hypotheses, Swain's Output Hypothesis (see section 2.5 below) and Long's Interaction Hypothesis (see section 2.7 below) can be considered as looking at interaction as an interpersonal activity, the second of Halliday's view of interaction in

learning (see section 2.7) and refers to language used to promote communication between participants.

Gass (1997) makes a distinction between three kinds of input. She calls the first type 'apperceived input' which occurs when the learner notices that there is a mismatch between what they already know and what there is to know. This apperception which she also refers to as noticing gets a linguistic form into the learner's cognitive system. According to Gass (1997) it can then become 'comprehended input'.

2.4 Affective Filter

In considering the role of input, it is also useful to consider the Affective Filter, an imaginary barrier which prevents learners from using input which is available in the environment. According to Krashen (1981), if learners are to effectively process the input made available to them, their Affective Filter must be down. The filter was first proposed by Dulay and Burt (1973) and is defined as that part of the internal processing system that subconsciously screens incoming language based on what psychologists call 'affect'. It has four functions: firstly, it determines which language models learners will select; secondly, which part of the language a learner will attend to first; thirdly, when the learner's efforts should cease; and fourthly, it affects how quickly a learner can acquire a language. 'Affect' refers to such things as motives, needs, attitudes and emotional states. Thus a learner who is tense, angry, anxious or bored may 'filter out' input making it unavailable for acquisition. Some teachers may find this hypothesis attractive because it might explain why some learners, given the same opportunity to learn, may be successful while others are not.

However, as Lightbown and Spada (1999) note, it is difficult to be sure that affective factors cause the differences in language acquisition. They argue that it seems likely that success in acquisition may in itself contribute to more positive motivation or a 'lowered affective filter'.

Input was discussed earlier, as was Krashen's belief that exposure to comprehensible input is necessary and sufficient for SLA to occur. Long (1996) argues that input is often made comprehensible through conversational adjustments and it is this input which he believes is necessary for acquisition. Swain (1995) maintains that pushed output is needed for a learner to develop certain grammatical features that do not seem to be acquired simply by comprehensible input (see section 2.5 below).

2.5 Output in Second Language Acquisition

According to Mitchell and Myles (1998) most language learning researchers agree that output is necessary to increase fluency. They contend that learners must practise producing second language utterances if they are to learn to use their interlanguage system confidently and routinely. However, the Output Hypothesis advanced by Swain (1985, 1995) makes a number of claims which go beyond the practice function of output. According to her Output Hypothesis, production causes learners to engage in syntactic processing and therefore promotes acquisition (Ellis, 2003).

Ellis (2003) also points out that Swain initially formulated the Output Hypothesis as a complement to Krashen's Input Hypothesis. She argued that evaluations of immersion programmes in Canada showed that comprehensible input alone was insufficient to ensure that learners achieved high levels of grammatical and sociolinguistic competence. In other words, her research revealed that input alone did not lead to acquisition and production requires learners to process syntactically. This means that they have to pay some attention to form. This, she argued, is especially true when learners were 'pushed' to produce messages that are concise and socially appropriate. Therefore, when completing a task, learners produce output and are 'pushed' to produce speech which is grammatically correct and is an appropriate use of the L2.

Output does not create new knowledge but it is a way for learners to practise using existing knowledge. Swain (1985) argues against Krashen's claim that grammatical competence is achieved automatically, provided there is enough input. She argues that

learners need opportunities for meaningful use of their linguistic resources. Opportunities could be provided through a task-based learning approach.

Skehan (1996, 1999) built on Swain's Output Hypothesis by suggesting that production requires attention to form but only sometimes. According to him language users vary in the extent to which they emphasise fluency, accuracy or complexity. Fluency is the capacity of the learner to communicate in real time. Accuracy is the ability of the learner to handle the level of interlanguage complexity that they have achieved and complexity refers to the use of elaborate interlanguage structures. According to Skehan (1996, 1999), some tasks predispose language users to focus on fluency, some on accuracy and others on complexity.

In a later work, Swain (1995) identified three possible functions of output: the noticing function, the hypothesis-testing function and the metalinguistic function. The noticing function relates to the possibility that when learners try to communicate in their developing target language they encounter a linguistic problem and their consciousness is therefore raised. The hypothesis-testing function relates to the possibility that when learners use the target language they may be experimenting with what works and what does not. The metalinguistic function of output relates to the possibility that learners may be consciously thinking about language and its system in order to produce sentences that are linguistically correct and communicatively appropriate. Learners can be encouraged to think consciously about linguistic forms and their relationship to meaning when they are asked to do communicative tasks.

The precise role learner output plays in L2 development is not yet known. Due to Swain's (1985) research, comprehensible output was recognised as being equally important as comprehensible input and negotiated interaction. Skehan (1996, 1999) meanwhile explained why output has to be 'pushed' before it engages the learner's syntactical knowledge. However, neither really provides a convincing explanation of how production leads to acquisition (Ellis, 2003).

Further research on output-related studies conducted by Pica, Holliday, Lewis and Morgenhaler (1989) and Gass (1997) suggests that output has the potential to provide learners with a starting point for important language learning functions of output for learners such as hypothesis testing and moving from meaning-based processing to a grammar-based processing. Comprehensible output also has the potential to provide learners with opportunities to notice the gap in their developing interlanguage.

Recent psychological theories have also attracted attention in describing second language acquisition (SLA). In sharp contrast to Krashen's views, cognitive psychologists do not assume that there is a difference between acquisition and learning. According to Lightbown and Spada (1999) cognitive psychologists working in an information processing model of human learning and performance tend to see second language acquisition as the "building up of knowledge systems that can eventually be called on automatically for speaking and understanding" (p.41).

2.6 Noticing

One theorist who has emphasised the role of 'noticing' in second language acquisition is Richard Schmidt. He argues that everything we come to know about the language was first 'noticed' consciously. Schmidt (1994) contends that attention to input is a conscious process. He claims that the following two processes are essential in L2 acquisition: noticing, i.e. registering formal features in the input, and noticing-the-gap, i.e. identifying how the input to which the learner is exposed differs from the output the learner is able to generate (Ellis, 2003). Schmidt (1994) refers to his own experience as a learner of Portuguese in Brazil to demonstrate the importance of attention. From the beginning of his stay he had heard certain language forms and had been processing the forms for meaning. However, it was not until he later 'noticed' the forms that he was able to use them. In further support of this theory, Schmidt and Frota (1986) examined a learner's diary to find out which features the learner had consciously attended to. They discovered that the learner tended to use the forms that he had noticed others saying to him.

According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), some interactionist theorists, while influenced by psychological learning theories, have developed their ideas mainly within SLA research itself. Hatch (1992), Pica (1994) and Long (1996) have argued that much second language acquisition takes place through conversational interaction (see section 2.7 below).

2.7 Interaction and the Interaction Hypothesis

As Kumaravadivelu (2003) points out, a recurring theme in L2 professional literature is that meaningful interaction increases the possibility of a greater amount of input becoming available, “thus considerably enhancing the opportunities for the activation of fundamental processes that are essential to L2 development”(p.101). The precise role of conversation in L2 development has not been sufficiently investigated but it appears that meaningful interaction increases the possibility of a greater amount of input becoming available. This in turn increases the opportunities for activating the processes needed for L2 development.

Some interactionist theorists (Hatch, 1992; Pica, 1994; Long, 1996) have argued that much second language acquisition takes place through conversational interaction. They believe that an L2 learning and teaching environment must include opportunities for learners to have meaningful interaction with competent speakers of the target language.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggests that a greater understanding of interaction in learning can be gained by looking at it in terms of three macrofunctions of language proposed by Halliday (1986). These view interaction as a textual activity, an interpersonal activity and as an ideational activity. The first looks at interaction as a textual activity and refers to the use of linguistic and metalinguistic features necessary for understanding language input.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) argues that most interactional studies view interaction as a textual activity in which learners and their interlocutors modify their input in order to

maximise chances of mutual understanding. Teacher talk, for example, is the simplified language teachers use in order to talk to L2 learners.

In a number of studies on the relationship between input, interaction and L2 development, Long (1985) proposed and updated (1996) the Interaction Hypothesis. He agrees with Krashen that comprehensible input is necessary for language acquisition. However, he is more concerned with the question of how input is made comprehensible.

Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996) contends that modified interaction is vital in this process. Modified interaction involves adapted conversation patterns which proficient speakers use in addressing language learners so that the language learner will be able to understand (for example, using shorter, simpler sentences). In Long's (1996) view, what learners need is not necessarily simplification of the linguistic forms but rather an opportunity to interact with other speakers, in ways which lead them to adapt what they are saying until the learner shows signs of understanding (Lightbown and Spada, 1999). He infers that modified interaction must be necessary for language acquisition. His argument is that interactional modification makes input comprehensible and comprehensible input promotes acquisition. Therefore, interactional modification promotes acquisition.

The Interaction Hypothesis suggests that the more opportunities for negotiation (meaning and content) there are, the more likely acquisition is (Ellis, 2003). Ellis (2003) further suggests that tasks that stimulate negotiation and through this provide comprehensible input and feedback and push learners to reformulate are the ones that will work best for acquisition. Feedback refers to information given to the learner which they can use to revise their interlanguage (Ellis, 1994). Gass (1997) maintains that once input has been comprehended in some way then it can become intake. While there is a lot of discussion about how input enters the cognitive system, there is also discussion about the nature of input needed for SLA which centres on positive and negative evidence. Gass (1997) defines positive evidence as evidence based on forms that actually occur. According to Long (1996), positive evidence provides models of

what is grammatical and acceptable in L2. Some SLA theorists such as Krashen argue that positive evidence alone is sufficient for L2 acquisition while others such as Long (1996) argue that it is not. Long (1996) defines negative evidence as direct or indirect evidence of ungrammatical language. Through negative feedback a learner is provided with a means of focusing on those areas of a language that do not match the target language. A teacher may point out errors to the students to alert them to the fact that they have produced a form which differs from the target language structure. Theorists arguing for an innatist model of language learning have claimed that language is not learnable from the normal type of input which provides mostly positive evidence of the structure of the target language and lacks negative evidence (for example grammar corrections (Mitchell and Myles, 1998). According to Long (1996) positive evidence provides models of what is grammatical and acceptable in L2. Some SLA theorists such as Krashen argue that positive evidence alone is sufficient for L2 acquisition while others, such as Long (1996), argue that it is not.

Studies of Canadian French immersion classes (Swain, 1985) have shown that even after prolonged periods of exposure to target language input, learners still do not reach native-like levels of accuracy. This suggests that positive evidence alone is insufficient for L2 acquisition. If positive evidence is insufficient for SLA then negative evidence may be one remedy. Research by Gass and Schacter (1989) showed that it is negative evidence (incorrect forms) not positive evidence which is the essential ingredient when aiming to learn an L2. When given negative feedback a learner can focus on areas of language that do not match the target language.

White (1991) studied the development of adverb placement by French students studying English. Some classes were provided with explicit instruction on adverb placement plus exercises and corrective feedback. The other groups were given instruction on questions using the same type of exercises but no explicit instruction on adverbs. The classes lasted two weeks. The results showed that negative evidence did promote the learning of adverb placement. However, there was no difference when the learners were tested one year later. A possible explanation is that the subjects did not receive further focused evidence. If negotiation in the form of negative evidence

initiates change which restructures linguistic knowledge, then reinforcement is needed if the restructuring is to have a long-term effect.

Interactional modifications made possible through negotiation of meaning are considered to facilitate L2 development in a number of ways. First of all, input modifications may provide potentially acceptable input. According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), it is the learner's interactional efforts that make form-meaning relationships in the L2 data accessible and able to be internalised. Secondly, the communicative and cognitive effort required to negotiate meaning can help learners notice the linguistic features that are problematic for them. The interactional studies conducted so far have highlighted the importance of modified input and modified interaction in L2 development. A study by Pica, Young, Doughty (1987) showed that learners who were exposed to unmodified input with opportunities to negotiate meaning understood it better than learners who were exposed to a simplified version of the input but offered no opportunity for negotiation. They have also started to focus on the language output that learners produce as a result of input and interactional modifications.

Further support of Long's Interaction Hypothesis was provided by Pica's (1994) study involving two groups who listened to a script in order to complete a task. One group (group A) listened to a linguistically modified version of the script but was not allowed to ask questions as they carried out the instructions. The other group (group B) listened to the original script but could ask for clarifications. Group B outperformed group A, suggesting that using clarification does assist learners in their comprehension.

Long's (1996) reformulation of the Interaction Hypothesis places more emphasis on linking features of input and the linguistic environment with 'learner-internal factors' (Mitchell and Myles, 1998). This new version of the hypothesis highlights the possible contribution to second language learning of negative evidence with regard to the structure of the target language, from environmental language (i.e. from foreigner talk discourse).

Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggests that a greater understanding of interaction in learning can be gained by looking at it in terms of three macrofunctions of language proposed by Halliday (1986). These view interaction as a textual activity, an interpersonal activity and as an ideational activity. The first looks at interaction as a textual activity and refers to the use of linguistic and metalinguistic features necessary for understanding language input.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) argues that most interactional studies view interaction as a textual activity in which learners and their interlocutors modify their input in order to maximise chances of mutual understanding. Teacher talk, for example, is the simplified language teachers use in order to talk to L2 learners. Halliday (1986) also considered interaction in learning, namely interaction as an ideational activity. This involves expression of the participant's own experience of the processes, persons, objects in and around the learning and teaching context. The focus is on ideas and emotions learners bring with them based on their personal experiences. It also involves a cognitive awareness of and a sociocultural sensitivity to the external world.

Breen (1985) pointed out that interaction is more than a sociolinguistic process. What needs to be taken into account are the sociopsychological and sociocultural forces that shape an individual's behaviour. The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky emphasised the role played by social interaction in the development of language. His perspective on the role of interaction in second language acquisition is provided by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. He believes that SLA is influenced by both social and cultural factors. His view is that the interaction which constitutes the learning process is not so much individual as social by nature. One component of the theory, namely Activity Theory, comprises a series of proposals for conceptualizing the social context within which individual learning takes place (Mitchell and Myles, 1998). According to Activity Theory, the personal goals with which an individual approaches a task may vary. Therefore a language learner may approach a task in a different way to how the task designer (i.e. the teacher) intended (see section 2.10 below).

Another perspective on the role of interaction in second language acquisition is Sociocultural theory of human mental processing (see section 2.8 below).

2.8 Sociocultural Theory of Mind (SCT)

According to Lantolf (2000) the most fundamental concept of sociocultural theory is that the human mind is mediated. Vygotsky (1978) argued that symbolic tools, or signs, are used by people to mediate and regulate their relationships with others and themselves and therefore change the nature of these relationships.

A sociocultural theory of mind (SCT) is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978), Leontiev (1978), and Wertsch (1985). However, according to Lantolf (2000), not all scholars working within sociocultural theory have agreed with Vygotsky's designation of the word as the unit of analysis for the study of the mediated mind. Wertsch (1985) suggests that it is difficult to perceive mediated processes such as memory or attention in the sense of a word. Leontiev (1978) also rejected word sense, arguing that it was too far removed from the concrete activity of people in their world.

Lantolf (2000) points out that sociocultural theory focuses on human individuals and, in doing so, the possibility that an individual will act according to his/her own intentions. He also suggests that, according to Vygotskian thought, human beings construct their environment in unique ways. In particular, the theory of activity, a component of sociocultural theory, maintains that human behaviour is a complex process. The theory seeks to explain how mediated minds (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 1996) are developed out of social activity. Social activity allows individuals to exercise conscious control over mental activities such as attention, planning and problem-solving. In Vygotskian theory, language is viewed as both a means of accomplishing social interaction and of managing mental activity. As Ellis (2003) notes, in sociocultural SLA, language learning involves both developing the means for mediating learning, i.e. the tools, and the language itself, i.e. the object. Swain (2000) suggests that it involves learning how to use language to mediate language learning. Lantolf

(2000) suggests that mediation in second language learning involves mediation by others in social interaction.

According to Ellis (2003), a primary means of mediation is verbal interaction and sociocultural theory regards language learning as dialogically based. Artigal (1992) suggests that a “language acquisition device” is located in the interaction that takes place between speakers rather than inside their heads. The implication is therefore that acquisition occurs in rather than as a result of interaction. L2 acquisition is viewed not as a purely individual –based process but shared between the individual and other person. Ellis (2003), also points out that both monologic and dialogic interaction can provide mediation in learning. However, dialogic is central because it allows the teacher to create a context in which learners can participate in their own learning and the teacher can provide support.

As noted earlier, Breen (1985) pointed out that an individual’s interactional behaviour and its impact on the learning process cannot be interpreted in terms of input and interaction alone. He therefore acknowledged the Vygotskian approach to language acquisition. According to Vygotsky (1987) meaning is constructed through social interaction. Sociocultural theorists assume that language acquisition actually takes place in the interactions of learner and interlocutor. When learners interact with themselves they shape and solidify their learning. This would ultimately help students with their language development. Sfarid (1998) notes that sociocultural theorists prefer to talk of “participation” rather than acquisition in order to point out that development is not so much a matter of the taking in and possession of knowledge but rather the taking part in social activity. Ellis (2003) points out that this view of learning blurs the distinction between “use” of the L2 and “knowledge” of the L2 because knowledge is use and use creates knowledge.

According to socio-cultural theory, learning arises in interaction not through interaction. Learners first succeed in performing a new function with the assistance of another person and then internalise this function so that they can perform it unassisted. Social interaction therefore mediates learning (Ellis, 2003). The kinds of

interactions that most successfully mediate learning are those in which the new functions are 'scaffolded' by the participants. Scaffolding is the dialogic process by which one speaker assists another to perform a new function. According to Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976), it can involve recruiting interest in the task, simplifying it, maintaining pursuit of the goal of the task, controlling frustration during problem solving and demonstrating an idealised version of what has to be done.

2.9 Activity Theory

According to Lantolf (2000), Activity Theory is a unified account of Vygotsky's original proposals on nature and development of human behaviour. Specifically it suggests that human behaviour results from the integration of socially and culturally constructed forms of mediation into human activity. Luria (1973) refers to the system that results from the integration of artifacts into human activity (whether psychological or social) as a functional system. Vygotsky argued that if psychology was to understand these functional systems it had to study their formation and their activity and not their structure. Lantolf (2000) notes that Vygotsky's ideas were eventually crystallised by Leontiev (1978).

According to Leontiev (1978) people possess motives that determine how they respond to a particular task. Motives can be biologically determined or socially constructed. The learners' motives determine how they construe a given situation. Students with different motives will perform the same task in different ways. Activity Theory distinguishes three dimensions or levels of cognition – motives, goals and operations. Lantolf and Appel (1994) note that the level of motive answers why something is done, the level of goal answers what is done and the level of operations answers how it is done. Motives can be socially constructed as with the need to learn an L2. Language learning provides a link between socioculturally defined motives and concrete operations. He also suggests that, according to Vygotskian thought, human beings construct their environment in unique ways. In particular, the theory of activity, a component of sociocultural theory, maintains that human behaviour is a complex

process, and the properties of any given activity are determined by the sociohistorical setting.

According to Lantolf (2000), Activity Theory, one aspect of sociocultural theory, explains that in a particular classroom at a given time, different activities might be underway despite the fact that all of the participants display the same or similar overt behaviours in a task. Therefore, as Ellis (2003) points out, a task can result in different kinds of activity because different students will approach the task differently depending on their underlying motives. This could mean that a learner who views the task as a game will engage in a different kind of activity from one who views the task as work.

Ellis (2003) points out that Activity Theory recognises that changing social conditions can result in individuals realigning their motives and possibly their operations they use. The way that learners view a task is therefore unpredictable. They might view a task as a 'game' on one occasion and as 'work' on another, depending on how they approach the task at different times. Ellis (2003) has noted that researchers need to ascertain what motives learners bring to a task if they are to understand the interactions that occur when the task is performed. He also notes that much task-based research that has taken place to date is at fault.

