Writing up your PhD (Qualitative Research)

Independent Study version

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Contents

About the course

Who is the course for?

This is for PhD students working on a qualitative thesis who have completed their data collection and analysis and are at the stage of writing up. The materials should also be useful if you are writing up a 'mixed-methods' thesis, including chapters of analysis and discussion of qualitative data.

What does the course offer?

The focus is on improving your ability to write academic English appropriate to a qualitative study. We assume that by this stage of your PhD work you are familiar with key qualitative notions such as: *Grounded theory*; *Contextualisation*; '*Showing your workings*' (analytical rigour); *'Letting the data speak'*; *Reflexivity*; and *Transferability* (in contrast to generalisability).

How does the course work?

In each unit you focus on the different sections of a qualitative thesis (see Contents),

- Reflecting on advice on writing-up from leading qualitative researchers
- Analysing sample thesis extracts
- Studying English expressions relevant to writing up specific chapters
- Applying the ideas covered in the unit to drafting/revising your thesis sections

Are these Independent Study materials the same as the materials used in class?

Yes. These Independent Study (IS) materials have been written for students who are not able to attend the classes in Semester 1, or who want to use them independently, at another time of the year. The IS materials comprising the six course units, with additional *Independent Study notes* written specifically for students working without a language tutor.

Acknowledgments

In writing this course I have used extracts from a number of qualitative studies, mainly PhD theses written by my ex-students and (former) colleagues at the Institute for Applied Language Studies, University of Edinburgh: Dr Lesley Gourlay, Dr Heather Hewitt, Dr Ko Chao-Jung, Dr Paul Mennim, Dr Joy Northcott and Dr Melada Sudajit-apa. I chose these particular sources to give the materials an appropriately 'local' orientation to what is expected of students writing up qualitative research for a doctorate. The course could not have taken this form without the willing help of those authors, and I thank them warmly for their cooperation.

I am also grateful to Dr Cathy Benson and Dr Joy Northcott for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of the materials.

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References

The sources I have cited in the six course units are listed below. If you have time to do further reading at this stage of your doctoral research, the two books I would recommend in particular are **Holliday (2007)** and the 'Writing Up' section of **Silverman (2012)**.

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1 Structure and Introduction

What makes qualitative research 'qualitative'?

Before we look at alternative thesis structures, let's take a step back and consider the fundamental differences between qualitative and quantitative research:

> Qualitative researching is exciting and important. It is a highly rewarding activity because it engages us with things that matter, in ways that matter. Through qualitative research we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings they generate. We can do all of this qualitatively by using methodologies that celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity rather than being embarrassed or inconvenienced by them. Instead of editing these elements out in search of the general picture or the average, qualitative research factors them directly into its analyses and explanations. This means that it has an unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about *how things work in particular contexts.*
>
> (Mason 2002: 1)

Task 1.1

Does Mason <u>mention</u> quantitative research?

What does she <u>imply</u> about it?

What are the 'particular contexts' you are investigating in your own research?

Given this divergence between qualitative and quantitative researchers, one would naturally expect to find differences in the way in which their research is written up. Here is one view of *qualitative writing*:

> … the sense of argument develops through the whole process of data collection, analysis and organization. This makes qualitative writing in essence very different from quantitative writing. Qualitative writing becomes very much <u>an unfolding story</u> in which the writer gradually makes sense, not only of her data, but of the total experience of which it is an artefact. This is an interactive process in which she tries to untangle and make reflexive sense of her own presence and role in the research. The written study thus becomes a complex train of thought within which her voice and her image of others are interwoven. Therefore, 'unlike quantitative work that can carry its meaning in its tables and summaries, qualitative work carries its meaning in its entire text… its meaning is in the reading' (Richardson and St Pierre 2005: 959-60). The <u>voice and person of the researcher</u> as writer not only become a major ingredient of the written study, but <u>have to be evident</u> for the meaning to become clear.
>
> (Holliday 2007: 122, underlining added)

Task 1.2

Why is qualitative writing *an unfolding story*?

Is that expression relevant to your own research?

Do you agree that '*the voice and person of the researcher*' have to be evident? Why?

Have your supervisors suggested how <u>your</u> voice should be present?

The writer's voice

Have you noticed whether it is common in your field for authors to use first-person language forms - either in the singular *I/me/my/mine*, or the plural *we/us/our/ours* ?

Below is some data on this area of academic English usage. Hyland (2002) analysed journal papers in various subject fields and counted the following instances (per 1,000 words):

discipline	first-person forms	*I / me / my / mine*	*We / us/ our(s)*
Marketing	38.2	1.6	36.6
Philosophy	34.5	33.0	1.5
Sociology	29.4	11.7	17.7
Physics	17.7	0.0	17.7
Biology	15.5	0.0	15.5
Electronic Engineering	11.6	0.0	11.6

Task 1.3
What patterns do you notice there?
Can you suggest reasons for the differences between disciplines?

Task 1.4
Hyland's figures relate to journal articles. In which parts of a <u>PhD thesis</u> would you expect to find most frequent use of *I / me/ my / mine*?

Task 1.5
Does anything strike you as *odd* in the Acknowledgment below? If so, **change the text** to make it more appropriate.

> *First, gratitude should be expressed to the students and teachers at... who participated as subjects in this study. Special thanks go the seven pairs of students who... An eternal debt is owed to the supervisor of this thesis.... for his devotion of time and precious advice. He was encouraging and constructive at all times. Without his help and guidance the completion of the thesis would not have been possible. Thanks are also expressed to two other committee members... who played an important role in giving valuable advice from the beginning. Additional advice on statistical analysis has come from ... and help with graphics from ... Finally, my partner is to be thanked for his love and support and his family for their concern.*

Structuring your thesis

Given the different aims and approaches of qualitative and quantitative research, it is not surprising that theses written in the two traditions can also look rather different. On the next page is Adrian Holliday's 'map' for writing up qualitative research.

> ### Task 1.6
> Study Holliday's map and read the notes 1-21 carefully.
> Is there anything in Holliday's notes that you do <u>not</u> intend to include in your thesis?
> Is there anything you think Holliday has <u>missed out</u>?

ABSTRACT the essential message

1) Summary of your basic message

INTRODUCTION setting the scene

2) Your statement of **topic** and **focus**
3) Your vision and motivation for the research, and how you locate it within broader work
4) Your choice of research **setting** and overall data collection **strategy**
5) How your **thesis** is structured

LITERATURE REVIEW

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6) Your **conceptual framework**

7) What **you have learnt** from previous research and **how you position yourself** in relation to current discussions, within which (a) your **topic** and (b) your **methodology** are located

8) Evidence that you are **well informed**

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PROCEDURES

9) How you chose your **core setting** and relevant **data sources**
10) What we need to know about the setting
11) How you developed an appropriate research **strategy**
12) How you gained **access** and collected **data**
13) A catalogue of **research activities** and data **collected**
14) How you structured your analysis and arrived at your choice of **themes** and **headings**
15) Your system for **presenting data** (e.g. coding, anonymising)

DISCUSSION OF DATA

16) Structured **using the themes and headings** described above

17) What **you have learnt** from the data

18) How the data provides **evidence for what you have found**

IMPLICATIONS

19) A **summary** of what you have found during your research

20) What you think it all **means**

CONCLUSION -
summing up and recommendations

21) Your final comments on all the basic points in your argument

Written study, structure and functions (Holliday 2007: 43)

Structuring your research story

Silverman compares the macrostructure of a thesis with <u>telling a story</u> and suggests there are at least three possible types: hypothesis, analysis and mystery.