2.10 Summary

It is only through cooperation that teachers and learners generate classroom discourse, and in generating discourse they also generate a wide range of learning opportunities. However, it is perfectly possible that they have different perceptions about what constitutes a successful learning opportunity. As Kumaravadivelu (2003) points out, the gap between teacher and learner perceptions of the aims and activities of classroom events can easily increase the gap between input (input refers to the oral and written data of the target language which learners are exposed to and which they recognise as useful and usable for language learning purposes) and learner intake (that is, new language which has been processed sufficiently for it to become incorporated

into the learner's developing second language system). Kumaravadivelu (2003) notes that to a large extent what actually goes in may be determined by how learners perceive the usefulness of classroom events through which they are exposed to input. Therefore, teaching cannot always lead automatically to learning because learning is a personal construct controlled by the individual learner. If learning is controlled by the learner, then teachers can only try to construct the conditions necessary for learning to take place. Tasks are one way of providing second language learners with learning opportunities and these are discussed in Part B.

PART B – Tasks in SLA and Language Pedagogy

In Part B I explain how task-based learning has been influenced by SLA theory. Some of this interest has been motivated by the fact that ‘task’ is seen as a construct of equal importance to second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and to language teachers (Ellis, 2003).

2.11 Introduction

Second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and language teachers aim to elicit samples of language use from learners (Ellis, 2003). Researchers require samples to investigate how second language (L2) learning takes place while teachers use the samples to help learners with their learning and as evidence to show that successful learning is taking place. Both researchers and teachers accept that the samples will vary according to the extent to which learners focus on using language correctly as opposed to simply communicating a message. They are both now increasingly aware of the need to elicit samples of language use that are representative of how learners perform when they are not attending to accuracy. It is thought that such samples will provide evidence of learners’ ability to use their L2 knowledge in real-time communication and how they structure and restructure their interlanguages over time. Teachers now realise that it is important to give learners the opportunity to experience such samples in order to develop the kind of L2 proficiency needed to communicate fluently and effectively (Ellis, 2003). One of the main ways that these samples of meaning-focused language can be elicited is through using ‘tasks’.

As Ellis (2003) notes, the use of tasks has been closely linked to the developments in the study of second language acquisition (SLA). SLA has become more and more theory-oriented with researchers looking to test specific hypotheses based on theories of L2 acquisition. Tasks have played an important role in theoretically based research and have become a focus of research in their own right. Ellis (2003) also points out that due to the ability of learners to set their own tasks, further research is needed to

investigate how individual students react to the tasks they have been asked to perform.

2.12 Defining a Task

Tasks have been employed by both researchers and teachers to elicit such samples of meaning-focused language. However, neither in research nor language pedagogy is there complete agreement as to what constitutes a task. Ellis (2003) believes that task definitions address the following dimensions: the scope of the task, the perspective from which a task is viewed, the authenticity of a task, the linguistic skills required to perform a task, the psychological processes involved in task performance and the outcome of a task.

The first of these is the scope of a task. This involves establishing whether the term 'task' should be restricted to activities where the learners' attention is primarily focused on conveying messages or whether it should include language activities designed to get learners to display correct use of the language.

According to Ellis (2003), tasks are activities that call for primarily meaning-focused language use and the overall purpose of tasks is learning language. Widdowson (1998) points out that tasks are concerned with 'pragmatic meaning', that is, the use of language in context. Therefore, as Ellis (2003) notes, a task requires learners to function as 'language users' because they must use the same kinds of communicative processes as those involved in real-world activities. Any learning that takes place is incidental. However, as Ellis (2003) also notes when learners engage in tasks they do not always focus on meaning and act as language users. He argues that while a task requires a learner to act primarily as a language user and give focal attention to conveying messages it also allows for some attention to be paid to form as they act as language learners.

The second dimension, according to Ellis (2003), which is important in task definition, is perspective. "Perspective refers to whether a task is seen from the task designer's or

the participants' point of view. This is relevant to the distinction between meaning-focused and form-focused" (Ellis, 2003, p.5). A task may have been designed to encourage a focus on meaning, but, as Ellis (2003) notes, it may result in display rather than communicative language use. As Hosenfield (1976) points out, learners are adroit at redefining activities to suit their own purposes. Thus the 'task-as-workplan' may or may not match the 'task-as-process' (Breen, 1989). The 'task-as-workplan' is the intended pedagogy (the plan made before classroom implementation of what the teachers and learners will do). The 'task-in-process' is the actual pedagogy or what actually happens in the classroom.

The third perspective is authenticity and this refers to whether a task needs to correspond to some real-world activity (i.e. achieve situational authenticity). Skehan (1996) broadens the definition to allow tasks to have some sort of relationship to the real world. By this he means that kind of language elicited corresponds to the kind of communicative behaviour that arises from performing real-world tasks. Learners therefore will need to negotiate their way to a shared understanding by asking questions and clarifying meanings.

As Ellis (2003) points out the literature on tasks, both research-based and pedagogic (Ur, 1991; Crookes and Gass, 1993; Bygate, Skehan, and Swain, 2001) assumes that tasks are directed at oral skills, particularly speaking. His definition, however, is that a task can involve any of the four language skills and may require dialogic or monologic language use.

Another dimension highlighted by Ellis (2003) is a psychological one involving cognitive processes. The workplan requires learners to use cognitive processes such as selecting, reasoning, classifying, reasoning, ordering and evaluating information in order to carry out the task. Robinson (2001) suggests that tasks vary in their complexity according to the cognitive demands placed on learners. Finally, tasks can be defined by a feature of tasks referred to as outcome. The stated outcome of task helps determine when the learners have completed a task.

In defining a 'task' Ellis (2003) has identified the following criterial features: it is a workplan, it involves a primary focus on meaning, involves real-world processes of language use, can involve any of the four language skills, engages cognitive processes and has a clearly defined communicative outcome. Dunkel (1988) also views tasks as workplans that specify how learners will respond to tasks. The workplan does not specify what language the learners should use but rather allows them to choose the language needed to achieve the outcome of the task. As Kumaravadivelu (1991) notes, tasks indicate the content but the actual language to be negotiated in the classroom is left to the teacher and the learner.

2.13 Task-as-workplan and Task-in-process

As noted earlier, it is important to take into consideration the conceptions of task-as-workplan and task-in-process. According to Breen (1989), the 'task-as-workplan' is the intended pedagogy, the plan made prior to classroom implementation of what the teachers and learners will do. The 'task-in-process' is the actual pedagogy or what the teachers actually happens in the classroom. Breen (1989) notes that the concept of 'task' is intended to cover a range of workplans which are designed to facilitate language learning particularly in classrooms. Breen (1989) states that a 'task' can be a simple and brief practice exercise or a more complex workplan requiring spontaneous communication of meaning.

2.14 Task-based Research and Language Pedagogy

According to the psycholinguistic perspective tasks are viewed as devices that provide learners with the data they need for learning. A task therefore guides learners to engage in certain types of information-processing that are believed to be important for effective language use and/or for language acquisition from some theoretical standpoint (Ellis, 2003). This perspective is predictive and potentially deterministic. It assumes that there are properties in a task that will predispose learners to engage in certain types of language use and mental processing that are beneficial to acquisition. Skehan, Foster and Mehnert (1998) note that task properties will play an important

role in the nature of performance. It is claimed therefore that there is a close correlation between the task-as-workplan and the task-as-process because the activity that results from the task-as-workplan is predictable from the design features of the task. The design of the task is seen as potentially determining the kind of language use and opportunities for learning that arise (Ellis, 2003). The underlying theoretical position adopted by task-based researchers who work in this tradition comes from what Lantolf (1996) calls the 'computational metaphor'. This metaphor underlies the work on task-based learning/teaching of Long (1989), Skehan (1996) and Yule (1996) who, according to Ellis (2003), view tasks as devices for manipulating how learners process language. Tasks are therefore seen as the external means by which we can influence the mental computations that learners make. These computations determine how effectively they communicate and how they acquire language.

Within this metaphor, there are a number of theoretical positions which I discussed earlier. The first of these was Long's (1985) Interaction Hypothesis which in its early form claimed that acquisition is facilitated when learners obtain comprehensible input as a result of the opportunity to negotiate meaning when communication breaks down. In its later form (Long, 1996) the theory took into account other ways in which meaning negotiation can contribute to L2 acquisition. These include feedback that learners receive when they attempt to communicate and modified output that results from learners being pushed to reformulate their productions to make them comprehensible. As Ellis (2003) points out meaning negotiation draws the learners' attention to linguistic form in the context of a primary focus-on-meaning and therefore induces noticing which Schmidt (1990) claims is necessary for acquisition to take place.

The Interaction Hypothesis emphasises that what is important for acquisition is the opportunity for learners to engage in meaning negotiation. According to Ellis (2003), however, with the exception of a few studies (Ellis, Tanaka and Yamazaki, 1994; Mackey, 1999; and Ellis and He, 1999), there is little empirical evidence to demonstrate that negotiation promotes acquisition.

A related approach to investigating tasks is that suggested by Swain (1985, 1995). Her approach is based on the role that output can play in L2 acquisition. Swain argues that output helps learners notice gaps in their linguistic knowledge. This then results in analysis of input and of their own internal resources. It also provides a means by which learners can test hypotheses about the L2 and reflect on their own and the interlocutors' use of language. According to Ellis (2003) Swain and her co-researchers have examined how tasks have impacted on language related episodes (occasions when linguistic form is discussed by learners). These 'episodes' arise when learners attend to form in the context of performing a task. However, Swain and Lapkin (2000) found no major task differences in the degree of attention that L2 learners paid to form.

Skehan's cognitive approach (which was discussed in depth earlier) to investigating tasks, was developed in 1998 to support his empirical investigations of tasks. This approach is based on a distinction between the way learners build an exemplar-based and a rule-based system. The linguistic knowledge contained in the exemplar-based system can be easily and quickly accessed and it is therefore suited for occasions requiring fluent language performance. The rule-based system consists of abstract representations of the underlying patterns of the language and these require more processing. They are therefore more suited to more controlled, less fluent language performance.

According to Ellis (2003), task-based research originating from the Interaction Hypothesis has focused on meaning negotiation whereas Skehan's research has examined learner production. Skehan examined three aspects of production: fluency (i.e. the capacity of the learner to use their system to communicate in real time); accuracy (i.e. the ability of the learner to perform as to target language norms) and complexity (i.e. the utilisation of interlanguage structures that are new, elaborate and structured). Skehan suggests that some tasks predispose them to focus on fluency, accuracy or complexity. He also argues that it may be possible to influence different aspects of language acquisition by providing opportunities for learners to engage in different types of production. Research based on Skehan's work has therefore been

aimed at finding out what task variables lead learners to emphasise fluency, accuracy or complexity in their productions. These variables can be grouped as either task features or task implementation.

Research based on the Interaction/Output Hypothesis and Skehan's cognitive approach aims to identify those task features that result in learner production of potential importance for L2 acquisition. Yule's (1996) research, however, has been aimed at examining task-processes that contribute to communicative effectiveness. Yule (1996) has proposed a theory of communicative effectiveness for referential tasks of the same or different kind. The theory has a role-taking dimension which refers to the ability of the learners to take account of their communicative partners. They need to recognise the importance of the other speaker's perspective, to make inferences about other speaker's perspective, to take these inferences into account when encoding a message and attend to the feedback provided by the other speaker in order to monitor output (Ellis, 2003). Tasks may vary in terms of the ease with which participants can achieve communicative effectiveness. Brown (1995) found that native speakers of English found it easier to perform a task that simply needed the participants to 'use an interpretation' rather than 'construct' their own. According to Ellis (2003), Yule's theory goes beyond that of both the Interaction/Output Hypothesis and Skehan's cognitive approach but is of greater applicability to performance testing than task-based teaching. However, Yule has highlighted a weakness in the psycholinguistic perspective. Task performance depends not just on the nature of the task but also on learner factors (involved in the role-taking dimension).

Ellis (2003) argues that the psycholinguistic tradition has not paid sufficient attention to the task setting (i.e. pseudo-laboratory or classroom) and number of participants (a pair of participants or the whole class). The same task might also result in different kinds of activity depending on the role that the teacher plays in the interactions that arise at various stages of a lesson (Samuda, 2001).

An alternative view, a constructivist view, can also be taken in examining the relationship between tasks and acquisition. The socio-cultural theory, discussed in

Chapter Two claims that participants always co-construct the activity they engage in, in accordance with their own socio-history and locally determined goals. Appel and Lantolf (1994) point out that performance depends on the interaction of the individual task rather than on the inherent properties of the task itself. Ellis (2003) also notes that sociocultural accounts of tasks show that the same task can result in very different kinds of activity when performed by the same learners at different times. This is because when students perform a task they 'construct' the activity in terms of their motives and goals which can vary.

This distinction between 'task' and 'activity' is examined in a study by Coughlan and Duff (1994). They compared the performances of five learners (one Cambodian and four Hungarian) on a picture description task performed face to face with a researcher. Coughlan and Duff (1994) concluded that despite the relatively controlled nature of the task a range of discourse types may result from the learners' multiple interpretations of that task. They also concluded that the interviewer-researcher plays a large role in shaping task-based activity. They warn against treating 'task' as a constant in research as the activity it generates will be unique (Ellis, 2003).

Similarly, Platt and Brooks (1994) show how a role-play is interpreted variably by different groups of students. One group carried out the instructions in a mechanical fashion. Another group reconstructed the task in accordance with their own goals. Foster (1998) investigated tasks that students performed as part of a time-tabled lesson in their normal classroom. She found that none of the tasks resulted in much negotiated input or output and suggests that the students were motivated to make the tasks fun. The students therefore performed the tasks in a way that was compatible with their own motives and goals. Foster (1998) investigated tasks that students performed as part of a timetabled lesson in their normal classroom. She found that the students performed the task in a way that was compatible with their own motives and goals.

Wang (1996) shows how different groups of learners interpreted the same task very differently. When students were asked to rank in order a list of seven effects of

excessive TV viewing, Wang found that one group did not perform the task as instructed because they did not agree with most of the effects listed in the task materials. Another group chose to ignore the instructions. This caused the teacher to change the activity and the instructions. Roebuck (2000) showed that L2 learners of Spanish not only orient to recall tasks in different ways but also some of them re-oriented themselves in the course of completing the task (Ellis, 2003). According to Ellis (2003), the studies above show that tasks are not generalisable and also that tasks do not manipulate learners to act in certain ways.

These studies support Donato's (2000) conclusion that generalisations cannot be made about tasks and that tasks cannot manipulate learners to act in a certain way. Ellis (2003) points out that tasks of the kind commonly used in SLA research are not just performed but are interpreted, resulting in activity that is 'constructed' by the students in accordance with their particular motives and goals.

Task-based research in the socio-cultural tradition has focused on showing how scaffolding helps learners achieve a successful task outcome. Donato (1994) described the collective scaffolding employed by groups of university students performing an oral task. He showed how one group of learners was able to produce a particular grammatical construction jointly even though none of the students individually knew it. Swain and Lapkin (1998) also reveal learners' ability to internalise grammatical features that they constructed collaboratively through dialogue when performing a task. Samuda (2001) shows how a teacher created the conditions for students to uptake a new grammatical feature through scaffolding but the students did not use the new feature in their own speech until the teacher provided a more explicit account (Ellis, 2003).

Socio-cultural researchers have focused on how tasks are accomplished by learners and teachers and how the process of accomplishing them might contribute to language acquisition. They view the learner, the teacher and the setting in which they interact as just as important as the task itself. However, according to Ellis (2003), as in psycholinguistically oriented research on tasks, researchers have concentrated on

describing the social interactions that arise when learners perform tasks and have made little attempt to demonstrate if these interactions contribute to acquisition.

Recently, some researchers, notably Seedhouse (2005), have questioned the robustness of 'task' as currently conceived in the TBL/SLA literature as a construct to be used for research. He argues that 'task' has weak construct validity and ontology because the construct has a 'split personality'. He notes that conceptualisation is based on the task-as-workplan, but data is gathered from the task-in-process. Adopting a conversation analysis (CA) perspective he argues that the two can be very different. Another difference noted by Seedhouse (2005) is the emic or etic perspective. The etic perspective refers to an external analyst's perspective on human behaviour while the emic perspective refers to the participant's perspective within a system. According to Seedhouse (2005) the CA perspective is not merely the participants' perspective, but the perspective from within the sequential environment in which the social actions are performed. He notes that the emic perspective can only apply to the task-in-process since the task-as-workplan is a plan rather than a communicative event.

Seedhouse (2005) also contends that a task-as-workplan can be specified only etically because at that stage there are no participants in communicative behaviour to study. However a task-in-process is a communicative event which can be analysed emically using a CA methodology (Seedhouse 2005). According to Seedhouse (2005) the construct used for conceptualisation by TBL/SLA research is predominantly the task-as-workplan. As mentioned earlier, Ellis (2003) notes that the first criterial feature of a task is that it is a workplan. Seedhouse (2005) contends, however, that TBL/SLA research gathers interactional data from the task-in-process because that is the actual communicative event that generates interactional data.

2.15 Use of Tasks

According to Ellis (2003), this suggests that tasks cater for learning by providing the following opportunities for learners: to use new language structures and items through

collaboration with others; to subsequently engage in more independent use of the structures they have internalised in relatively undemanding tasks and to finally use the structures in cognitively more complex tasks. In theory, learning takes place when learners actually use a new skill in the accomplishment of some goal. What is required is not just an understanding of input containing unknown language forms but actually producing them.

Where tasks result in scaffolding, collaborative dialogue and instructional conversations, opportunities for learners to extend their knowledge of the L2 can be expected to rise. Ellis (2003) points out that these opportunities are not created by the tasks themselves but rather by the way in which the tasks are performed by the participants.

With regard to Activity Theory, discussed earlier, Ellis (2003) points out that a task can result in different kinds of activity because different students will approach the task differently depending on their underlying motives. Lantolf (2000) points out that activities are differentiated in terms of motives. A learner who views a task as a 'game' will engage in a different kind of activity to a learner who views the same task as 'work'. Activity theory also recognises that changing social conditions can result in students realigning their motives. Therefore a student may view a task as a 'game' on one occasion and as 'work' on another. This highlights the importance of trying to ascertain what motives learners bring to a task because motives may help in understanding the interactions that occur when the task is performed. Ellis (2003) notes that according to a sociocultural theory of mind tasks are tools that learners interpret and use to construct an activity in accordance with their own particular goals and motives.

Ellis (2003) points out that due to the ability of learners to set their own 'tasks' that further research is needed to investigate how individual students react to the tasks they have been asked to perform. Ellis (2003) contends that tasks that are commonly used in SLA research are not just performed but are also interpreted. This results in activity that is 'constructed' by the learners according to their particular motives and

goals. Orientation refers to how learners view a task, the nature of the goals and operations that are used to carry it out. The type of orientation that is adopted by a learner can determine the kind of activity that results.

2.16 Learners' Interpretation of Tasks

According to some researchers, learners have the ability to set their own tasks (Breen, 1989; Ellis, 2003). Some (Breen, 1987; Nunan 1989) have pointed out that language learners will inevitably interpret a task and make it their own. Ellis (2003) has shown that task-as-work plan may or may not correspond to task-as-process. One reason appears to be that learners choose to establish their own purpose for doing the task.

Block (1994, 1996) has found that teachers and learners operate according to quite different systems for describing and attributing purpose to tasks. He believes that learners do have an awareness of what goes on in class and that teachers should therefore make an attempt to align their task orientation to that of learners. Following on from work done by Breen (1987) and Nunan (1989) he argues that language learners will inevitably interpret a task, make it their own and, in essence, do with it what they please. Block (1994) notes that one way of improving our understanding of this learner-generated process is to examine the ways in which learners describe and attribute purpose to the tasks which teachers ask them to do in class.

2.17 Previous Studies of Learner Perceptions

Four experimental studies conducted in four different countries involving learners of different proficiency levels have been done since the late 1980's. These were conducted by Kumaravadivelu (1989, 1991), Slimani (1989, 1992), Block (1994, 1996) and Barkhuizen (1998).

2.17.1 Kumaravadivelu's Study

Kumaravadivelu (1989, 1991) tried to identify sources of potential mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation by exploring the learners' and teachers' perception of the nature, the goals, and the demands of a selected language-learning task carried out by low intermediate level ESL learners in the United States. He chose a task that dealt with newspaper advertisements. It focused on the rhetorical features of comparison and the grammatical features of too and enough. The task had two parts. The first part entitled "Finding an inexpensive wedding dress" presented information about a bride-to-be. This included information such as her budget and size. Also provided were six brief classified advertisements for wedding gowns.

The second part was entitled "Finding an apartment". Information was presented about a renter couple (for example their budget and flat specifications). Information concerning six brief classified advertisements for flat rentals was also provided. Learners had to decide which advertisement the bride-to-be and the renters would answer.