The Hypothesis Story

If we consider all types of research – quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods - this is probably the commonest way of writing up research, and is what most academic journals encourage/expect from researchers submitting their papers for publication:

- ▪ You state your hypotheses
- ▪ You test them
- ▪ You discuss the implications

As a qualitative researcher, there are two reasons why you might wish **not** to use this model. In the first place, you may be proceeding inductively - developing and refining hypotheses in the course of your data analysis. Secondly, even in quantitative studies the model may not represent the actual logic of the research, but a *reconstructed logic* to match what the statistical analysis eventually showed (Alasuutari 1995). In other words, the Hypothesis story may be a neater and simpler, 'tidied-up' version of the study.

The Analytical Story

The Hypothesis Story tends to be written in the Passive voice. Telling the Analytical Story 'is a more conversational way of writing' (Silverman 2000: 243) and involves asking and answering questions such as

- • *What are the key concepts that I have used in my study?*
- • *How do my 'findings' shed light on these concepts?*
- • *How do they relate to my original research problem and to the literature I consulted?*

'Rather than hope that the reader will eventually find out these matters, telling an analytic story lays everything out on a plate at the outset' (Silverman 2000: 243).

The Mystery Story

Some readers – though your supervisor **may not** be one of them! – prefer to be surprised. Alasuutari describes the Mystery Story approach as one that starts directly from empirical examples, develops the questions by discussing them, and gradually leads the reader to interpretations of the data collected and to more general implications of your findings (Alasuutari 1995: 183).

Two potential advantages of the Mystery Story approach: it may engage readers' interest and attention; and it might more accurately reflect the inductive form of much qualitative research, where the intention is for findings (and possibly even the topics) evolve gradually.

After considering the three models, Silverman says,

'In a sense, whichever story you choose can be safely left to personal choice. More important is whether you are telling some coherent story. For, despite their differences, all three models share one important feature in common: they give the study focus and point. This means that the structure of your thesis should only rarely flow from the chronological order in which you happened to find out things'.

(Silverman 2000: 243-44)

Task 1.7
Which of the three models is closest to the overall story of your thesis?

> **Task 1.8**
>
> *"The final version of the thesis should be written, with hindsight,*
> *knowing where one has been"* (Cryer 1996: 178).
>
> In the case of your research, what do you <u>now</u> know is important that you didn't know when you started? Does that change in your thinking appear in your data discussion?

Outline of a qualitative thesis

Here are the components that David Silverman suggests - in the 'Writing Up' section of *Doing Qualitative Research* – are necessary in a qualitative thesis. We will be using his headings in the various units of this course:

A The First Few Pages
B The Literature Review chapter (but he asks 'Do you need one?)
C The Methodology chapter
D The Data chapters (*note the plural*)
E The Final Chapter

> **Task 1.9**
> What are the differences between Holliday's seven boxes and Silverman's components? Can you identify Silverman's A, B, C, D and E components in the following Contents Pages from a PhD thesis?

Task 1.10
Below are three more examples of PhD thesis contents. In each case, do you think the research was <u>qualitative</u>, <u>quantitative</u> or <u>mixed</u>?

Abstract
1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE
2. LITERATURE REVIEW
3. METHODOLOGY
4. FINDINGS 1: WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS COURSE HAVE?
5. FINDINGS 2: PRE-COURSE FACTORS AND IMPACT
6. FINDINGS 3: PEOPLE AND LEARNING PROCESSES - THEIR RELEVANCE TO IMPACT
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Abstract
1. Introduction
2. Overviews of 'listening', 'strategy' and 'interaction'
3. Comprehension and interpretation in listening
4. Second language strategies
5. Conversational adjustments
6. The teachability of strategies
7. Task design for spoken interaction
8. Interactional listening strategies: a study
9. Results and discussion: two analyses
10. Conclusions

Abstract
1. Introduction
2. The institutional and distance contexts of front desk talk
3. Research methodology and method
4. Transactional patterns in front desk talk
5. Relational patterns in front desk talk
6. The discourse roles of receptionists and patients
7. Three problem-solving encounters
8. Review of the research and implications for receptionist training

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Task 1.11
Which do you think are the <u>Data chapters</u> in that third thesis?

Writing the Introduction

A fundamental question is: How long should the Introduction be?