The study involved two intermediate level ESL classes, taught by two different teachers. The teachers were given the same task and were asked to follow the guidelines given in the prescribed textbook. The selected task was introduced as a paired activity. Attention was given to two pairs of learners. One pair was a Japanese male and a Brazilian female. The other pair was a Japanese male and a Malaysian female. The classroom interaction was audiotaped and transcribed. During the analysis stage the researcher talked with the teachers and learners in order to clarify some of the questions and responses. The classroom transcripts formed the primary data and the interview scripts formed the secondary data. Analysis of the data (primary and secondary) as well as learner, teacher and researcher perspectives of classroom events gave insights into the mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation.

Based on this study Kumaravadivelu (2003) identified ten sources that have the potential to contribute to the mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation. These are as follows:

- 1) Cognitive mismatch: this source refers to the general, cognitive knowledge of the world that adult learners bring with them to the classroom. It includes mental processes such as recognising and inferencing.
- 2) Communicative mismatch: this source refers to the communicative skills required by learners to exchange messages or express personal views. Learners have only a limited command of the target language and therefore struggle to convey their message.
- 3) Linguistic mismatch: This source refers to the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic knowledge of the target language that is minimally required to do the task and talk about it.
- 4) Pedagogic mismatch: this source refers to the teacher and learner perceptions of stated or unstated short or long-term instructional objectives of language learning tasks.
- 5) Strategic mismatch: This source refers to learning strategies: operations, steps, plans, and routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information. This is concerned with what learners do to learn and to regulate learning.
- 6) Cultural mismatch: This source refers to the prior knowledge of the cultural norms of the target language community minimally required for the learners to understand and solve a problem-orientated task.
- 7) Evaluative mismatch: This source refers to articulated or unarticulated types of self-evaluation measures used by learners to monitor their progress in their language-learning activities.
- 8) Procedural mismatch: This source refers to stated or unstated paths chosen by learners to do a task. The procedural source involves bottom-up tactics that look for an immediate solution to a problem. The strategic source refers to any top-down strategy that learners use to find an over-all solution to a problem in a general language learning situation.

- 9) Instructional mismatch: this source refers to instructional guidance given by the teacher or indicated by the textbook in order to help learners carry out the task successfully.
- 10) Attitudinal mismatch: This source refers to participants' attitudes toward the nature of L2 learning and teaching, the nature of classroom culture, and teacher-learner role relationships. Adult learners often have quite well-established attitudes toward classroom management. These preconceived notions can easily contribute to the mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) derived three broad pedagogic insights from his work. The first was that mismatches are unavoidable. He believes that even highly structured and well planned lessons will result in perceptual mismatches of one kind or another. In fact Kumaravadivelu (2003) states that it would be surprising if perceptual mismatches do not occur at all. Secondly, he believes that mismatches are identifiable and that further research might reveal more than the ten he identified. Thirdly, he points out that mismatches are manageable and that a mismatch can be converted into a learning opportunity in class.

2.17.2 Slimani's Study

Slimani (1989) investigated a group of first-year university students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) in Algeria. She observed and recorded six lessons. She was particularly interested in uptake or the students' report of their perception of what they learned after each lesson. She found that the teacher often focused on various specific instructional features without the learners reporting them. She also found that learners reported to have learned some items that were different from what the teacher had planned for them. She also found that the learners mentioned only 44 per cent of the explicit focus of the lessons, and a majority of the items unnoticed by the learners are instances of error treatment provided by the teacher. Slimani's study seems to highlight perceptual mismatches between teaching agenda and learning outcome.

2.17.3 Block's Study

Block (1994, 1996) examined the ways in which learners describe and attribute purpose to the activities that teachers ask them to do. The study focused on the similarities and differences between learner and teacher perceptions of learning purpose. The study involved an EFL class for MBA students in Spain. The observed lesson consisted of five activities: a brief conversation warm-up, a vocabulary review, a review of a news broadcast, a practice minitest and an extended activity about job advertisements. Block found that the learners talked most highly of the news reviewing task which was not important from the teacher's perspective. Interestingly the learners were not interested in the job activity which was of importance from the teacher's perspective. This study highlights the autonomy of learner thought and also the existence of a gap between the way teachers and learners view the classroom.

2.17.4 Barkhuizen's Study

Barkhuizen's (1998) study involved high-school students learning English as a second language (ESL) in South Africa. He focused on the students' perceptions of learning and teaching activities done in class. He found that students' perception of classroom aims and events did not match those of their teachers. The study revealed that many teachers were surprised that the students ranked the acquisition of mechanical skills highly in terms of learning English. In light of these findings Barkhuizen advises teachers to pay close attention to learner perceptions.

These experimental studies confirmed that there are perceptual mismatches between teaching objectives and learning outcomes and between the instruction that makes sense to teachers and instruction that makes sense to learners.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2003) the studies above confirm our experiential knowledge that there are indeed perceptual mismatches between teaching objectives and learning outcomes and between the instruction that makes sense to teachers and instruction that makes sense to learners.

2.18 Summary

From the review of the literature, it can be seen that it is possible that teachers and learners may have very different perceptions about what a successful learning opportunity is. While the role of learner perception of the value of such opportunities has been recognised (Corder, 1967), there have been very few systematic studies on learner and teacher perceptions in the field of classroom L2 teaching and learning. As Ellis (2003) points out, the ability of learners to set their own tasks suggests that researchers need to investigate how individual students react to the tasks they have been asked to perform. Allwright (1986) points out that teachers and learners may not look at the same classroom event as a potential learning event. Other research (Kumaravadivelu, 1989, 1991; Block, 1994, 1996) has shown that perceptions of teachers and learners do not always match. These studies support the view that “the more we know about the learner’s personal approaches and personal concepts, the better and more productive our intervention will be” (Kumaravadivelu, 1991, p. 107). However, as Ellis (2003) notes, these kind of studies are rare. It is important that we learn more about the learner’s personal perspective on classroom aims and investigate the possible sources that could contribute to potential mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation. Therefore, my study will address the following:

My Research Question:

Do mismatches exist between teacher’s intention and learners’ interpretation of task and if so, what is their source?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces, and contains a discussion of, the methodological approach and research design which I chose to examine the research question set out in Chapter Two. First of all, I discuss qualitative research in relation to the current study. I then present the study itself, the participants, and the setting. Next, I look at the instruments used before discussing the pilot study carried out before the main study. Finally, I look at the process of data collection and analysis for the main study and ethical issues.

3.2 Methodological Approach

Patton (1990) has advocated the importance of recognising that 'different methods are appropriate for different situations' so that designing a study appropriate for a specific situation is largely determined by the purpose of the study, the questions being investigated, and the sources available.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research in Relation to the Current Study

The central goal of a qualitative approach is to document the world from the point of view of the people studied and to know how people define their situations (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). An adoption of a qualitative paradigm can allow the researcher to not only describe happenings and behaviours, but also to explore why such phenomena occur (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

In 2005, two of the most influential qualitative researchers, Denzin and Lincoln, concluded that qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of

methods or practices that are entirely its own. Qualitative research is many things to many people. Silverman (1993) similarly concluded that there is no agreed doctrine underlying all qualitative social research. Furthermore, Holliday (2004) noted that boundaries in current qualitative research have begun to crumble, and researchers are increasingly doing whatever they can to find out what they know.

There are many characteristics of qualitative research. As Dörnyei (2007) points out, its emergent nature means that no aspect of the research design is tightly prefigured and a study is kept open and fluid so that it can respond in a flexible way to new details or openings that may emerge during the process of investigation. This flexibility applies to the research questions which may evolve, change or be refined during the study.

Qualitative research usually comprises fewer participants. Mackey and Gass (2005) noted that qualitative researchers tend to work more intensively with fewer participants and are less concerned about issues of generalisability. Dörnyei (2007) pointed out that a qualitative study, which is well-designed, usually requires a relatively small number of respondents in order to gather the saturated and rich data that is needed to understand even subtle meanings in the phenomenon under focus.

Therefore a qualitative inquiry encompassing an emergent research design was best suited to my study. This enabled the research process to be entered into with an open mind and without setting out to test preconceived hypotheses. The analytic categories/concepts were defined during, rather than prior to the process of research. This study does not aim to generalise about why there might be mismatches between all students studying English as a foreign language and their teachers but instead focuses on a particular group of students studying at a particular level of English but a more extensive data set might enable generalisations if a quantitative approach was also included.

Dörnyei (2007) also points out that qualitative researchers aim to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people attach to them – that is, to adopt an emic perspective, or the use of categories that are meaningful to the speech community under study. The study is concerned with possible mismatches that might arise when learners interpret a task in different way from how the task was originally intended to

be interpreted by the teacher. It is therefore important to understand what the learners' perspective of a particular task is. Bell (1999) suggests that research that adopts a qualitative perspective is more concerned with understanding individuals' perceptions of the world. Learners' interpretations of a particular task may well be affected by their cultural and educational background. For the questionnaire and teacher interview I mostly used open questions to encourage free, personal responses. Bell also points out that qualitative research is concerned with subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals. Therefore, the explicit goal of research is to explore the participants' view of the situation being studied. This is particularly relevant to the study as it attempted to investigate potential mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation by exploring learners' and teachers' perceptions of the nature and goals of two selected language-learning tasks.

3.2.2 Triangulation

As it applies to research, triangulation involves the application and examination of multiple data sources and different data collection methods in the investigation of a single question or phenomenon (Freeman, 1998; Patton, 1990).

Research can be triangulated on three layers: the level of the data sources; the level of the data collection, or research methods; and the level of data analysis (Freeman 1998). Denzin (1978, quoted in Patton, 1990) has outlined four basic types of triangulation:

- Data triangulation, using a variety of data;
- Investigator triangulation, involving the use of several investigators or researchers;
- Theory triangulation, or the employment of more than one perspective to interpret and analyse the data;
- Methodological triangulation, involving the use of multiple methods of collecting data.

Freeman (1998) has suggested another type of triangulation, triangulation in time and/or location, which involves collecting the same types of data and/or using the same method(s) over a given time period or with the same sources in multiple data-gathering sites.

In this study, two forms of triangulation are applied; namely 'methodological triangulation', involving the use of multiple tools to collect data (Brown, 2001; Patton, 1990), and 'data triangulation' using a variety of data.

In summary, a qualitative approach was identified as the most appropriate for the present research as it explored learners' and teachers' perceptions of the nature and goals and triangulation enabled the investigation of different sources of mismatch from different perspectives. To achieve this aim, I used qualitative research methods. The qualitative data collection tools, which I employed, comprised student questionnaires as well as teacher and student interviews.

3.3 Participants

The participants (see Table 3.1 below) were a group of adult learners (n=16) enrolled in a Post-Intermediate Certificate in English Language Course at Auckland University of Technology. The participants in the research were all at a Post-Intermediate level of proficiency. In order to study at this level, students would have to achieve a band score of at least 4.5 in the International English Language Testing System exam. I chose this level because the students came from a variety of countries and, studying in an English medium environment, the language of instruction for the research project was by necessity English. A Post-Intermediate level of proficiency was chosen in order that all the participants could fully understand the questionnaire, interview questions and task requirements.

The learners (11 Females, 5 Males) were from a range of L1 backgrounds. Among them, six were Chinese, two were Ethiopian, two were from Afghanistan, one was Thai, one was Iranian, one was Russian, one was Japanese, one was Sudanese and one was from Somalia. Three were under 25, six were between 26 and 35 and seven were over 35.

Table 3.1: Participant's Background Information

Students	Gender	Age	Ethnic Group	Mother Tongue
Student 1	F	26 - 35	Taiwan	Mandarin
Student 2	M	26 - 35	Ethiopia	Amharic
Student 3	F	Over 35	China	Chinese
Student 4	M	Under 25	Sudan	Dinka
Student 5	F	Over 35	Thailand	Thai
Student 6	F	26 -35	Somalia	Somali
Student 7	F	Under 25	Afghanistan	Farsi
Student 8	F	Over 35	Afghanistan	Persian
Student 9	F	Under 25	China	Chinese
Student 10	M	26 - 35	Taiwan	Chinese
Student 11	F	Over 35	China	Chinese
Student 12	F	Over 35	Russia	Russian
Student 13	F	Over 35	Japan	Japanese
Student 14	F	26 – 35	Taiwan	Mandarin
Student 15	M	26 – 35	Ethiopia	Amharic
Student 16	M	Over 35	Iranian	Turkish

3.4 Setting

The research took place in the School of Languages and Social Sciences at Auckland University of Technology in Auckland, New Zealand. A Certificate in English Language is awarded for achievement in English as an additional language at these levels of proficiency: Beginner, Post-Beginner, Elementary, Intermediate, High-Intermediate, Post-Intermediate. The purpose of the language papers is to enable learners to

develop their language ability in all four macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, so that they can use social facilities and institutions to participate fully in community life, undertake mainstream study in tertiary institutions, get jobs or start their own businesses. Teaching and learning strategies at the school encompass those that are teacher-directed through pair and group work to independent study both in and outside the classroom depending on learners' level of proficiency and the stage of the teaching-learning cycle. Teaching strategies in the programme follow predominantly two main models: Presentation/Practice/Production: new language is presented, practised in controlled tasks which lead in the final stage to free production in unstructured communicative situations and Task-Based Learning: uncontrolled whole task practice precedes analysis and critique of language, after which there is further whole task practice. As my study involved the use of tasks, this was an ideal setting.

3.5 Choice of Task

Convergent tasks were chosen as they have been shown to be more effective in promoting meaning negotiation (Duff, 1986). These tasks are open in nature i.e. they allow multiple solutions. The tasks chosen for the pilot study and main study were taken from a task-based English as a second language text book ('Cutting Edge' Intermediate/ Upper-Intermediate) which provides students with authentic tasks designed to give them the opportunity to develop their speaking skills in real life situations.

The aim of Task One (Appendix H – Camping Holiday), was for the students to make a list of what to take on a camping holiday. The students were put into pairs. One student was given a copy of the Student A worksheet and the other a copy of the Student B worksheet. The students were asked to tell each other what they had in their rucksacks and comment on their partner's choices.

Task Two (Appendix I – Where on earth are we?), required the students to work in pairs. The students were told to imagine that they got lost on the way to a wedding. The students were asked to act out a role-play and decide what to do next.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) identified ten sources that have the potential to contribute to a mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation. However, my thesis had a limited scope and investigated four of the mismatches above, which I believed would yield significant results, namely: instructional, procedural, pedagogic and strategic.

3.6 Instruments

The study involved two sets of instruments for the students: questionnaires and interviews (audio-tape recorded). The questionnaires explored the learners' perceptions of the tasks they performed. The interviews further explored the questionnaire findings. Having completed a task, all the students involved in the study completed a questionnaire. Eight students completed a questionnaire after completing the first task and a further eight students completed a questionnaire having completed the second task. Four students were interviewed after each task. Therefore a total of eight students were interviewed. The four students who were interviewed were randomly chosen from the group of eight students who completed the task. As the students had a rigid timetable to follow as part of their study at the School of Languages and Social Sciences, the time available to interview students was restricted. Therefore it was not possible to interview all the students who participated in the study. The teacher was interviewed after each task was completed.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

Collecting data through the use of a questionnaire has the advantage of ensuring stability of responses across a range of questions of interest to researchers. In second language acquisition research, questionnaires are recommended to collect data on phenomena that are not easily observed such as attitudes and motivation (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989). I used questionnaires to explore the interpretation of the tasks from a student's perspective.

Questionnaires are an ideal way of collecting as much data as possible, quickly, efficiently and cheaply. Questionnaires, as a data collection method, allow the

researcher to analyse the findings, extract patterns and make comparisons between the different student responses.

The student questionnaire (Appendix C) began with a set of instructions. These were followed by eight questions. These questions were designed to investigate one of the four mismatches being investigated (i.e. instructional, procedural, pedagogic and strategic). Therefore two questions on the questionnaire related to one of the mismatches. For example, the first question was: What did the teacher tell you to do? This question relates to the instructional mismatch. A later question (question 6) was: What do you think was the purpose of this task? This question relates to the pedagogic mismatch. A mixture of closed and open-ended questions was used to explore the perceptions of both the learners and the teacher. For example a closed question was used to ask if the students had ever asked their partner what to do during the task. This closed question was followed by an open question: "What did you ask?" which allowed the learner or teacher to expand on their answer to the closed question.

However, a problem with using a questionnaire of this type is that if the students were unclear as to the intentions of the questionnaire (some students came from countries which might not be open and transparent about their reasons for collecting data) they might have given what they thought would be a satisfactory response or have avoided answering the question.

3.6.2 Interviews

Interviews are procedures used for gathering oral data in particular categories, as well as for gathering data that was not anticipated at the outset (Brown, 2001). Patton (1990) has suggested that the major advantage of using interviews as a data collection tool lies in their strength as a strategy to find out from people things that we cannot directly observe, such as feelings, thoughts and intentions. This was therefore considered to be an ideal tool for investigating how the students and the teacher had interpreted the task they had just completed.

I used interviews for a number of reasons. Firstly, I wanted to follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives provided by the questionnaires. Secondly,

interviews have an advantage that the actual language content is preserved and the researcher can re-analyse the data. Thirdly, in interviews, the students could clarify their responses and provide the interviewer with rich reportage and they can act as a check on previous responses. Therefore, personal interviews with participants on a one-to-one basis were considered favourable for the study compared to group interviews, since they were more likely to lead to the true views of the respondents (Brown, 2001).

A standardised structured format was followed in which each participant was asked the same questions. Carefully worded and considered interview questions were written in advance exactly as they were to be asked during the interview (Patton, 1990). Each question was checked to ensure that it was free of words, idioms or syntax likely to interfere with the respondents' understanding of them. According to Patton (1990), standardised interviews must establish a fixed sequence of questions due to their structured format.

Four students were interviewed immediately after completing each of the tasks. Therefore, four students were interviewed after task one and four after task two. These were different students as the students involved in each task were different. The students represented one of the four pairs of students who participated in each task. They were chosen at random.

I interviewed both the teacher and students after each task in order to investigate how the teacher had interpreted the task and to gain further understanding of the students' interpretation of the task (information giving an understanding of the task was given on the questionnaire). The student interviews and teacher interviews comprised mainly open questions. The few closed questions had a follow up question designed to allow the respondent to elaborate on.

3.7 Data Validity and Reliability

The validity of data employed in any study, together with its reliability, are important issues to be addressed, as both go to the credibility of the study design, data collection and data analysis procedure.

3.7.1 Data Reliability

Reliability provides information about whether the data collection procedure is consistent and accurate (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989). To achieve reliability in the study, a triangulated approach to data collection was applied in order to enable issues to be examined from a number of perspectives.

Assessing the quality of the data collection procedure in the pilot phase allowed the researcher to revise and where necessary, modify the instruments on the basis of new information, thus improving the reliability of the procedure (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989). As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) have suggested, the aim of the pilot study is to learn about the research process and to get a general sense of the nature of the research setting. Pilot studies should therefore be carried out in situations and with people as close to the realities of the actual study as possible (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).

A structured interview schedule that provided uniform information assured the reliability and comparability of data (Kumar 1996; Newman and Benz, 1998), while interviewer effects were minimised by asking the same question of each respondent by the same interviewer (Patton, 1990).

3.7.2 Data Validity

Data validity is an estimate of the extent to which a study or set of instruments measures what it purports to measure (Newman and Benz, 1998; Seliger and Shohamy, 1989). A triangulated approach to the research design and data analysis enhanced the validity of the findings. Qualitative research entailed the researcher getting close to the participants which rendered it trustworthy (Patton, 1990).

3.8 Pilot Study

A pilot study, carried out approximately two months prior to the main study, was conducted for several reasons. Most importantly I wanted to test the reliability of the data collection methods.

3.8.1 Pilot Study Methodology

The pilot study involved the participation of eight Post-Intermediate students. These students were studying at the School of Languages and Social Sciences at Auckland University of Technology. I invited students to take part in the Pilot Study and explained the purpose of the study to them. I also invited their regular class teacher to take part in the Pilot Study. I arranged a meeting with the teacher during which I explained the nature and purpose of the study. Both students and the teacher were given an information sheet and a consent form which was returned to me.

3.8.2 Pilot Study Amendments

The Pilot Study was successful in that revisions and improvements were made prior to the main research taking part. First of all, in the Main Study I decided to interview one participant from each of the dyads in order to increase the amount and reliability of information gathered. The practicalities of data collection also influenced the changes to the collection of data for the Main Study. Secondly, the wording of some questions (deemed closed) was altered to encourage a greater volume of feedback.

I also decided to change the type of task. In the Pilot Study a closed task was chosen because, according to Long (1989) closed tasks are more likely to promote negotiation work than open tasks because they make it less likely that learners will give up when faced with a challenge. However, as the chosen task did not elicit sufficient data, convergent tasks were chosen for the Main Study (deciding what items to take on a camping trip and what to do when lost going to a wedding). According to Ellis (2003), a study by Duff (1986) concluded that, overall, convergent tasks result in more comprehensible input than divergent tasks and are more effective in promoting meaning negotiation. Thus the convergent tasks were open in nature i.e. they allowed multiple solutions. Open tasks are those where the participants know there is no predetermined solution.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure for the Student Questionnaires and Interviews

The next section outlines how I collected the data for the students.

3.9.1 Questionnaires

I firstly arranged for the teacher from the School of Languages and Social Sciences at the Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, to distribute a letter giving information about my research study and inviting anyone interested to participate. Two weeks later I introduced myself and my research topic to the class. I then asked the teacher to distribute my research Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form to any potential participants (i.e. all members of the pre-arranged class). It was emphasised that the research was voluntary and confidential. After a further two weeks, I returned to the class to teach. Those students who agreed to participate in the study were chosen at random and asked to do the task. Immediately after they had completed the task they were asked to complete the questionnaire. The questions were designed to elicit information regarding the four mismatches under investigation. The question numbers on the questionnaire (Appendix C) which relate to the four mismatches are as follows: Instructional mismatch – questions 1 and 2; Strategic – questions 3 and 7; Procedural – questions 4 and 5; Pedagogic – questions 6 and 8. The question order was deemed best suited to a logical flow of interview questions.

3.9.2 Interviews

Four of the participants who agreed to take part in the study were asked to be interviewed. Following the completion of their questionnaires, one of the dyads involved in the task was chosen at random and was interviewed by the researcher (Appendix K and N). The teacher was interviewed immediately after the student interviews were completed (Appendix L and O). The questions asked during the interview were designed to elicit information regarding the four mismatches, as on the questionnaire, but in greater depth. Each interview was recorded and then transcribed (see Appendix K, Appendix N). The student and teacher interview questions (Appendix F, Appendix G) were designed to investigate the four mismatches in the following

order: Instructional mismatches – questions 1 and 2; Strategic mismatches – questions 3 and 4; Procedural mismatches – questions 5 and 6; Pedagogic mismatches – questions 7 and 8.

3.10 Data Analysis

This section outlines how I analysed each of the responses given in the questionnaires and interviews.

3.10.1 Data Analysis of the Questionnaires

The four mismatches being investigated (i.e. instructional, procedural, pedagogic and strategic) related to two questions each on the questionnaire. The responses given by the students on the questionnaire were categorised and recorded in a table. For example (see table 4.1), question one asked the students the following question: What did the teacher tell you to do? This question relates to a potential instructional mismatch. The students' recollections of the teacher's instructions were varied but could be put into three groups: discuss what to take, tell each other what to take and prepare for camping trip. The number and percentage of the eight students who answered according to the three groups mentioned above was recorded in the table mentioned above (table 4.1). Responses from each of the questions were grouped and recorded for each of the two tasks.

3.10.2 Data Analysis of the Interview

Four pairs of students, chosen at random, participated in each of the two tasks. Four students, one from each pair, and the teacher were then interviewed in order to elicit more in-depth information regarding the four mismatches under investigation (i.e. instructional, procedural, strategic and pedagogic). The recorded (audio-taped) responses given by the students in the interviews were transcribed and then categorised and recorded in a table (see table 4.2). For example (see table 4.2), question one asked: What did the teacher tell you to do before you started doing the task? The question relates to an instructional mismatch. The students' recollections of the teacher's instructions were varied but could be put into four groups: Pack bags and

check what to take, read instructions and decide what to take, look at list on the sheet or given an explanation – no details. The number and percentage of the four students who answered according to the three groups mentioned above, was recorded in the table mentioned above (table 4.2). Responses from each of the questions were grouped and recorded for each of the two tasks. The recorded (audio-taped) responses from the teacher were transcribed and then compared with the data gathered from the student interviews.

The student answers from the questionnaires were compared with the data gathered from the student and teacher interviews in order to identify any mismatches between teacher intention and learners' perception of the two tasks.

3.11 Ethical Considerations for the Main Study

In accordance with the ethical guidelines issued by The Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), privacy and confidentiality were respected throughout the research process.

Ethical approval was gained from the Ethics Committee Board (Auckland University of Technology) where I was enrolled. In order to participate in the study, all subjects gave informed consent. A Participation Information Sheet explaining the research details, research procedures, time commitment, as well as practical requirements of taking part was distributed to all participants. The sheet clearly indicated that participation in the research was voluntary and that students were free to withdraw at any stage of the research. It was also explained that research was confidential and that no names would appear on the any part of the research. A consent form was signed and dated by all willing participants.

3.12 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research design and procedure. A qualitative approach was adopted in an attempt to record mismatches between teacher intention and student interpretation of tasks. I introduced the methodology behind the research. The research design focused on a triangulated approach to data collection on the basis

of methods and time to allow a comprehensive analysis of the research question, as well as constructing validity and reliability. Questionnaires and interviews were used to gather data. Effort was made to ensure the integration of ethical considerations into the research process.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

An analysis of research data gathered from student questionnaires, student interviews and teacher interviews is presented in this chapter, and the research question posed in Chapter One is reiterated and addressed.

4.2 Qualitative Results

In order to address the research question, data was gathered from both questionnaires and interviews. Sixteen students completed a questionnaire, eight for Task One and eight for Task Two. Eight students and one teacher were interviewed. The interviews were conducted immediately after the task was completed. Four student interviews were recorded (audio-taped) before the teacher was interviewed. The teacher interview was also recorded (audio-taped). The data gathered from the questionnaires and interviews from Task One is presented first. Task Two data is presented second. For each question, the student questionnaire results are presented first. The student interview results are then presented second followed by a comparison of questionnaire and interview data for four students per task.

4.3 Task One – Question one

4.3.1. Student Questionnaire – Results

The first question asked students what they had been told to do by the teacher, before starting the task. As Table 4.1 reveals, most students (37.5%) recalled being told to discuss and find out from each other what they ought to take on the camping trip. A quarter of the students (25%) recalled the teacher instructing them to tell each other what to take on the trip whilst another quarter (25%) could recall being told that

they should prepare for a camping trip. One student could not recall being given any specific instructions.

Table 4.1: Students' recollections of teacher's instruction

Teacher's instruction	n = 8	%
Discuss what to take	3	37.5
Tell each other what to take	2	25
Prepare for a camping trip	2	25
Gave instructions (details not recalled)	1	12.5

The teacher had actually given the students instructions on how to complete the task. Working in pairs, they were first of all told to discuss which items were important. They were told to decide what to take on the camping trip and make a list of the most important items.

4.3.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The first question the students were asked was, what the teacher had asked them to do before starting the task. As Table 4.2 below shows, there were four different responses. One student recalled being to check what to take whilst another recalled being told to read the instructions before deciding what to take. One of the students recalled being told to look at a list on the sheet which had been given to the students whilst another recalled being given an explanation but could not recall any details.

Table 4.2: Students' recollections of teacher's instructions

Response	n=4	%
Pack bags and check what to take	1	25
Read instructions and decide what to take	1	25
Look at the list on the sheet	1	25
Given an explanation – no details	1	25

In fact, the teacher had instructed the students on how to complete the task. They were told to decide what to take on the camping trip, having first discussed which items were important.

4.3.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what recollections the students had regarding the instructions given to them, by their teacher and prior to starting the "Camping Holiday" task. The first question asked the students to recall what the teacher told them to do before starting the task.

Table 4.3 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question one on the questionnaire and when interviewed. As the table shows, the students had different recollections of what the teacher had instructed them to do. On the questionnaire sheet the majority (75%) of students said that they were told to discuss what to take with them on the camping trip. However, when interviewed the students gave a range of responses.

Table 4.3: Students' recollections of teacher's instructions

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
Told to discuss what to take	3	75
Follow the list and find out what to take	1	25
Interview response	n=4	%
Told to check what to take	1	25
Told to read instructions and discuss	1	25
Told to review list on sheet	1	25
Teacher gave an explanation	1	25

4.4 Task One – Question Two

4.4.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

The second question asked the students what reason had been given by the teacher for doing the task. As Table 4.4 reveals, the majority (62.5%) of students did not recall a reason that had been given by the teacher for doing the task.

Table 4.4: Students' recollections of reason given for doing task

Reasons	n = 8	%
To practise oral English	1	12.5
To help research	2	25
No reason	5	62.5

4.4.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The second question the students were asked was, what reason the teacher had given for doing the task. As Table 4.5 below shows, the students recalled three different reasons and one student could not recall being given a reason.

Table 4.5: Students' recollections of reason given for doing task

Reasons	n=4	%
Become experienced campers	1	25
To help the teacher improve lessons	1	25
To improve English language ability	1	25
No reason given	1	25

According to the teacher, the aim of the task was to prepare the students for a hiking trip. The students had to decide what to take and what to leave behind.

4.4.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what recollections the students had regarding the reasons for doing the task given to them, by their teacher and prior to starting the 'Camping Holiday' task. The second question asked the students to recall the reason they had been given (by the teacher) for doing the task.

Table 4.6 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question one on the questionnaire and when interviewed. As can be seen from the table, more reasons for doing the tasks were given when the students were interviewed compared with the questionnaire.

Table 4.6: Students' recollections of reason given for doing task

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
To practise oral English	1	25
To help research	2	50
Make sure you've got everything	1	25
Interview response	n=4	%
Become experienced campers	1	25
To help the teacher improve lessons	1	25
To improve English language ability	1	25
No reason given	1	25

4.5 Task One – Question Three

4.5.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

In order to determine any strategic mismatch, the students were asked two questions. The first questions asked the students to identify any plan of action they had formulated when they began the task. As Table 4.7 below reveals, most students

(75%) could not recall having formulated a plan. A quarter of the students (25%) recalled having made a plan but only one student could give further details.

Table 4.7: Students' recollections of making a plan of action

Students' plans	n=8	%
Take provisions and discuss details with partner	1	12.5
Had a plan but couldn't elaborate	1	12.5
No plan	6	75

4.5.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The students were asked if they had formulated a plan of action, as they prepared to do the task. As Table 4.8 below shows, none of the students had a plan of action.

Table 4.8: Students' recollections of making a plan of action

Response	n=4	%
No plan of action	4	100

The teacher expected the students to talk about what they had in their bags and discuss whether or not the items should be taken.

4.5.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what learning strategies: steps plans and routines were used by the students to facilitate the use of information (i.e. what the students did to regulate learning) about the 'Camping Holiday' task. The third question asked the students to recall if they had any plan of action as they began the task.

Table 4.9 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question three on the questionnaire and when interviewed. As the table shows, none of the students recall making a plan of action.

Table 4.9: Students' recollections of making a plan of action

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
No plan of action	4	100
Interview response	n=4	%
No plan of action	4	100

4.6 Task One – Question Four

4.6.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

In order to determine any strategic mismatch, the students were asked two questions. The fourth question asked the students what advice they could give other students who wished to do the task in the future (now that the students had completed the task). As Table 4.10 below reveals, most students would advise other students to discuss the task with their partner and make decisions together. One quarter (25%) of the students would advise reading the instructions and key words carefully, one student would advise using a range of tenses whilst a further quarter of students (25%) had no advice to offer.

Table 4.10: Students' advice to other students

Students' advice	n = 8	%
Read instructions and key words carefully	2	25
Talk to partner and decide together	3	37.5
Use a range of tenses	1	12.5
No advice	2	25

4.6.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The fourth question I asked the students was what advice they could give someone else who wanted to solve the problem. As Table 4.11 below shows, there were four different responses. Interestingly two students offered specific advice on how to complete the task whilst two of them would offer more general advice. The latter involved advising them to practise useful English phrases in class before doing the task and thinking carefully about the purpose of the task. More specific advice involved discussing the task carefully with a partner and what the students should take with them on the camping trip (plenty of provisions).

Table 4.11: Students' advice to other students

Potential advice to other students	n=4	%
Practise use of English phrases before doing task	1	25
Discuss task carefully with partner	1	25
Think carefully about the purpose of the task	1	25
Make sure you take sufficient provisions	1	25

4.6.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what advice the students would give other students about how to do the 'Camping Holiday' task.

Table 4.12 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question four on the questionnaire and when interviewed. As the table shows, when interviewed, the students all offered advice (which was different for each student). On the questionnaire, however, one student had no advice to offer other students.

Table 4.12: Students' advice to other students

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
Read instructions/ key words	2	50
Discuss task with partner	1	25
No plan	1	25
Interview response	n=4	%
Practise use of English phrases before doing task	1	25
Discuss task carefully with partner	1	25
Think carefully about the purpose of the task	1	25
Make sure you take sufficient provisions	1	25

4.7 Task One – Question Five

4.7.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

In order to determine any procedural mismatch, the students were asked two questions. The first question was in two parts. The first part asked the students if they experienced any problems during the task whilst the second part asked them if they had known what to do. As Table 4.13 below reveals, some students had problems with the task but all of the students said that they knew what to do.

Table 4.13: Students with problems understanding task

Students understanding of task completion	n=8	%
Didn't have problems and knew what to do	6	75
Had problems but knew what to do	2	25

4.7.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The fifth question asked the students if, during the task, they had ever been unsure of what to do. As Table 4.14 below shows, half the students (50%) were sure of what to do whilst the other half (50%) were unsure of what to do in some parts of the task.

Table 4.14: Students with problems understanding task

Students' understanding of task requirement	n=4	%
Sure of what to do	2	50
Unsure of some parts of the task	2	50

4.7.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine the students' recollections of their understanding of the task requirements during the 'Camping Holiday' task. The first question asked the students to recall if they had had any problems or been unsure of what to do during the task.

Table 4.15 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question five on the questionnaire and when interviewed. As the table shows, the students' recollections of their understanding of the task requirements teacher had instructed them to do vary from the response written on the questionnaire sheet to that given when interviewed.

Table 4.15: Students understanding of task requirements

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
Had problems but knew what to do	2	50
Didn't have problems and knew what to do	2	50
Interview response	n=4	%
Sure of what to do	2	50
Unsure of some parts of the task	2	50

4.8 Task One – Question Six

4.8.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

In order to determine any procedural mismatch, the students were asked two questions. The second question asked the students if, during the task, they had ever stopped to ask their partner what to do. They were asked to write down what they asked and what the reply was. As Table 4:16 below reveals all the students said that they knew what to do. The second part of the question asked if, during the task, the students had asked their partner what to do. As the table shows, the majority (75%) of students did not ask their partner what to do. Interestingly, one student reported that he/she didn't have any problems, knew what to do but still asked his/her partner what to do during the task.

Table 4.16: What the students asked each other during the task

Student questions	n=8	%
What shall we do now?	1	12.5
What does this word mean?	1	12.5
Did not ask for advice	6	75

4.8.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The sixth question I asked the students was if they had asked for any advice in understanding the task. As Table 4.17 below shows, there were four different responses. Interestingly, two students offered specific advice on how to complete the task whilst two of them would offer more general advice. The latter involved advising them to practise useful English phrases in class before doing the task and thinking carefully about the purpose of the task. More specific advice involved discussing the task carefully with a partner and what the students should take with them on the camping trip (plenty of provisions).

Table 4.17: What the students asked each other during the task

What the students asked each other during the task	n=4	%
What shall we do now?	1	25
No questions	3	75

4.8.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what recollections the students had in regards to asking for help during the 'Camping Holiday' task. Table 4.18 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question six on the questionnaire and when interviewed.

Table 4.18: What the students asked each other during the task

Questionnaire response	n=8	%
What shall we do now?	1	12.5
What does this word mean?	1	12.5
Did not ask for help	6	75
Interview response	n=4	%
What should we do now?	1	25
No questions	3	75

As the table shows, the students' recollections of what the teacher had instructed them to do vary from the response written on the questionnaire sheet to that given when interviewed.

4.9 Task One – Question Seven

4.9.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

The seventh question asked students what they thought the purpose of the lesson was. As Table 4.19 below shows most students (37.5%) thought that the purpose of the lesson was to research the students doing the task. A quarter of the students (25%) thought that the purpose was to give them good preparation for a camping trip. A further quarter of the students (25%) thought that the purpose was to learn useful language whilst one student (12.5%) didn't know of any lesson purpose.

Table 4.19: Students' recollections the purpose of the lesson

Purpose of lesson	n = 8	%
To prepare for a camping trip	2	25
To learn useful vocabulary/language	2	25
To research students' approach to task	3	37.5
Didn't give purpose	1	12.5

4.9.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The seventh question I asked the students was what they thought the purpose of the lesson was. As Table 4.20 below shows, most students thought that the purpose of the task was to learn vocabulary.

Table 4.20: Students' recollections of purpose of the lesson

Purpose of lesson	n=4	%
To prepare for a camping trip	1	25
To learn useful vocabulary/phrases	3	75

4.9.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what the students thought had been the purpose of the lesson.

Table 4.21 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question one on the questionnaire and when interviewed. As the table shows, the majority (75%) of students said, when interviewed, that the purpose of the doing the task had been to learn useful vocabulary or phrases. However, on the questionnaire, three different reasons were given as well as one reply by a student who didn't give a purpose.

Table 4.21: Students' recollections the purpose of the lesson

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
To prepare for a camping trip	1	25
To learn useful language	1	25
To research students' approach to task	1	25
Didn't give purpose	1	25
Interview response	n=4	%
To prepare for a camping trip	1	25
To learn useful vocabulary/phrases	3	75

4.10 Task One – Question Eight

4.10.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

The eighth question on the questionnaire asked the students if the task had helped with their English language learning. As Table 4.22 below reveals, the majority of students (75%) thought that the task had been helpful and had improved their English language skills. A quarter (25%) of the students didn't think that the task had been helpful.

Table 4.22: Students' response to how the task assisted language learning

Useful or not for language learning	n = 8	%
Provided new vocabulary/improved speaking	6	75
Not helpful	2	25

4.10.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The first question I asked the students was what the teacher had asked them to do before starting the task. As Table 4.23 below shows, the majority (75%) of students believed that the task had improved their English language skills.

Table 4.23: Students' response to how the task assisted language learning

Useful or not for language learning	n=4	%
Improved vocabulary/useful phrases	3	75
Didn't help with language learning	1	25

4.10.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine whether or not the students thought that task had improved their English language skills.

Table 4.24 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question eight on the questionnaire and when interviewed.

Table 4.24: Students' response to how the task assisted language learning

Questionnaire response	n = 4	%
Provided new vocabulary/improved speaking	3	75
Not helpful	1	25
Interview response	n=4	%
Improved vocabulary/useful phrases	3	75
Didn't help with language learning	1	25

As the table shows, the majority of students (75%) on both the questionnaire and in the interview believed that the task had been useful in terms of improving their English language ability.

4.11 Task Two – Question One

4.11.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

The first question asked students what they were told to do by the teacher, before starting the task. As Table 4.25 below reveals, most students (37.5%) recalled the teacher either explaining the task instructions or simply telling them to work in pairs. One student could not recall being given any specific instructions whilst another could not recall any detail.

Table 4.25: Students’ recollections of teacher’s instructions

Teacher’s instruction	n = 8	%
Work in pairs	3	37.5
Explained Instructions	3	37.5
Couldn’t remember details	1	12.5
Couldn’t remember	1	12.5

The teacher had actually given the students instructions on how to complete the task and had also discussed the meaning of some vocabulary in the task that might have caused problems for the students. The teacher discussed some useful language (to make suggestions and apologise) that might be helpful in completing the task.

4.11.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The first question I asked the students was what the teacher had asked them to do before starting the task. As Table 4.26 below shows, there were three different responses. Interestingly, only one student recalled being given instructions (including working in pairs) by the teacher.

Table 4.26: Students' recollections of teacher's instructions

Response	n=4	%
Didn't hear instructions	1	25
Couldn't remember instructions	2	50
Teacher gave instructions	1	25

4.11.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what recollections the students had regarding the instructions given to them, by their teacher and prior to starting the "Where on Earth are we?" task. The first question asked the students to recall what the teacher told them to do before starting the task.