Guidance from qualitative researchers varies quite widely on the issue of length. For example, Silverman (2000: 224) took the view that "there is no reason why your introduction should be any longer than two or three pages, particularly if your 'methods' chapter covers the natural history of your research". On the other hand, the student whose thesis contents page we saw on pages 5-6 wrote an Introduction of 12 pages; the students whose thesis structures are outlined on pages 6-7 wrote 8, 2 and 10 pages, respectively.

The length will depend on precisely what an Introduction covers. You should ask your supervisors' advice on the specific requirements of your Introduction.

Task 1.12
Compare the authors' views quoted below. How many <u>different</u> elements can you find?

The point of the introduction is to answer the question: What is this thesis about? You answer that question in four ways, by explaining
1. Why you have chosen this topic rather than any other, e.g. because it has been neglected or because it is much discussed but not properly or fully
2. Why this topic interests you
3. The kinds of research approach or academic discipline you will use
4. Your research questions or problems   (Murcott 1997: 1)

Introductions are for
a. Explaining why and how
b. Establishing key terminology
c. Contextualising the research
d. Telling the reader what each chapter is about   (Holliday 2007: 44-47)

The Introduction ought to do a number of things:
- Provide preliminary background information to place your study in context
- Clarify the focus of your study
- Specify your overall research aim and individual objectives
- Point out the value of your research   (Biggam 2011: 52)

Although (as it happens), all of those three authors mentioned four aspects of Introductions, they were not the same four aspects in each case. If you want a more complete list of what may go into an Introduction, the analysis provided in the next box should be helpful.

Stage 1: ORIENTATION

> **1a - General statements** (especially on the importance of the topic)
> **1b - Background information**
> **1c - Reference to previous studies**

Stage 2: JUSTIFICATION

> **2a - Indicating a gap**
> **2b - Questions/problems**
> **2c - Value of further investigation** (by you) **of the topic**

Stage 3: FOCUS ON YOUR RESEARCH

> **3a - Content: aims/thesis**
> **3b - Structure**
> **3c - Limitations**
> **3d - Means** (method)
> **3e – Evaluation**

Stages of the Introduction to a project or dissertation (adapted from Anderson 1993)

N.B. This is not a 'model' of how you *must* write an Introduction. Anderson's list shows *the range of options* available to you when you are deciding what to include in your particular Introduction.

One key feature of academic work reported in a dissertation or thesis is that you are expected to place your work in the context of related work and to explain why you thought it necessary to do the research you have done. In other words, you justify your contribution to the field.

Task 1.13
The extract below is from a journal article, so the Introduction was relatively short. Read it and decide whether the writer justifies his choice of an individual case-study approach

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Both theoretical and practical publications on listening comprehension emphasise that two-way listening is not only common in real-life communication but also a useful way to improve foreign language knowledge and skills, and recommend that the skills of listening and speaking should be integrated in the classroom. In one of the most detailed discussions of such integration, Oprandy (1994) coined the term 'listening/speaking' to draw attention to the close interrelationship between the two skills. However, it is noticeable that Oprandy - among others - adopted a teaching perspective,

rather than a <u>learning</u> perspective; for him, integration was in terms of activities, materials and curriculum - a matter of pedagogic procedure.

Researchers have paid much less attention to the learner. In particular, it is not clear how an individual learner's experiences in one-way listening might help them to perform better on two-way listening tasks, and vice versa. Do gains in one listening mode transfer to the other? It could be argued that, if performance in the two listening modes is linked, it is through the listener's gains in foreign language knowledge, rather than in procedural skill. For example, increased vocabulary (gained through contextual guessing in one-way listening, or through negotiation of meaning in two-way listening) could arguably assist subsequent performance in the other mode of listening. As far as I am aware, this issue of an individual learner's transfer of skill or knowledge from one-way to two-way listening has not been investigated, which is what led me to this exploratory study of one intermediate-level learner's progress, or lack of it, during an English for Academic Purposes course, and to see how he coped with the demands of listening and listening/speaking in the classroom context.