Table 4.27 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question one on the questionnaire and when interviewed. As the table shows, the students' recollections of what the teacher had instructed them to do vary from the response written on the questionnaire sheet to that given when interviewed. On the questionnaire sheet the majority (75%) of students could recall the teacher giving instructions (either to work in pairs or simply to do the task). However, when interviewed the students gave a range of responses.

Table 4.27: Students' recollections of teacher's instructions

Questionnaire response	n = 4	%
Couldn't remember instructions	1	25
Work in pairs	2	50
Do the task	1	25
Interview response	n=4	%
Didn't hear instructions	1	25
Couldn't remember instructions	2	50
Teacher gave instructions	1	25

4.12 Task Two – Question Two

4.12.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

The second question asked the students what reason had been given by the teacher for doing the task. As Table 4.28 below reveals, the majority (75%) of students could recall being given a reason for doing the task. However, three different reasons were given by the students. A quarter of the students thought that the teacher had told them that the task would improve their English language skills, a quarter thought the reason was to solve a problem whilst another quarter recalled being told that they were being asked to do the task to help the teacher do some research.

Table 4.28: Students' recollections of reason given for doing task

Reasons	n = 8	%
Useful for studying English	2	25
Research purposes	2	25
Solve a problem	2	25
No reason	2	25

4.12.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The second question I asked the students was what reason the teacher had given for doing the task. As Table 4.29 below shows, the students recalled two different reasons and one student could not recall being given a reason. Two students recalled the reason for doing the task as being to improve their English.

Table 4.29: Students' recollections of reason given for doing task

Reasons	n = 4	%
To improve English skills	2	50
Research purposes	1	25
Could not remember	1	25

According to the teacher, the aim of the task was “to establish the situation where people are disagreeing over directions and various other topics”.

4.12.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students’ written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what recollections the students had regarding the reasons for doing the task given to them, by their teacher and prior to starting the “Where on Earth are we?” task. The second question asked the students to recall the reason they had been given (by the teacher) for doing the task.

Table 4.30 below shows a comparison of four students’ responses to question one on the questionnaire and when interviewed. As can be seen from the table, when interviewed, half of the students thought that the reason for doing the task was to improve their English skills. On the questionnaire, however, only one student had mentioned this as a reason. Half of the students on the questionnaire thought that the reason for doing the task was for research purposes which would benefit the teacher in developing future tasks.

Table 4.30: Students’ recollections of reason given for doing task

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
Research purposes	2	50
Useful for studying English	1	25
Solve a problem	1	25
Interview response		
To improve English skills	2	50
Research purposes	1	25
Could not remember	1	25

4.13 Task Two – Question Three

4.13.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

In order to determine any strategic mismatch, the students were asked two questions. The first questions asked the students to identify any plan of action they had formulated when they began the task. As Table 4.31 below reveals, most students (50%) could not recall having formulated a plan. A quarter of the students (25%) recalled having made a plan to read the instructions before starting the task while the other two students recalled reading and then discussing the instructions.

Table 4.31: Students’ recollections of making a plan of action

Students’ plans	n = 8	%
No plan	4	50
Read first	2	25
Follow instructions and discuss	2	25

4.13.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. First of all I asked the students if they had formulated a plan of action, as they prepared to do the task. As Table 4.32 below shows, only one of the students had a plan of action, which was to read the instructions first.

Table 4.32: Students’ recollections of making a plan of action

Response	n=4	%
No plan of action	3	75
Read first	1	25

When interviewed, the teacher wasn’t sure how the students would deal with the task.

4.13.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what learning strategies: steps plans and routines were used by the students to facilitate the use of information (i.e. what the students did to regulate learning) about the 'Where on Earth are we?' task. The third question asked the students to recall if they had any plan of action as they began the task.

Table 4.33 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question three on the questionnaire and when interviewed. The majority (75%) of students recalled making no plan of action.

Table 4.33: Students' recollections of making a plan of action

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
No plan of action	3	75
Read first	1	25
Interview response	n=4	%
No plan of action	3	75
Read first	1	25

4.14 Task Two – Question Four

4.14.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

In order to determine any strategic mismatch, the students were asked two questions. The fourth question asked the students what advice they could give other students who wished to do the task in the future (now that the students had completed the task). As Table 4.34 reveals, the majority of students would advise other students to read the task carefully before starting it. One student would advise discussing it first whilst another would simply advise doing it as a way of improving their English skills. A quarter of the students would have no advice to give.

Table 4.34: Students' advice to other students

Students' advice	n = 8	%
Do the task to improve your English	1	12.5
Discuss the task before starting it	1	12.5
Read the task before starting it	4	50
No advice	2	25

4.14.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The fourth question I asked the students was what advice they could give someone else who wanted to solve the problem. As Table 4.35 below shows, there were three different responses. All the students would advise reading the task instructions before starting the task. Interestingly, only one student specifically mentioned listening to the teacher first.

Table 4.35: Students' advice to other students

Potential advice to other students	n = 4	%
Read the instructions and make conversation	1	25
Listen to and then read instructions	1	25
Read and understand before starting the task	2	50

4.14.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what advice the students would give other students about how to do the "Where on Earth are we?" task.

Table 4.36 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question four on the questionnaire and when interviewed. As the table shows, when interviewed, all the students offered advice which was mainly to read the instructions before starting

the task. This is in stark contrast to the questionnaire response on which only one student suggested reading the task.

Table 4.36: Students' advice to other students

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
Do the task to improve your English	1	25
Discuss the task before starting it	1	25
Read the task before starting it	1	25
No advice	1	25
Interview response	n=4	%
Read the instructions and make conversation	1	25
Listen to and then read instructions	1	25
Read and understand before starting the task	2	50

4.15 Task Two – Question Five

4.15.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

In order to determine any procedural mismatch, the students were asked two questions. The first question was in two parts. The first part asked the students if they experienced any problems during the task whilst the second part asked them if they had known what to do. As Table 4.37 below reveals, the majority (75%) reported having had problems during the task. However, one student who didn't report any problems also claimed to have known what to do. Similarly, half of the students reported that they had known what to do, despite also reporting problems.

Table 4.37: Students with problems understanding task

Students understanding of task completion	n = 8	%
Had problems and didn't know what to do	2	25
Had problems but knew what to do	4	50
Didn't have any problems but didn't know what to do	1	12.5
Didn't have any problems and knew what to do	1	12.5

4.15.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The fifth question I asked the students was if, during the task, they had ever been unsure of what to do. As Table 4.38 below shows, there were four different responses. Half of the students said that they were sure of what to do whilst the remaining students said that were unsure of some parts of the task.

Table 4.38: Students with problems understanding task

Students' understanding of task requirement	n=4	%
Sure of what to do	2	50
Unsure of some parts of the task	2	50

4.15.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine the students' recollections of their understanding of the task requirements during the "Where on Earth are we?" task. The first question asked the students to recall if they had had any problems or been unsure of what to do during the task.

Table 4.39 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question five on the questionnaire and when interviewed. As the table shows, the students' recollections of their understanding of the task requirements teacher had instructed them to do vary from the response written on the questionnaire sheet to that given when interviewed. When interviewed and on the questionnaire sheet, half of the students were sure that they knew what to do on the task. The other half were obviously unsure but surprisingly, on the questionnaire sheet, one student said that they had problems but still knew what to do whilst another said that they didn't have any problems but didn't know what to do.

Table 4.39: Students with problems understanding task

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
Had problems and didn't know what to do	1	25
Had problems but knew what to do	1	25
Didn't have any problems but didn't know what to do	1	25
Didn't have any problems and knew what to do	1	25
Interview response	n=4	%
Sure of what to do	2	50
Unsure of some parts of the task	2	50

4.16 Task Two – Question Six

4.16.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

In order to determine any procedural mismatch, the students were asked two questions. The second question asked the students if, during the task, they had ever stopped to ask their partner what to do. They were asked to write down what they asked and what the reply was. As Table 4.40 reveals four students did not ask for advice during the task. Two of the students who did ask for advice, asked for specific advice regarding the task.

Table 4.40: What advice students asked for during the task

Reasons for asking partner for advice	n = 8	%
Conversation regarding the task	2	25
To check if he/she understood me	1	12.5
To know what to do next	1	12.5
Did not ask for advice	4	50

4.16.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The sixth question I asked the students was if they had asked for any advice in understanding the task. As

Table 4.41 below shows, two students asked the teacher for advice at the start of the task while the other two students didn't ask for any advice.

Table 4.41: What advice students asked for during the task

Advice asked for	n=4	%
Asked teacher at start of task	2	50
No advice asked for	2	50

4.16.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what recollections the students had in regards to asking for help during the "Where on Earth are we?" task.

Table 4.42 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question six on the questionnaire and when interviewed.

Table 4.42: What advice students asked for during the task

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
Conversation regarding the task	1	25
Did he/she understand them	1	25
Did not ask for advice	2	50
Interview response	n=4	%
Asked teacher at start of task	2	50
No advice asked for	2	50

As the table shows, half of the students, on both the questionnaire and when interviewed, said that they had not requested advice. On the questionnaire two of the students recalled asking for advice from their partner. Two of the students interviewed recalled asking for advice from their teacher.

4.17 Task Two – Question Seven

4.17.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

The seventh question asked students what they thought the purpose of the lesson was. As Table 4.43 below shows most students (37.5%) thought that the purpose of the lesson was to research the students doing the task. A further quarter of the students (25%) thought that the purpose was to learn useful language whilst one student (12.5%) didn't know of any lesson purpose.

Table 4.43: Students' idea of the purpose of the lesson

Purpose of lesson	n = 8	%
To make conversation and decisions	1	12.5
To negotiate and find solutions	1	12.5
To improve English skills	1	12.5
To help the teacher/research	3	37.5
To help the students study	1	12.5
Don't know	1	12.5

4.17.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The seventh question I asked the students was what they thought the purpose of the lesson was. As Table 4.44 below shows, the majority (75%) of students thought that the purpose of the task was to improve English skills.

Table 4.44: Students' idea of the purpose of the lesson

Purpose of lesson	n=4	%
To discuss ideas with each other	1	25
To improve English language skills	3	75

4.17.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine what the students thought had been the purpose of the lesson.

Table 4.45 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question one on the questionnaire and when interviewed.

As the table shows, the students' idea of what the purpose of the lesson differed slightly on the questionnaire and when interviewed. On the questionnaire, one student thought that the teacher wished to understand how students understood tasks and that the purpose of the task was therefore to help the teacher. One student thought that the purpose of the task was for the students to make conversation and a student make a similar comment when interviewed (to discuss ideas). However, when interviewed, three students thought that the purpose was to improve English language skills compared with two on the questionnaire.

Table 4.45: Students' idea of the purpose of the lesson

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
To make conversation and decisions	1	25
To improve English skills	1	25
To help the teach	1	25
To help the student	1	25
Interview response	n=4	%
To discuss ideas with each other	1	25
To improve English language skills	3	75

4.18 Task Two – Question Eight

4.18.1 Student Questionnaire – Results

The eighth question on the questionnaire asked the students if the task had helped with their English language learning. As Table 4.46 below reveals, all the students

thought that the task had been helpful in some way. Half of the students thought that it had helped with their speaking skills.

Table 4.46: Students' response to how the task assisted language learning

Useful or not for language learning	n = 8	%
Helped to make conversation	3	37.5
Helped with speaking skills	4	50
Useful for reading and answering questions	1	12.5

4.18.2 Student Interview – Results

Four students were then interviewed after completing the task. The students were asked if the task had helped with their learning. As Table 4.47 below shows, all the students thought that the task had improved their language skills.

Table 4.47: Students' response to how the task assisted language learning

Useful or not for language learning	n=4	%
Improved language skills	4	100

4.18.3 Comparison of Questionnaire and Interview Data

In order to compare the students' written and oral responses, immediately after completing the task, four students were asked to complete a questionnaire sheet before being interviewed. I wanted to examine whether or not the students thought that task had improved their English language skills.

Table 4.48 below shows a comparison of four students' responses to question eight on the questionnaire and when interviewed.

Table 4.48: Students' response to how the task assisted language learning

Questionnaire response	n=4	%
Helped to make conversation	2	50
Helped with speaking skills	2	50
Interview response	n=4	%
Improved language skills	4	100

As the table shows, all of students on both the questionnaire and in the interview believed that the task had been useful in terms of improving their English language ability. On the questionnaire half of the students noted specifically that the task had helped with their speaking skills whilst the other two students thought it had improved their ability to make conversation in general. All the students interviewed said that the task had improved their language skills, particularly speaking and reading skills.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

In this section the findings of the study will be discussed. This involves two tasks in relation to the four potential mismatches under investigation and in relation to Kumaravadivelu's (1991) findings. I would then like to discuss the results of the study in relation to previous studies and language theories.

Overall, the results show that two mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation, namely Instructional and Pedagogic, do occur. However, there appears to be no or little evidence to support a Strategic or Procedural mismatch.

The results provide some support for the findings of previous studies which I will discuss later. In particular, the results lend some support to Kumaravadivelu's (1991) findings in relation to Instructional and Pedagogic mismatches.

The results of this study showed a pedagogic mismatch was evident, highlighting the difference between the teacher and learner perceptions of the short-or long-term instructional objectives of language learning tasks. It also showed that an Instructional mismatch exists and this also supports earlier studies (Kumaravadivelu, 1991; Slimani, 1989; Block, 1994, 1996; Barkhuizen 1989). I will now address the four mismatches under investigation and discuss any potential mismatch.

5.2 Instructional Mismatch

Instructional mismatch, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003) refers to instructional guidance given by the teacher to help learners carry the out task successfully. In a previous study (Kumaravadivelu, 1991), the instructional direction given by the teacher was simple and clear enough not to be misunderstood. However, in practice, some of the vocabulary used in the task had misled the learners. Kumaravadivelu (2003) noted

that “even straightforward instructional guidance can produce unintended effects” (p.88).

I will now discuss the extent to which there was a mismatch evident in the two tasks, between the teacher’s instructions and the students’ recollections will now be discussed.

5.2.1 Question One – *Task One*

The instructional direction given by the teacher was simple and clear enough not to be misunderstood. The students were instructed to discuss the items in pairs and then decide which items would be taken. However, as can be seen in Table 4.1, only 3 of the 8 students who answered the student questionnaire recalled being told to discuss the items to take with them. Two of the students recalled being told to tell each other what to take whilst the remaining three students were quite vague in their recollections. Interestingly, three out of four of the students who completed the questionnaire and who were interviewed recalled being instructed to discuss which items to take.

Furthermore, as is revealed in Table 4.2, none of the four students interviewed recalled specifically being told to discuss, in pairs, which items to take on the camping trip. It is also interesting to note that only two of the four students recalled being instructed to check/decide what to take, which was the second part of the teacher’s instructions.

5.2.2 Question One – *Task Two*

The instructions given by the teacher had been clear and comprehensive. The teacher had also discussed the meaning of some difficult vocabulary in the task instructions. The results from the questionnaire show that the majority of students could recall the teacher explaining the instructions or asking them to work in pairs. Only two of the students could either recall the detail of the instructions or couldn’t remember having being given instructions. When interviewed, however, only one student could remember being given instructions.

When interviewed, the teacher said that she had given the students instructions, including the fact that they had to work in pairs. She said that she had also talked about difficult vocabulary and explained what they needed to do in the process of the role play.

5.2.3 Question Two – *Task One*

The teacher read through the task instructions and explained some difficult vocabulary. In particular she explained that in pairs the students would have to decide what is really necessary to take on a camping trip. She also told the students that they had different information. Although she explained the task instructions, she did not give a specific reason for doing the task.

This was reflected on the questionnaire as the majority (62.5%) of students did not recall being given a reason for doing the task. Interestingly, one student recalled being told that the reason was to practise oral English. Two other students thought that the reason was to help research.

When interviewed, three out of four students recalled being given a reason. One student recalled that the reason was to become experienced campers; another said it was to help the teacher improve the lessons and another said it was to improve their English language ability. The students recalled more reasons for doing the task when they were interviewed. When interviewed the teacher said that she thought the aim of the task had been to establish a situation where people were disagreeing over directions and other topics.

5.2.4 Question Two – *Task Two*

When introducing the task, the teacher explained the instructions and discussed some useful language that would be helpful for the students. When interviewed the teacher thought that the aim of the task was “to establish the situation where people are disagreeing, perhaps in a conversational setting”. The teacher did not, however, give any specific reason for doing the task.

The questionnaire revealed that the majority of students could recall being given a reason for doing the task. However, three different reasons were given which surprisingly included doing the task for research purposes. When interviewed, only one student could not recall being given a reason for doing the task. The results show that although no definite reason for doing the task was given in the introduction to the task, the majority of students did recall being given a reason for doing the task by the teacher.

When the questionnaire and interviews were compared, half of the students on the questionnaire thought that the reason was for research purposes whereas half of the students interviewed believed that the reason for doing the task was to improve their English skills.

When interviewed the teacher said that she thought the aim of the task had been to establish a situation where people were disagreeing over directions and other topics.

5.2.5 Summary of Findings

There now follows a discussion as to whether there was any mismatch between the teacher's instructions and the students' recollections and if so, what was the source. As discussed earlier, instructional mismatch, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003) refers to instructional guidance given by the teacher to help learners carry the out task successfully. The instructional direction given by the teacher was simple and clear enough not to be misunderstood. The students were instructed to discuss the items in pairs and then decide which items would be taken. Question one produced different results in the questionnaires. Only 37.5 per cent of students could clearly recall the instructions on Task one compared with the majority of students on Task two. However, the students' recollections were clearer when interviewed on Task one than Task two. Question two produced a similar result, in that on the Task one questionnaire, the majority of students could not recall being given a reason for doing the task whereas the task two questionnaire results showed that they could. However, the interview results were the same for both tasks with the majority of students recalling reasons for doing the task.

These results support Kumaravadivelu's (1991) findings. It would appear that students can interpret the task instructions in their own way. Clearly, for a task to be completed successfully and in the manner intended, more time may be needed when introducing the task and giving instructions, particularly if it's a task that the students are unfamiliar with. Task one was introduced quite quickly by the teacher. The instructions were read once to the students with little opportunity provided for questions. Task two was explained in more detail but again the students weren't given much opportunity to ask questions. At one point, the teacher said: "Right, check there are any other things there. No, I think the rest of it is fairly clear". It later became apparent from the questionnaires and interviews that this assumed clarity was lacking.

During the task introductions, although the teacher read through the instructions, she did not give any specific reason for doing the task. This might have been helpful, given the fact that these types of task were new to the students.

Interestingly, the results show that, overall, the students recalled being given a reason (except on one questionnaire). Being given a reason for doing a particular task might increase motivation but there is little evidence that the students were affected in this regard.

Recollections of the task instructions would naturally be clearer immediately after they were given. It is therefore not surprising that some of the students' recollections were vague or lacked detail. The feedback from the interviews was more substantial than from the questionnaires.

Therefore the results seem to demonstrate an instructional mismatch, in that the students have interpreted the instructional guidance given by the teacher in their own way.

5.3 Strategic Mismatch

Strategic mismatch, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003), refers to learning strategies: operations, steps, plans, and routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information (i.e. what learners do to learn and regulate

learning). The strategic source pertains to any broad-based, higher-level, top-down strategy that seeks an overall solution in a general language learning situation.

In a previous study (Kumaravadivelu, 1991) the teacher had expected the task to trigger the use of certain specific language learning strategies that would generate discussions, disagreements, and negotiations thereby giving an opportunity for an extended conversational practice. His study, however, demonstrated that sometimes the learners used the simplest possible strategy of elimination and solved the problem within a few minutes and without much negotiation. The teacher's expectation of an extended dialogue did not materialise. There was therefore a mismatch between the strategies the teacher expected the learners to use and ones they actually used.

5.3.1 Question Three – *Task One*

In order to determine any strategic mismatch, the students were asked if they had formulated a plan of action before starting the task. On the questionnaire, most students could not recall having formulated a plan of action. One student had a plan but could not give any details. When interviewed, none of the students could recall having made a plan. The comparison of students between the questionnaire and interview was interesting because it revealed that none of the students had made a plan.

When interviewed, the teacher said that she expected the students to talk about what they had in their rucksacks and then discuss whether or not those things would be useful or not. She also expected them to think about things that might be added to the list.

5.3.2 Question Three – *Task Two*

On the questionnaire, half of the students could not recall having a plan of action. The remaining half of the students determined their action plan as being to either read the instructions or read and then discuss the instructions. When interviewed, the majority of students of students said that they did not have a plan. When the interviews and questionnaires were compared, they were exactly the same (i.e. three out of four

students did not have a plan of action). When interviewed, the teacher said that she wasn't sure how the students would deal with task as they hadn't had any real practice of role plays.

In this task the teacher had no real expectations of how the students would approach the task. Therefore it is difficult to determine if any mismatch occurred.

5.3.3 Question Four – *Task One*

In order to determine any strategic mismatch, the students were also asked if they could give any advice to students who might do the task in the future.

On the questionnaire, the majority of students had some advice that they could offer students who intended doing the task. Most students would advise other students to discuss the task with their partner and make decisions together. When interviewed half of the students would offer specific advice on how to complete the task whilst the other half would offer more general advice such as thinking carefully before starting the task.

Comparing the questionnaire and interview results, all the students interviewed had some advice to give compared with only half of those on the questionnaire.

5.3.4 Question Four – *Task Two*

On the questionnaire, the majority of students replied that they would advise other students to read the instructions carefully before starting the task. One student advised discussing the task whilst another simply advised doing it.

When interviewed, all of the students advised reading the task instructions before starting the task. When the interviews and questionnaires were compared, all of the students in the interview advised reading or listening to the instructions whereas only half the number of students on the questionnaire advised either reading or discussing the task instructions. When interviewed, the teacher said that the students had read the instructions and had to revise their understanding of them a number of times.

5.3.5 Summary of Findings

As stated earlier, strategic mismatch, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003), refers to learning strategies: operations, steps, plans, and routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information (i.e. what learners do to learn and regulate learning). The strategic source pertains to any broad-based, higher-level, top-down strategy that seeks an overall solution in a general language learning situation.

I will now discuss whether or not any strategic mismatch was evident in the two tasks. Overall, the students on both tasks did not recall having made a plan of action. The teacher had certain expectations of how the students would approach and plan for the task. In practice, these did not eventuate. The results indicate that the majority of students simply went ahead with task without considering how to approach it. However, the expectations of the teacher matched the actions of the students in that the students first discussed what they had in their bag and then decided what to take or leave.

The majority of students on both tasks would be willing to offer advice to other students who intended to do the task. Interestingly, the nature of the advice given by some students differed on the questionnaires from that given during the interviews.

The results from Task one do not seem to support Kumaravadivelu's (1991) findings. The teacher had certain expectations of how the students would approach the task. The teacher expected the students to discuss with each other what they had in their rucksacks and then discuss whether those things would be useful or not. The students did this during the task, as the teacher pointed out. However, the teacher had also expected the students to add items to the list and this did not happen. When interviewed about Task one, the teacher said that she hadn't had any particular expectations of how the students would complete the task. It is therefore difficult to determine whether or not any mismatch occurred.

Interestingly, on Task one all the students interviewed had some advice to give compared with only half of those on the questionnaire. Most students would advise

other students to discuss the task with their partner and make decisions together. Although Task one had been introduced fairly quickly, the majority of students had recalled the instructions given by the teacher and would offer the instructions such as “you’ll have to talk about what you’ve got and then make a decision about what’s really necessary to take” as advice to other students. On Task two the advice on the questionnaires was mainly to read the instructions. The students were divided, when interviewed, between advising others to read the instructions and discuss the task.

5.4 Procedural Mismatch

Procedural mismatch, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003) refers to stated or unstated paths chosen by the learners to do a task. The procedural source “pertains to locally specified, currently identified, bottom-up tactics that seek an immediate resolution to a specific problem” (p.87). In a previous study (Kumaravadivelu, 1991) one of the students attempted a fairly detailed, bottom-up explanation of how to go about solving a problem. As this was not what the teacher expected to hear, the student wasn’t given any feedback.

5.4.1 Question Five – *Task One*

In order to determine any procedural mismatch, the students were asked if they experienced any problems during the task. On the questionnaire, all the students stated that they were totally sure of what to do. When interviewed, half of the students said that they had been unsure of some parts of the task. In comparing the interview and questionnaire responses, it seems that the students were more forthcoming in their response.

5.4.2 Question Five – *Task Two*

On the questionnaire, the majority (75%) of students reported having problems with the task. The majority (62.5 %) also reported that they knew what to do. Half of the students reported that despite the fact they had encountered problems with the task, they still knew what to do. When interviewed half of the students said that had been unsure of what to do in some parts of the task while the other half were sure.

When the questionnaires and interviews were compared, half of the students replied that they were sure or had known what to do. Similarly, half of the students had been unsure of what to do in some parts of the task or had had problems. The teacher commented that the students went through the tasks a couple of times and as a result became more fluent.

5.4.3 Question Six – *Task One*

In order to determine any procedural mismatch, the students were also asked if they had asked their partner for advice during the task. On the questionnaire, the majority of students stated that they had not asked for advice during the task. However, when interviewed the majority of students said that they had asked for advice. When interviewed, the teacher said that she had not been asked for, nor volunteered any advice.

5.4.4 Question Six – *Task Two*

On the questionnaire, half of the students said they did and half did not ask for advice from their partner during the task. When interviewed, half of the students did and half did not ask their teacher for advice during the task. When the questionnaires and interviews were compared the results showed that half of the students asked for advice (half did not) during the task.

When interviewed, the teacher explained that when students asked for advice, she had explained that the task was really an argument for discussion situation. The teacher said that she had given a lot of extra help because they were unfamiliar with role plays.

5.4.5 Summary of Findings

As stated earlier, procedural mismatch, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003) refers to stated or unstated paths chosen by the learners to do a task. The procedural source “pertains to locally specified, currently identified, bottom-up tactics that seek an immediate resolution to a specific problem” (p.87).

The majority of students, on both tasks, said that they knew what to do. However, in the Task one interviews, the students revealed that they were unsure of what to do in certain parts of the task. Interestingly, on the Task one questionnaire all the students said that they knew what to do and had not asked for advice. However, when interviewed they said that they had asked for advice and had been unsure of what to do in some parts of the task.

On Task two it emerged that the students knew what to do despite having problems with the task. This may reflect the interpretation of the question by the students. They may have thought that they were being asked if they had 'generally' known what to do as opposed to knowing 'exactly' what to do throughout the entire task. Interviews certainly allow for greater clarification of this question. Half of the students on both the questionnaire and in the interview said that they had asked for advice.

The teacher commented that the students hadn't asked for help with Task one. She said: "They didn't seem to need help for this task; they didn't actually ask me anything". Some students on Task one revealed, in interview, that they had been unsure of what to do in certain parts of the task. They had presumably chosen to ask their partner for advice instead of seeking help from the teacher.

However, on Task two the teacher said she had had to give a lot of extra help and advice because the students had not done role plays before. Some of the students had felt comfortable in asking advice from both the teacher and their partner on this task. Therefore, on Task one it is difficult to know if any mismatch occurred because the students didn't ask the teacher questions related to task completion.

The teacher said that she had given advice to the students who were confused on Task two. It appears that the students followed her advice and were able to complete the task.

Overall, therefore, there isn't any evidence of a mismatch that would support Kumaravadivelu's (1991) findings.

5.5 Pedagogic Mismatch

Pedagogic mismatch, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003), refers to the teacher and learner perceptions of stated or unstated short – or long-term instructional objective(s) of language learning tasks. In a previous study (Kumaravadivelu, 1991), the teacher presented the students with a meaning-focused activity. The teacher tried to get the students to identify certain grammatical terms. However, Kumaravadivelu (2003) found that “the perception of the two learners in terms of the purpose of the lesson did not match each others; neither did they match that of the teacher” (p.84).

5.5.1 Question Seven – *Task One*

In order to determine any pedagogic mismatch, the students were asked what they thought the purpose of the lesson was. On the questionnaire, a quarter of the students thought that the purpose of the task was to prepare for a camping trip whilst another quarter thought that it was to learn useful vocabulary. Interestingly, three out of eight students (37.5%) thought that the purpose of the task was to help with research on the students themselves.

When interviewed the majority (75%) of students thought that the purpose was to learn useful vocabulary or phrases. Comparing the answers on the questionnaire with those in the interview, three different reasons were given on the questionnaire (prepare for camping trip, learn useful language and for research purposes) whilst only one was given in the interview (to learn useful vocabulary/phrases).

5.5.2 Question Seven – *Task Two*

On the questionnaire, the majority (87.5%) of students gave a variety of reasons for doing the task. These included making conversation, finding solutions and helping to improve English skills. Surprisingly, three students thought that the purpose was to help the teacher with research.

When interviewed, the majority (75%) of students thought that the purpose of the task was to improve their English skills. Comparing the answers on the questionnaire with

those in the interview, none of those interviewed felt that the purpose was to help the teacher. When interviewed, the teacher said that the purpose had been to provide an argument for discussion situation.

5.5.3 Question Eight – *Task One*

In order to determine any pedagogic mismatch, a further question was asked. The question was whether or not the task had been helpful with their English skills. On the questionnaire, the majority (75%) of students thought that the task had been helpful and had improved their English language skills. A similar result emerged when the students were interviewed (75% of students believed that the task had improved their vocabulary).

5.5.4 Question Eight – *Task Two*

On the questionnaire and when interviewed all of students reported that the task had been helpful with their English language learning.

5.5.5 Summary of Findings

As stated earlier, Pedagogic mismatch, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003), refers to the teacher and learner perceptions of stated or unstated short – or long-term instructional objective(s) of language learning tasks.

On Task one a variety of reasons were given for doing the task on the questionnaire. The students only gave one reason for doing the task (to learn useful vocabulary and phrases). This reason was given when the students were interviewed. This was also the case on Task two. The results for question eight were similar, both the questionnaires and interviews, on both tasks. The majority of students thought that the task had been useful for their language learning.

The results demonstrate a mismatch between the intended purpose of the tasks set by the teacher and what the students believed to be the purpose of the tasks. The students believed that the purpose of the tasks was mainly to improve their English language skills, although some students believed that it was a way of helping the

teacher to do research on them. They also found the tasks useful in improving their language skills. The teacher, however, had thought of Task two for example as a role-play in which a setting was created or as the teacher herself said: “an argument for discussion situation”. The teacher had no doubt intended to improve the English language skills of her students but this precise purpose was not explained in the interview.

5.6 Results in Relation to Previous Studies and Language

Theories

The results of my study support evidence gathered in previous studies relating to the similarities and differences between learner and teacher perceptions of learning purpose. They support the study done by Slimani (1989) who focused on uptake, or the students’ report of their perception of what they learned after several lessons. The students reported to have learned several items that were different from what the teacher had planned for them. In fact, in Slimani’s study, the learners mentioned only 44% of the explicit focus of the lesson. Similarly, in my study, the majority of students had a different perception of the lesson objectives from that of the teacher. They also support the study done by Block (1994, 1996). He examined the ways in which learners describe and attribute purpose to the activities that teachers asked them to do. His study pointed not only to the autonomy of learner thought but also to the existence of a gap between the way teachers and learners ‘see’ the classroom and all that occurs within it. (Block, 1996). The results support a further study conducted by Barkhuizen (1998) who found that students’ perception of classroom aims and events did not match those of their teachers. Based on his study, Barkhuizen (1998) advised teachers to “continuously explore their classes, particularly their learners’ perceptions” (p.104).

It appears that the results from this study, which support findings from earlier studies, as shown above, echo Allwright’s (1986) viewpoint when he noted that teachers and learners may not look at the same classroom event as a potential learning event. Many students either considered the reason for doing the task was either in general terms, such as to improve their English or to help the teacher with their research. The study also highlighted Breen’s (1987) distinction between task-as-workplan and task-as-

process. The distinction, in relation to neo-Vygostkyan perspectives on language learning, has been framed in terms of 'task' (the task as planned) and 'activity' (the task as enacted by individual learners). As Coughlan and Duff (1994) reported, the 'official' task may be uniquely transformed by the learners carrying it out. My study appears to lend support to their study given the varied number of responses from the questionnaires and interviews. However, the instructional mismatch which was evident in my study may have been a deliberate choice by the students to do the task in their own way or it could have been caused by the speed at which the instructions were given. The students may not have grasped what was said by the teacher during the introduction and if they were reluctant to ask questions or had not been given an opportunity to do so, this might have resulted in them "reinterpreting" the task.

As discussed in the literature review, one component of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, namely Activity Theory, comprises a series of proposals for conceptualizing the social context within which individual learning takes place (Mitchell and Myles, 1998). According to activity theory, the personal goals with which an individual approaches a task may vary. This would naturally have important implications for task designers and those intending to use a task-based approach to language learning. According to Lantolf (2000), Activity Theory, one aspect of sociocultural theory, explains that in a particular classroom at a given time "different activities might be underway...despite the fact that all of the participants display the same or similar overt behaviours in a task". Therefore a language learner may approach a task in a different way to how the task designer (i.e. the teacher) intended. It could therefore be expected that tasks will not be performed by learners in a manner that was intended by the teacher.

As Ellis (2003) points out a task can result in different kinds of activity because different students will approach the task differently depending on their underlying motives. This could mean that a learner who views the task as a game will engage in a different kind of activity from one who views the task as work. The results of the study were varied and some of the answers given by the students on the initial questionnaire were not consistent with their answers given in the interview. The motives of the students appear, in some cases, to be confused. Student responses also included a

suspicion that the tasks were designed to be useful for teacher research purposes which would naturally have an effect on their behaviour during the task. Ellis (2003) also notes that Activity Theory recognises that changing social conditions can result in individuals realigning their motives and possibly the operations they use. The way that learners view a task is therefore unpredictable. They might view a task as a game on one occasion and as work on another depending on how they approach the task at different times. This might explain the diverse responses that were given by the students in the study. It is important to note that researchers need to ascertain what motives learners bring to a task if they are to understand the interactions that occur when the task is performed. According to Lantolf (2000), Activity Theory, explains that in a particular classroom at a given time “different activities might be underway...despite the fact that all of the participants display the same or similar overt behaviours in a task”.

As Kumaravadivelu (2003) points out, “a common thread that runs through previous studies is an unfailing realisation that one and the same classroom event is interpreted differently by each participant” (p.78). Leontiev (1978) pointed out that people possess motives that determine how they respond to a particular task (motives can be biologically determined or socially constructed). He explained that the learners’ motives determine how they construe a given situation. Students with different motives will perform the same task in different ways.

Therefore, as Ellis (2003) points out, a task can result in different kinds of activity because different students will approach the task differently depending on their underlying motives. This could mean that a learner who views the task as a game will engage in a different kind of activity from one who views the task as work. The motives of the students in the study would need to be investigated further and in much greater detail in order to fully understand why the mismatches (pedagogic and instructional) occurred. Whether or not the mismatches would occur again and on the same tasks is a question that would be interesting to be able to answer with some certainty. In truth, it seems likely that some of Kumaravadivelu’s (1991) insights were well-founded; mismatches are unavoidable and are a part of everyday teaching. It seems however

that far from being related to a particular source, they are unpredictable, do not have distinct boundaries and are not mutually exclusive.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

Firstly, this chapter presents a summary of the key findings of the research followed by a consideration of pedagogical implications for students and teachers.

Recommendations for future research are suggested and then, the limitations are assessed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief summary of the preceding sections.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

The primary objective of this study was to investigate whether or not a mismatch exists between the teacher's intention and the learners' interpretation of tasks and if so, what is the source?

The study was carried out at the School of Languages and Social Sciences at Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. Sixteen students and one teacher were involved in the research. The data collection method of questionnaires and interviews was used.

In order to facilitate desired learning outcomes in the classroom, it is important to identify potential mismatches between teacher intention and learners' interpretation of task. For this reason, the following research question was explored:

Do mismatches exist between teacher's intention and learners' interpretation of task and if so, what is their source?

Overall, the results show that two mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation, namely Instructional and Pedagogic, do occur. Instructional mismatches

occur when students' interpretation of the instructions differs from that of the teacher. Pedagogic mismatches refer to the teacher and learner having different perspectives of stated or unstated short-or long term instructional objectives of language learning tasks. However, there appears to be little or no evidence to support a Strategic or Procedural mismatch. The two tasks produced different results in terms of the extent to which mismatches occurred. The teacher may have influenced this outcome in the way she approached the two tasks. The mismatches do appear to be related to a particular source. That is, they are related to one of the four categories used in the study: instructional, pedagogic, and strategic. It seems clear from the answers given on the questionnaires and during the interviews that the students had not always formulated a clear idea of what they expected from the tasks.

The results of my study support evidence gathered in previous studies relating to the similarities and differences between learner and teacher perceptions of learning purpose. They support the study done by Slimani (1989), Block (1994, 1996) and Barkhuizen (1998), who found that students' perception of classroom aims and events did not match those of their teachers. The results of the study also provide support for two mismatches (Instructional and Pedagogic) originally identified by Kumaravadivelu (2003).

6.3 Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study have confirmed that mismatches do occur and this therefore leads to the question of how they can be minimised. One of the mismatches identified was Instructional. The teacher introduced the tasks fairly quickly, especially on one of the tasks, and gave little explanation of why she wanted the students to do the task or how it might benefit them. Given that the students had little experience of doing this type of task it would possibly have been better to have been more methodical and clearer when introducing the task. Obviously in any classroom situation, many factors influence the students' interpretation of a task. These include language aptitude and motivation. However, introductions to tasks would be enhanced by the teacher spending time clearly outlining the aims of the task, how it can improve their learning and stating exactly what they needed to do. The students also need to be given the

opportunity to ask questions before starting the task. Students may not feel comfortable asking questions in front of the whole class and therefore opportunities could be provided for the students to ask questions in smaller groups, before the start of the task.

Another mismatch identified was pedagogic. The students seemed either unsure or assumed their own reasons for doing the task. Obviously, if the task aims were not clearly explained to them in the introduction they would be unsure of the reason for doing the task. This might reduce their motivation, especially if they felt that it was a waste of time. On the other hand, if the teacher clearly identified the aims and purpose of the lesson, the students' motivation might be increased. As with any task, if the aim of the task is in line with the students' desired learning outcomes, the motivation will be increased.

Teachers and students would benefit from discussing potential mismatches. Using sample interactional data, the concept of mismatches can be explained to the students. Talking about possible differences between teacher intention and learner interpretation of classroom aims and activities could prevent misinterpretation of teacher intention.

6.4 Implications for Further Research

The results have provided further evidence that perceptual mismatches do exist. In particular, the study provides support which indicates that Instructional and Pedagogic mismatches do exist. Although the results of the other two mismatches investigated in this study, namely Strategic and Procedural, were inconclusive, future research may find clearer evidence of mismatches in these areas.

Future research needs to focus on clear identification of perceptual mismatches as well as investigating how they can minimise mismatches once they are identified. Using larger sample sizes, for example several classes of students of English as a second language and more precise instruments, such as more detailed and extensive questionnaires and interview questions, mismatches may well be identified as coming

from a particular source and the exact number might be recorded. This study was limited in that only eight questions on the questionnaires and interviews were used.

The choice of task may have influenced the results and therefore future research could include a wider range of tasks. Ultimately a correlation between task choice and frequency of mismatches might be drawn.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

The most obvious limitation in this research was that of a small sample size, a limitation that prevented a clear generalised statement about whether mismatches exist and what their cause is. A larger sample size would make it possible to generalise beyond the context of a single study.

The study only investigated four potential mismatches. Kumaravadivelu (1991) has identified ten mismatches and acknowledges that there may be many more waiting to be discovered. The study involved two tasks which obviously limits the amount of reliable data that can be gathered. The questionnaires and interviews were also restricted in length due to time restrictions and so this limited the amount of data that could be gathered.

6.6 Conclusion

The primary purpose of the study was to examine whether mismatches exist between the teacher's intention and the learners' interpretation of task. It also aimed to investigate the source of mismatches that might occur. Sixteen students enrolled on a Post-Intermediate level General English course at the School of Languages and Social Sciences at Auckland University of Technology and one teacher participated in this study. Instruments such as questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data.

The most useful finding from this study was that the mismatches which were evident, namely instructional and pedagogic, were both identifiable and preventable.

Discussing the goals and purpose of the task with the class would, I believe, have reduced the gap between teacher intention and learner interpretation. Similarly,

instructional mismatches could be avoided through deliberate and methodical task introductions including detailed small group question and answer sessions.

Results from this investigation of perceptual mismatches have pointed to pedagogical implications for second language instruction. It was suggested that teachers should not only be aware of potential mismatches but openly discuss them with students in an attempt to identify and prevent them.

It is suggested that further research should look at identifying the causes of mismatches. Recognising the cause of a mismatch could help both the learners and the teachers understand that there is an underlying reason for the difficulties the learners may have encountered in making sense of a classroom event.

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Participant Information Sheet

**Date Information Sheet Produced:**

24 February 2006.

Project Title

An examination of factors contributing to any observable gap between teacher's interpretation and the learners' interpretations of the task assigned to them.

Invitation

You are invited to participate in a language study.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to investigate whether or not there is any mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation. The results will be used to compile a Thesis which is part of my studies towards an M.A. in Applied Language Studies.

How are people chosen to be asked to be part of this research?

Sixteen overseas students will be chosen from the post-intermediate level.

What happens in this research?

After the teacher has introduced the task, student participants will be asked to perform a problem-solving task.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Neither the teacher nor students will experience any discomfort or risk from taking part in this study.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

N/A

What are the benefits?

The participants will be contributing to the advancement of language learning which will be of benefit to all language students and teachers of English as a second language in the future.

How will my privacy be protected?

The teacher and student names will remain confidential (real names will not be used in the Thesis).

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Each student will be asked to give approximately two hours of participation time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

All participants will be given one month to consider this invitation.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

All participants will be given a consent form to sign if they wish to participate in the study.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, participants will have the opportunity to read a summary of the research findings.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr. John Bitchener, Auckland University of Technology, Room WT 1003, Auckland.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Who do I contact for further information about this research?***Researcher Contact Details:***

Mark Ashcroft, The New Zealand School of Travel and Tourism, Level 6, 246 Queen St, Auckland, (09) 921 5372, markashc@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr. John Bitchener, Auckland University of Technology, Room WT 1003 (in the Arts Faculty Building, cnr Wakefield and Rutland Streets, Auckland Central); (09) 917 9999 ext: 7830, john.bitchener@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEK Reference number *type the reference number*.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

[This form is to be completed in conjunction with, and after reference to, the AUTECH Guidelines



ONLY type where indicated by instructions eg <Click here and type>
DELETE all clauses which are not applicable]

Title of Project: **An examination of factors contributing to any observable gap between teacher's interpretation and the learners' interpretations of the task assigned to them.**

Project Supervisor: **Dr. John Bitchener**

Researcher: **Mark Ashcroft**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project (Information Sheet dated 24th February 2006).
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that the interview will be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research: tick one: Yes No

Participant signature:

Participant name:

Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 14th August 2006 AUTECH Reference number 06/33

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix C

Questionnaire about the Task – _____

Please answer the following questions which form part of my research (details of which can be found on the Information Sheet). The questions are about the task you have just completed. There are no right or wrong answers and please write as much as detail as you wish. The information you give is confidential and your identity will not be revealed.

- 1) The teacher explained how to do the task.

What did the teacher tell you to do?

- 2) The teacher told you a reason for doing the task.

What reason did the teacher give?

- 3) When you first started doing the task, did you have a plan of how to do the task?

Yes, I had a plan

No, I did not have a plan.

If you had a plan, what was your plan?

4) During the task,

a) Were there any problems?

b) Did you know what to do?

Yes, I knew what to do.

No, I did not know what to do.

c) If you answered "No" to question 5 b, can you give a reason why you didn't know what to do?

5) During the task did you ever stop to ask your partner what to do?

a) What did you ask?

b) What did they say?

6) The teacher asked you to do this task.

What do you think was the purpose of this task?

7) Now you have done this task, what advice would you give another student about how to do this task?

8) Did this task help your language learning?

How did it help?

Please answer these questions about yourself:

a) In which country were you born?

b) What is your first language?

c) Which age group do you belong to?

under 25 years old between 26 and 35 years old over 35 years old

d) Are you

Male? Female?

-- Thank you for answering the questions above --

Camping Holiday

Questionnaire about the Task – Hotel Guests

Please answer the following questions which form part of my research (details of which can be found on the Information Sheet). The questions are about the task you have just completed. There are no right or wrong answers and please write as much as detail as you wish. The information you give is confidential and your identity will not be revealed.

1) The teacher explained how to do the task.

What did the teacher tell you to do?

Teacher told "Tell each other about what ^{and how many items.} items will we take to camping.

2) The teacher told you a reason for doing the task.

What reason did the teacher give?

To communicate and solve about goods which we have to take to camping.

3) When you first started doing the task, did you have a plan of how to do the task?

Yes, I had a plan

No, I did not have a plan.

If you had a plan, what was your plan?

4) During the task,

a) Were there any problems?

No.

b) Did you know what to do?

Yes, I knew what to do.

No, I did not know what to do.

c) If you answered "No" to question 5 b, can you give a reason why you didn't know what to do?

5) During the task did you ever stop to ask your partner what to do?

No. task was easy to do.

a) What did you ask?

How much can I eat?

How cook these food?

b) What did they say?

6) The teacher asked you to do this task.

What do you think was the purpose of this task?

We don't need to much things, because it will be heavy.

7) Now you have done this task, what advice would you give another student about how to do this task?

*Talk to each other your own items. and. decide.
how much and what you need.*

8) Did this task help your language learning?

Yes

How did it help?

Plactise speaking.

Please answer these questions about yourself:

a) In which country were you born?

Japan

b) What is your first language?

Japan

c) Which age group do you belong to?

under 25 years old

between 26 and 35 years old

over 35 years old

d) Are you

Male?

Female?

-- Thank you for answering the questions above --

Questionnaire about the Task – Where on earth are we?

Please answer the following questions which form part of my research (details of which can be found on the Information Sheet). The questions are about the task you have just completed. There are no right or wrong answers and please write as much as detail as you wish. The information you give is confidential and your identity will not be revealed.

1) The teacher explained how to do the task.

What did the teacher tell you to do?

Yes, the teacher explained the instruction and the situation we are.

2) The teacher told you a reason for doing the task.

What reason did the teacher give?

Negotiation with the situation and find the solution.

3) When you first started doing the task, did you have a plan of how to do the task?

Yes, I had a plan No, I did not have a plan.

If you had a plan, what was your plan?

I think in this task student A, B should find and solve the problem in this situation and negotiation.

4) During the task,

a) Were there any problems?

Student A and B have own idea and thinking. So they should solve the problems together.

b) Did you know what to do?

Yes, I knew what to do.

No, I did not know what to do.

c) If you answered "No" to question 5 b, can you give a reason why you didn't know what to do?

5) During the task did you ever stop to ask your partner what to do?

No, I am absolutely clear what to do.

a) What did you ask?

b) What did they say?

6) The teacher asked you to do this task.

What do you think was the purpose of this task?

Negotiation and find the solutions and agree with that.

7) Now you have done this task, what advice would you give another student about how to do this task?

I suggest follow the tips that task gives us and
do what we do.

8) Did this task help your language learning?

Yes

How did it help?

I can use the useful language in the task list,
that can clear my speaking.

Please answer these questions about yourself:

a) In which country were you born?

TAIWAN

b) What is your first language?

Mandarin

c) Which age group do you belong to?

under 25 years old

between 26 and 35 years old

over 35 years old

d) Are you

Male?

Female?

-- Thank you for answering the questions above --

Student Interview Question Sheet



STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- A. What instructions did you give to the class?
 - 1) What did the teacher tell you to do before you started doing the task?
 - 2) What was the reason for doing the task?
- B. To determine any strategic mismatch:
 - 1) Did you have any plan of action? If so, what was it?
 - 2) What advice could you give to someone else who wanted to solve the problem?
- C. To determine any procedural mismatch:
 - 1) During the task, where you ever unsure of what you had to do?
 - 2) Did you have to ask your teacher for help in understanding the task? If so, was their advice useful?
- D. To determine any pedagogic mismatch:
 - 1) What do you think was the purpose of the lesson?
 - 2) How did it help your learning?

Teacher Interview Question Sheet



TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What instructions did you give to the class?
2. What was the aim of the task?
3. What steps, plans or routines did you expect the learners to use in order to problem solve?
4. What steps, plans or routines do you think the students actually used in order to problem solve?
5. Did you find any other ways that they resolved any problems that they had?
6. What type of feedback did you give to the students when they asked for your help?
7. Did you give the students any extra help in how to solve the problem, without them asking for it?
8. Do you think that you could improve the way in which you introduced the lesson or interacted with the students?

8C Camping holiday

Quantifiers (*a few, a lot of, etc.*)

Student A worksheet

Tomorrow you and a friend are going camping in the mountains for three days. Because you are going to camp in a very remote place, you have to carry everything you need with you (except water – there are lots of streams in the mountains).

Unfortunately, both you and your friend packed your rucksacks without talking to each other first. Tell your friend what's in your rucksack, and give your opinion of the things your partner has packed. Together you must make a list of what you decide to take with you.

Make sure that you have both got plenty of everything. You don't want to be cold, wet and hungry, and you need to be ready for emergencies!

In your rucksack you've got:

cooking equipment

- a portable gas stove
- four saucepans
- six plates
- four mugs
- ten boxes of matches
- eight spoons and knives

food

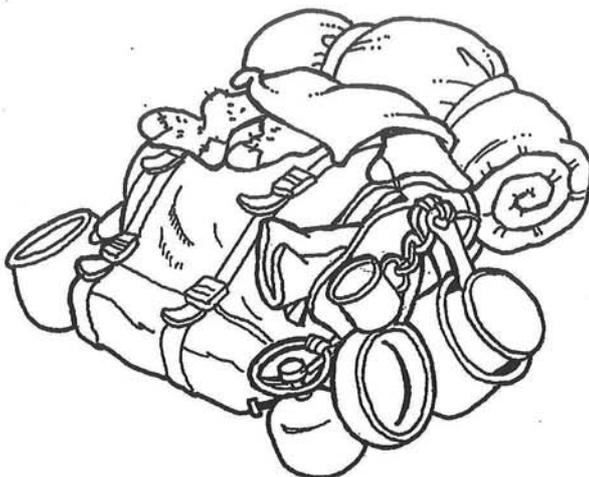
- twenty packets of soup
- 3 kg rice
- two big jars of coffee
- ten packets of biscuits
- 1 kg beans
- 1 kg chocolate
- three loaves of bread

clothes

- five T-shirts
- four jumpers
- three pairs of jeans
- six pairs of socks
- a pair of walking boots

other

- six novels
- ten packets of cigarettes
- a sleeping bag
- three tubes of toothpaste
- a camera
- six rolls of film
- washing powder



Useful language

We'll need	plenty of ...
We've got	a lot of ...
	lots of ...
	loads of ...
We/You've got	some ...
We/You have	several ...
	enough ...
	too much ...
	too many ...
We/You'll only need	one ...
	one or two ...
	a couple of ...
	a few ...
	a little ...
We/You haven't got	much ...
We/You won't need	many ...
	any ...
	enough ...
We've got no ...	

Source: New Cutting Edge Intermediate

By: Barker, H

Publisher: Pearson, Longman, 2006

Student B worksheet

Tomorrow you and a friend are going camping in the mountains for three days. Because you are going to camp in a very remote place, you have to carry everything you need with you (except water – there are lots of streams in the mountains).

Unfortunately, both you and your friend packed your rucksacks without talking to each other first. Tell your friend what's in your rucksack, and give your opinion of the things your partner has packed. Together you must make a list of what you decide to take with you.

You want to make sure that you both take as little as possible – it's very hard to walk with a heavy rucksack!

In your rucksack you've got:

cooking equipment

- two spoons
- one water container
- one big saucepan
- one plate
- one mug
- a lighter
- a small axe (for chopping wood)

food

- six packets of soup
- 2 kg pasta
- 1 kg rice
- a small jar of coffee
- four packets dried vegetables
- two packets of biscuits
- one loaf of bread

clothes

- two T-shirts
- one jumper
- one pair of jeans
- one pair of socks
- a pair of walking boots
- a raincoat

other

- a sleeping bag
- rope (50 metres)
- a torch with spare batteries
- a tent (with three tent pegs)
- soap
- a camera
- one roll of film



Useful language

We'll need	plenty of ...
We've got	a lot of ...
	lots of ...
	loads of ...

We/You've got	some ...
We/You have	several ...
	enough ...
	too much ...
	too many ...

We/You'll only need	one ...
	one or two ...
	a couple of ...
	a few ...
	a little ...

We/You haven't got	much ...
We/You won't need	many ...
	any ...
	enough ...

We've got no ...

Source: New Cutting Edge Intermediate

By: Barker, H

Publisher: Pearson, Longman, 2006

6B Where on earth are we?

Ways of adding emphasis; cleft sentences

Student A

You are on your way to a wedding in your car. You are driving, and your friend has been giving you directions. Now you're completely lost and you're going to be late. You stop the car and discuss what to do. Together you must decide what you're going to do next. You begin the conversation.

These are some points you want to make:

- You have no idea where you are. You've never been to this part of town in your life.
- You didn't leave early enough because your friend was late. You told him/her to arrive at a quarter **to** twelve, and he/she arrived at a quarter **past** twelve.
- You wrote down the directions, and thought they were extremely clear. There was no need to bring a map.
- You think you should have turned left at the crossroads a few minutes ago.
- You think that you must go back to the crossroads to get back on the right road.
- You told your friend yesterday to buy the wedding present, and you want to check he/she has brought it with him/her.
- You didn't want to come to the wedding. Your friend persuaded you to come.
- Your friend always thinks that he/she is right, and this annoys you!

Useful language

I'm absolutely certain that ...

I really do think that ...

What we need is ...

What really annoys me is ...

I told you to ...

It's / It was you who ...

Where / Why / What / How on earth ...?

I really am sorry about ...

Student B

You are on your way to a wedding in your car. Your friend is driving, and you've been giving him/her directions, but now you're lost and you're going to be late. You stop the car and discuss what to do. Together you must decide what you're going to do next.

These are some points you want to make:

- You are sure you know where you are. You and your friend came here together last year for a party.
- You arrived at your friend's house at a quarter past twelve, the exact time he/she told you on the phone.
- You think the directions, which your friend wrote down, aren't very clear. You suggested bringing a map, but your friend said you didn't need one.
- You told your friend to turn left at the crossroads a few minutes ago, but he/she didn't.
- You are sure that if you continue down this street, you will get back on the correct road.
- You didn't buy a wedding present, because your friend said on the phone yesterday that he/she was going to buy one.
- You didn't want to come to the wedding. Your friend persuaded you to come.
- Your friend never believes what you say, and this annoys you!

Useful language

I'm absolutely certain that ...

I really do think that ...

What we need is ...

What really annoys me is ...

I told you to ...

It's / It was you who ...

Where / Why / What / How on earth ...?

I really am sorry about ...

Appendix J

TAPE 7

Teacher's Instructions – T3

06.06.08

Okay, what you've got there is two role play cards and the situation they give you at the top there (and I'll read through the situation and some of the points so that you are clear about the vocab). It says: *You're on your way to a wedding in your car, you're driving and your friend has been giving you directions telling where to go. Now you're completely lost and you're going to be late. You stop the car and discuss what to do and together you have to decide what you're going to do next. Student A begins the conversation; Student B can reply.*

*I'll just go through and check there isn't any vocab that you're not so sure about. What about the word **crossroads** – do you know what a crossroads is?*

Student: *[Unable to hear – he is in the background]*

No, no – that's a pedestrian crossing. Crossroads is actually the intersection of two roads.

Student: Oh, intersection – where is traffic lights.

Yeah, often there's traffic lights at a crossroads, yes. In New Zealand, we often used the word **intersection** instead, rather than crossroads. We often use the word "intersection" – but sometimes crossroads too.

Right, check there are any other things there. No, I think the rest of it is fairly clear. On the right hand side they give you some suggestions as to what might be useful language. If you're disagreeing with someone or perhaps arguing in some way, or you're sure that you're right, you say: *I'm absolutely certain that ... I really do think that ... What we need is ... (this is when you're making suggestions – what you're telling someone what you should do). What really annoys me is ... I told you to ... (is often what people say when things go wrong – in other words "I was right and you were wrong") or something like, "It was you who said that" (and again, this is what we often say when we're cross/angry with someone. **Where, why, what or how on earth?** Do you know that expression? *Why on earth? How on earth?* When do we say that?*

Do you know this expression? *Why on earth? How on earth?* Do you know? Any idea what this means? It's something we use when we're angry, we say: "*Why on earth did you do that?*" Instead of just saying, "*Why did you do that?*" which is fine, we put "*on earth*" gives it a much **stronger** kind of emphasis ... "*Why on earth did you do that?*"; "*Who on earth were you talking to?*" and it just gives it a stronger, rather angry kind of tone to what you say. And we use it after those question words like: **where, why** or **what**.

And the last one is just giving you a phrase about apologising: "*I really am sorry about ...*" so when you want to say sorry about something, "*I really am sorry about ...*" – it makes it quite strong when you say it in that way: "*I really am sorry about ...*".

Okay, each of you in pairs – you've got Student A, Student B. The situation is the same. Some of the information about your point of view or what you think is different. So when you go with Mark or you stay here with me, I'll give you some time to read through what your person in your role play actually thinks. Okay now if you can take ...

(Ends)

Appendix K

TAPE 12

Student Interviews - Task 3

06.06.08

Student A from Group A

Mark: Good afternoon. If I could just ask you a few questions about the task that you've just done. Can you just tell me, what did the teacher tell you to do before you started doing the task?

Stu: The teacher at my class?

Mark: Yes that's right.

Stu: She said is ... some of the MBA (?) students you are studying with ... like to study the MBA and you need to do some after ... how to say? I forgot about the MBA doing.

Mark: Doing the research?

Stu: Research, yes.

Mark: What was the reason for doing the task?

Stu: I don't remember. The teacher said is ... you need to listen to some of students about how understand. He try to research about the foreigner who is student, just the English language, not the first language. He try to know which way he should do better in the lesson when he go to be a teacher in the future.

Mark: Was there any reason for actually doing the activity as well, another other reason? Was there another reason for doing the task, was there any other reason?

Stu: For the MBA?

Mark: Except for that, besides that, another reason?

Stu: Another reason? I'm not sure about that.

Mark: No problem. Do you have any plan of action or any plan of how to do the task? When you sat down and started to do it?

Stu: I thought in the paper that the teacher give to me, I thought is maybe we need to like ... make conversation on the situation that they give to us and we try to make the conversation about that. But our feeling is not really good match because after we finish, we found something is missed from the paper (?) ...

Mark: What advice could you give anybody if they was to do the task themselves ... What advice or help could you give somebody else to do the task?

Stu: You mean if I got to see another student?

Mark: Yes.

- Stu:** If someone ask me about that, I will say yes ... because of ... this task is quite good for the people like me because we not really good in English and maybe we just study in our class – we will never know ... Maybe we thinking at that book (?) that the teacher to give to us ... the lesson, this is good. But now maybe the time change ----- and we need to have someone to, like middle (?) of some of the lesson to make it easy to understanding.
- Mark:** So if the student, your friend, was going to do the task – could you give them some help? How would you tell them to do it?
- Stu:** I love to do that but I'm not confident in myself that I can help them or not. I know the way to do but still the same thing is, because of we still are ... I am still in the student and still not confident to teach another friend to do that, but just give them the guideline, just the same.
- Mark:** Okay, thanks. Were you ever unsure of what to do? When you were doing the task, were there times you didn't know what to do? When you were doing it, did you know what to do?
- Stu:** Not 100%, maybe just 50% because of the thinking, just following and everything should be correct (?) but when everything is finished, I think "*Oh no, we just made just conversation and -----*" go to the right way whatever.
- Mark:** Did you ask the teacher for any help in understanding how to do the task?
- Stu:** No.
- Mark:** No? So you didn't get any advice for the help?
- Stu:** Yeah.
- Mark:** What do you think was the purpose for doing this type of lesson?
- Stu:** In this purpose is ... I thought the teacher try to let us discuss in the idea each other ... idea to go to that party by ourself, make decision. But maybe I'm not really good in the listen when the teacher said ... that's why we just are looking and try to read and try to put the order in that one ... yeah, because of the listening.
- Mark:** How do you think it helped your learning?
- Stu:** How to learning one?
- Mark:** To help your English learning.
- Stu:** To help learning the English is concern about everything about myself and ourself with the media like that – newspaper, magazine or television.
- Mark:** Do you think this would help with ... ?
- Stu:** This is help also for sure, this is help.
- Mark:** How do you think this would help your English?

Stu: Because of ... when we go to the task and we know ... we need to read and understand and speaking, maybe we don't understand each other but we try to go to that meaning.

Mark: Thank you, that was Student A from Group A.

Student from Group B

Mark: Could I just ask first of all, what did the teacher tell you to do before you did the task?

Stu: She said: *Do this task, it's good for your English. Find a solution of the task what was saying for us.*

Mark: Good. What was the reason for doing the task?

Stu: You mean the problem of the task

Mark: Mmm.

Stu: I think it was like a game; it says, *"Me and my friend were going for a wedding and on the way we are lost"*. I was the director who was giving the direction for my friend and she was the one always get wrong. The things I told her, she don't listen to me. In the end we both get late for the wedding and we both get lost ... and she said: *"No, I don't want to go the wedding"*. And she said, *"I'm going home"* and I was very unsatisfied, so I went to the wedding. In the end, I went to the wedding without person.

Mark: Did you have any plan of action or any plan how to do it?

Stu: How to do it? No action, no because it was just the teacher give us ... and straight away start doing it.

Mark: What advice or help could you give to somebody else who wanted to solve the problem?

Stu: I will tell them to first read the instruction which they are seeing and then to be very polite for the friend ... partner to not get very upset or maybe in the end you would get like fight with each other, so it's better to first read the instruction First is to listen to the teacher, what's the teacher giving you instruction and then we for ourself watch the same and then do the work.

Mark: Good, thanks. Were you ever unsure of what you had to do? When you were doing it, did you sometimes think you didn't know what to do?

Stu: No.

Mark: Did you have to ask the teacher for help, did you ask: *What shall we do?*

Stu: Yes, at the beginning I asked her because I didn't know that you brought me and my friend in the same car or I was giving her direction from the phone; I didn't hear teacher say: *"No you're both in the car"*. Yes, that's the one I asked ...

- Mark:** What do you think was the purpose of the lesson?
- Stu:** To improve the lesson and to improve the English, especially speaking ... by giving like ... doing negotiation.
- Mark:** How do you think it helped your learning?
- Stu:** I think it helps, especially when I am speaking because as much as you speak, your speaking gets better and better ... so I think it was very helpful for us to speak a lot – especially negotiation.
- Mark:** Thank you very much.

Student from Group C

- Mark:** Just wonder if I could ask you first of all, what did the teacher tell you to do before you started to do the task?
- Stu:** The teacher told us to do Student A and Student B, work as a team and first start Student A, then Student B.
- Mark:** Good. What do you think was the reason for doing the task?
- Stu:** To know ... the teacher, they want to know how we understand the tests (tasks ?) they give us.
- Mark:** Okay, so really the understanding of the task is the reason?
- Stu:** Yes.
- Mark:** Whether you can do the task?
- Stu:** Yes, how we do task.
- Mark:** Did you have any plan, did you have any way of doing the task?
- Stu:** Yes; the first time it was very hard ... then we read, we make plan ... first we read and we understand then we start to answer.
- Mark:** If you were to give some advice or help to somebody else doing the task, what would you tell them?
- Stu:** I would tell them first they have to ... first task ... and read probably and understand then they start.
- Mark:** When you were doing the task, were you ever not sure of what you had to do? Were you ever unsure of what you had to do?
- Stu:** Yes! Before we start ... if it was very difficult, then we ask teacher to explain. When teacher explain to us, then we flow.
- Mark:** Right yes; so you did ask the teacher for help in understanding the task?

Stu: Yes.

Mark: Okay. Was their advice useful?

Stu: Yes it is.

Mark: Good, so overall what do you think was the purpose of the lesson?

Stu: It was very good; it was a conversation and also I feel for confidence to speak for my partner.

Mark: How did it help your learning? You say for 'confidence' – were there other things that helped your learning?

Stu: Yes – also I get a new vocabulary and speaking skills.

Mark: Thank you very much.

This is a Student from Group D

Mark: If I could just ask you first of all, what did the teacher tell you to do before you did the task?

Stu: She told us how to do the task and one of us is going to be the Student A and one of us going to be Student B. Actually we learnt the sheet that she gave us and to see what we are going to talk about. It was a good communication I was going to do in communicating with one of my friends ... one of my classmate.

Mark: Your classmate, right. What do you think ... what was the reason for doing the task?

Stu: Actually what I believe I think the reason was to provide a good service of studying in the future, I think (I'm not sure) ... this is what I believe.

Mark: Right. When you did the task, did you have any plan, any plan of action?

Stu: Actually, I can say yes because I read the sheet and I knew what to say and what I'm going to be asked for.

Mark: Right, right. So what sort of plan was it?

Stu: The plan was kind of ... because the friend was driver and I was sitting with him and we were going to a party. Because we were lost on the way and we were arguing about whose fault was it ... It's kind of: *Yeah, I know what to say and what to do.*

Mark: Yes, that sounds like a good plan. If somebody else was going to do the task, what help or what advice could you give them?

Stu: First of all, I think it's a good idea to read the task – to have an idea what they're going to talk about. I mean just ignore the tape, just communicate normally ...

Mark: Naturally ...

Stu: Naturally.

Mark: Were you ever unsure when you were doing the task, were you ever unsure of what you were meant to do or what you were ... ?

Stu: Maybe – I was a bit nervous ... that's all.

Mark: Okay, Did you ever ask the teacher what to do? Did they give you advice?

Stu: Actually, all the advice was given to me before doing the tasks because I know what to do.

Mark: What do you think was the purpose, then - the purpose of the lesson?

Stu: From what I've heard, I think the purpose of this task was to provide a good service of the study ... I think from the teacher which talked to us.

Mark: How did it help your learning?

Stu: Yes, I think the task that was given to us ... I think in this task ... it's kind of if you communicate, it's purpose was to communicate with other students and use that knowledge and skills you have.

Mark: Thank you very much.

(concludes)

Appendix L

TAPE 13

Teacher Interview - Task 3

06.06.08

- Mark:** Good afternoon. Just wanted to ask you some questions about the tasks that the students have just done. The first question is: *What instructions did you give to the class?*
- T:** I gave them instructions about ... that they had two different pieces of paper; one was for Student A, one was for Student B. I also talked about some difficult vocabulary that I thought they might have trouble with and I tried to explain what they needed to do in the process of the role play.
- Mark:** Great. *What was the aim of the task, do you think?*
- T:** To establish the situation where people are disagreeing, perhaps, in a conversational setting; disagreeing over (in this case) directions and various other topics.
- Mark:** *What steps, plans or routines do you expect the learners to use in order to problem solve?*
- T:** I wasn't sure how they would deal with it as they hadn't really had any practice in role plays. As far as I could see as they worked through it, they were alternately reading out the sentences that were on the page in front of them.
- Mark:** Thanks. *What steps, plans or routines did the students actually use in order to do the problem solving?*
- T:** They first of all went through it and virtually they read what was on the paper and then with a bit of help they realised that in fact they were supposed to change *you* to *I* and *your friend* to *you*. So that took a bit of doing; they went through the tasks a couple of times and became a bit more fluent as they did it for the second or third time.
- Mark:** So that's really how the students resolved any problems that they had?
- T:** Yes, and I also tried to point out these things to them as they were working through them for the first time.
- Mark:** *So what sort of feedback did you give the students when they asked for any help?*
- T:** I probably tried to explain the purpose of it all; saying that it was really an argument for discussion situation.
- Mark:** You just mentioned that you gave them some extra help with having to solve the problem. *Was there a lot of extra help needed?*
- T:** Yes, because I think they're not familiar with doing role plays they had to ... it took them some time to work out exactly what was expected of them.

Mark: *Do you think there are any ways that you could improve the way in which the lesson was introduced or the interaction was done with the students?*

T: I think that was probably as clear as I could make it. I suppose what you could do is perhaps to do a practice role play with someone, but of course you really need two native speakers to do it successfully.

Mark: Thanks very much.

(concludes)

TAPE 14

Teacher's Instructions

25.05.08

Okay, the task this week is ... again, you'll be working in pairs like you were last time and one of you will have some of the information and someone else another piece of information ... so you're going to be working as Student A and Student B. I'll give you out the worksheets so you've had a chance to look at it and then I'll explain a little bit more.

Okay, so have a look at the paper and have a look at your introduction at the top which is the same for both of you if you're A or B. It says:

"Tomorrow you and a friend are going camping in the mountains for three days. Because you're going to camp in a very remote place, a very far away place, you have to carry everything you need with you (except water – there's lots of streams in the mountains). Unfortunately, both you and your friend packed your rucksack (rucksack is another word for pack ... sometimes people say 'backpack', something you carry on your shoulders) ... so you didn't talk to each other before you packed your backpack or your rucksack and so you have to tell your friend what you've got in your rucksack and give your opinion of the things that your partner has packed. Together, you have to make a list of what you decide to take with you (and I'll give you a piece of paper to make the list on). The problem is that you've got too much stuff so you have to decide what's really important because you're going to have to carry it on your back and you don't want it too heavy. Both of you have ended up with probably too many things; you'll have to talk about what you've got and then make a decision about what's really necessary to take. You have to think about the things that you really need – perhaps some things you could leave behind ... so it's not too late, you can take things out of your bag now and leave them behind before you go."

I'll give you out the sheet which you can in the end write the list of things that you really think you'll need to take with you. Mark will take you out in four, four pairs. So you can choose them if you like.

(Ends)

Appendix N

TAPE 19

Student Interviews - Task 2

23.05.08

Student A from Group C

Mark: Good afternoon. Just wonder if I can ask you the first question. What do you think the teacher told you to do before starting to do the task?

Stu: She just told me everything for the vester (?) and to find out things that you don't need to give the information first ? and then we know how to do it.

Mark: Right. What was the reason for doing the task?

Stu: It was not a test; it was for helping Mark (?) doing research and is more helping for us out English or other things.

Mark: Did you have any plan of action and if so, what was it? Any way of doing the task?

Stu: No.

Mark: No plan?

Stu: Just following the instruction.

Mark: What advice could you give someone else who wants to solve the problem?

Stu: For this task. I will told them it's more easy to do in this form (?). And you can talk to your partner with the question and doing together and it's more helping for your English speaking.

Mark: That's good. During the task itself, were you ever unsure of what to you had to do?

Stu: Yeah, yes. This time it's more easier but the last time the test that we do, I feel confused about last time question. It's like —— hotel (?) for me and it's more confusing to match people to get —— group. But this time, it's more easier to understand. Now when you finish you feel, "*Oh, it's more interest (?) things, you find out ——*". When you go to camp or something like that.

Mark: Did you ever ask your teacher for help in understanding the task?

Stu: Before we don't know, we will go ask for explanation but if they understand, we don't —— after I done the test, I don't understand ... is more

Mark: What do you think was the purpose of the lesson?

Stu: Is for helping your English and also helping for doing more test that you don't know. I will go on camp (?) —— what you need to bring or something like that.

Mark: How do you think it helped your learning?

Stu: For the test, I can read some vocabulary that I have not been used before. It's for teaching something that I don't know. That's what I learn about that, the task.

Mark: Excellent, thank you very much.

Student from Group D

Mark: Good afternoon.

Stu: Good afternoon.

Mark: Just wondering if I can ask you some questions about the task that you've just done.

Stu: Of course.

Mark: What did the teacher tell you to do before you started doing the task?

Stu: My teacher just give me the sheet and asked us to review the list on the sheet and we want to discuss about what items shall we take for camping in the mountain for three days.

Mark: What was the reason for doing the task?

Stu: I'm not sure. I heard about my teacher – her name is Flora. She said it's always fully to relative to someone's research so I want to buy (?) some fun -

Mark: When you were actually doing the task, did you have any plan of action?

Stu: No, I don't have any plan and I'm quite confused. Like, "*What shall we do? Is there any like rule, like some correct way to do for the task?*" I'm not sure.

Mark: What advice could you give to someone else who wanted to solve the problem?

Stu: Cause I'm now really understand what the purpose is, so if for like camping in the mountain for three days, I think less some work (?) in the topic is about hungry, wet ... you don't want to be hungry, you don't want to be wet and cold and emergency I think is quite important. Is already shown in the sheet.

Mark: Yes, good advice. During the task itself, were you ever unsure of what you had to do?

Stu: Just in the beginning and when we started this class, what shall we need. We just go in the ----

Mark: Did you have to ask your teacher for help in understanding the task?

Stu: No we didn't because we don't know the purpose but the teacher just ask us to discuss with each others for item which we need for camping so it's quite clear.

Mark: What do you think was the purpose of the lesson?

Stu: I don't know, maybe something we don't know it. Maybe for the psycholog ... or is for learning English, I'm not sure.

Mark: How did it help your learning?

Stu: I start to think about how to explain the situation to my partner and yeah, I start to fire off how to impression, yeah. Is help me to find out a new vocabulary.

Mark: That's good; thank you very much.

Student from Group A

Mark: Just wonder if I can ask you a few questions about the task that you've just done. First question is: What did the teacher tell you to do before you started doing the task?

Stu: Teacher just give two group – one group, one is for A Student, one is for B Student and we have activity to go to the campings and we helps the student to pack our own things. After packing things, then we told each other what do we pack in the bags ...

Mark: That's right ...

Stu: Then we check what do we then need. Make sure we know how ----- things when we go to the camping.

Mark: Right, yes. What was the reason for doing the task?

Stu: Reason just because some time we go out, go to camping and make sure we have experience to pack things and what do we need to take with us.

Mark: Did you have any plan of action? Did you have any way?

Stu: No.

Mark: Okay. What advice would you give to somebody else who wants to do the same task, who wants to solve the problem?

Stu: Yes I will give them some advice just ... what do they need to take with them, what's important, yes.

Mark: Okay, so what sort of advice would you give them?

Stu: Like for example, like water – make sure they have enough water and lights and torch. Where you walk in the jungle, you need the boots. Make sure you have enough clothes to keep you warm and keep you dry. You need the raincoat.

Mark: Absolutely, good advice. During the task itself, were you ever unsure of what you had to do?

- Stu:** Not really.
- Mark:** No? Okay. Did you have to ask the teacher for help in understanding the task?
- Stu:** Just some vocabulary. Yeah, if I don't understand the vocabulary just ask a teacher. Other things are okay.
- Mark:** Okay. So their advice was useful?
- Stu:** Yes.
- Mark:** What do you think was the purpose of the lesson?
- Stu:** It was just give you ideas, just when you go out to go to camping, go to have a holiday ... just make sure you have things with you.
- Mark:** Yes. And how did it help your learning?
- Stu:** Learning? I don't know – really no much, is quite easy.
- Mark:** Okay, well thank you very much.

This is a Student from Group B

- Mark:** Good afternoon. Just wonder if I could ask you some questions about the task that you've just done; the task you've just completed.
- Stu:** Yes please.
- Mark:** Right. What did the teacher tell you to do before you started doing the task?
- Stu:** The teacher said to read the instructions and then to discuss what items we already got and what items we need to take or more. Some of them probably will have a lot and leave them; because you don't need ----
- Mark:** What was the reason for doing the task?
- Stu:** I think the teacher is writing the dissertation and he's trying to find more fun interactive ways to teach the English language. And it was fun.
- Mark:** Do you think there was any other reason for doing the task?
- Stu:** Probably for the research. Is it going to work or not? Will it be effective? Is he going to use it in the future or not?
- Mark:** You mean if the task will be ...
- Stu:** Successful.
- Mark:** Successful, right okay – yes. Actually during the task, did you have any plan of action? Did you have any way of doing the task?
- Stu:** No just spontaneously really.

Mark: Spontaneously, right.

Stu: And I think I didn't have enough time to look at the task. I felt that I didn't use the useful language that the teacher actually wanted us to use then ---- I just did it sort of spontaneously what to take or not to take. It was fun but sort of I was thinking I don't use enough of the ---- language. But mainly I think you wanted us to learn to use these things.

Mark: Right, okay, good.

Stu: That doesn't mean the exercise was wrong; it probably needed more time for me. Or focus, you have to use this ---- I just read this one and we just it straight away.

Mark: What advice would you give somebody else who's going to do the task?

Stu: I could give you advice that have to focus on his --- phrases, ---- in the class.

Mark: The use for language.

Stu: Yeah I tried but mainly because it was completely ... a tape recorder switched on people a bit anxious (?). It's right, but not as much ... I didn't use it as much as I wanted to ... and probably if you could read it, how to read it pronunciation because ---- shot in that, we've got "we'll need" how to pronounce it. If you go through that before.

Mark: So you develop ----- Yeah that's right, beforehand.

Stu: Because you need to learn that's kilos ---- how ---- shortened. Haven't ...

Mark: Right, he likes to use this *before* doing the lesson? Yes.

Stu: Yeah.

Mark: Okay, good. During the task, were you ever unsure of what you had to do?

Stu: No, it was clear.

Mark: Okay. Did you have to ask the teacher for any help?

Stu: Yes, I did. I asked you three times.

Mark: What sort of advice? Was it useful advice that the teacher gave you; was it helpful?

Stu: Yes it was not because I didn't understand the task, it was because of my language because I forgot *salami roll*, it was one piece of salami we're taking.

Mark: What do you think was the purpose of the lesson?

Stu: The purpose of the lesson was to learn to use this useful language, "we'll need; we've got". Yes, it was plenty of ... lots of ... to know those useful phrases that sort of memorised them during their interaction, during

communication and then use a real one. Yeah, so I think it's good that we could ... during the exercise we're bit (?) bonded -----

Mark: Good, that's interesting yes.

Stu: Become more friends and ...

Mark: Teamwork?

Stu: Yeah, teamwork, teamwork I think.

Mark: Good, good.

Stu: It's a teamwork and I feel good sense of humour, will laugh between their different parts of ... it did mean (?) a lot of different parts of exercises ... we laughed and when people study and they're happy, they learn better.

Mark: Quite true; you'd be right because you're happy and enjoy it. Overall, how do you think it helped your learning?

Stu: I think I learnt about pronunciation of some words and some negotiation skills. Yes and I learned a lot of how to pack when you go travelling and I also ... it's not enough time but I also try to learn how to use the useful phrases. I think that's more the main task – to learn to use those phrases; using them in an exact situation, -----

Mark: I suppose if you work as a pair, you learn about the other person, what they like.

Stu: Yes. And it's very interesting. If I would work on my own, it would be boring.

Mark: That's right.

Stu: Then I wouldn't never open the book.

Mark: Thank you very much for that.

(concludes)

Appendix O

TAPE 20

Teacher Interview - Task 2

23.05.08

Mark: I was just wondering if I could ask you about the tasks that we've just done. If I could just ask what instructions you gave to the class.

T: I gave out the Student A/Student B sheets and I read through the instructions at the top of the page (which was the same one with both Student A and Student B) and I think that set the scene for the background and I think gave them an idea about what they had to do.

Mark: *What was the aim of the task?*

T: It was to prepare for a hiking trip and the students had to make a decision about what things they should take with them and what things they didn't need to take with them – they'd leave behind.

Mark: *What steps, plans or routines did you expect the learners to use in order to problem solve?*

T: They would have had to talk about what was in each of their rucksacks and then discuss with each other whether those things were useful or not and also perhaps to think about things that might be added to the list.

Mark: *What steps, plans or routines did the students actually use in order to problem solve, do you think?*

T: As far as I knew, that's what was happening. I overheard the other group and they seemed to be saying things like: *What do you have in your bag? Do we really need that? How many things do we need?*

Mark: So that's one way that the students resolved any problems that they had in understanding. *Did you find any other ways that they resolved any problems that they had?*

T: I didn't notice, no, any other ways.

Mark: *What type of feedback did you give to the students when they asked for your help?*

T: They didn't seem to need the help for this task, they didn't actually ask me anything.

Mark: *Did you give the students any extra help, how to solve the problem, without them asking for it?*

T: Not really. I think the only thing I added at the end was whether any things weren't on the list that they probably should have taken with them.

Mark: *Do you think that you could improve the way in which you introduced the lesson or interacted with the students?*

T: I don't think so. It probably would have been a task if we were doing that particular topic (which we do sometimes) if we were already involved in some way with talking about camping or hiking or going bush in New Zealand, that that might have fitted better into the topic – it was something that was quite divorced from what we were actually doing.

Mark: Thank you very much.

(concludes)