Task 1.14
Apart from **Indicating a Gap**, which other elements of Anderson's Stages 1 and 2 can you identify in that extract? Circle YES or NO against the items in the list below:

ORIENTATION

    1a - General statements (especially on the importance of the topic)   YES   NO

    1b - Background information   YES   NO

    1c - Reference to previous studies   YES   NO

JUSTIFICATION

    2a - Indicating a gap   (YES)

    2b - Questions/problems   YES   NO

    2c - Value of further investigation (by you) **of the topic**   YES   NO

The language of Introductions

In this course we will be focusing on English expressions typically found in different parts of a thesis, for you to apply in your own writing. On the next two pages are Language Boxes for the three stages of an Introduction, followed by this week's **Writing task**.

Language Box: Introduction stage 1 - Orientation

1a - General statements
> Hunger striking **has a long ... history** in Ireland.
> The sceptical paradox **is well known**:...
> **There has been much interest recently in** the concept of ... and its relevance
> Research and speculation on ... **have been growing at a rapid rate**...
> **In recent years** the study of ... **has focused on** ...

1b - Background information
Stage 1b sometimes contains essential **facts** about the subject-matter which the reader has to know in order to understand the text - for example **definitions**, or other basic information.

1c - Reference to previous studies
> *Parkinson (2012) has developed* an elaborate framework to show that ....
> There is now a **considerable body of research** which suggests ....
> **Most researchers** in the field agree that ....
> **Recent studies** have shown that ....
> **Much recent work** ... has indicated that ...
> **Jenkins (2009)** found ... that ...

Language Box: Introduction stage 2 - Justification

Stage 2a - Indicating a gap
> Surprisingly, **only one** extensive article has been published.
> This aspect of ... **has not been given much attention**.
> The **limitation** of all these interpretations is that....
> Studies of ... are **rare**

Negative expressions *(few, little, not much, hardly*, etc.*)* are very common here.

> the literature on ... **has concentrated principally on** ...
> **Most of the data** on ... which can be found in the literature **pertain to** ...
> **Most existing research** on ... **has been based on relatively small samples** ...
> which **has made it impossible** to carry out satisfactory studies ....

Stage 2b - Indicating questions/problems
> Either direct or indirect questions:

> **Would** an analysis of ... bear out their claims?
> ...requires clarification. **Is it ..., or is it ...?**
> But **the question remains whether ...**.

Stage 2c - Importance of the topic
> Highlight the positive value or advantage of the topic:

> His elegant model **merits testing** as a macrosociological theory. ..
> The article **well deserves careful analysis**...

Language Box: Introduction stage 3 - Focus on my research

3a - Content: aims / central idea

*My **primary purpose** is to...*
*I will **discuss** ...   In ... I shall **argue** that ....*
*In this thesis I will **claim**...*
*In this thesis I **present results of a pilot study** ....*
*The **aim** of this study is to **demonstrate** that ...*
*This study **investigates/describes** ...*
*The **object** of this thesis is to **look critically at** ....*
*This study **attempted to explore** ...*

3b - Structure

*This thesis will **first** ..., and **then** ...*
***Having** analysed ..., I will go on to ....*
***First**, brief definitions of ... will be offered; **second**, ... the language data and the*
*analysis will be presented; **third**, an attempt will be made...; **finally**, ...*

3c - Limitations

*Since ... is **beyond the scope of** this study ....*
*It is **not the purpose of this study** to ..., **but rather** to ...*
*I will **not attempt** here to .... **Rather than focus** upon ..., my intention is ....*
*I **do not attempt** to describe or compare ... Instead, I **seek to** ...*
***Only** the data from ... **are considered** here*

3d - Means (method)

***My approach is** characterised by two assumptions ....*
***I have based my study on** ....*
***The data** on which the discussion will be based **comprises** ....*
*This study **uses** and **extends** those concepts and **is based on** ...*

3e - Evaluation

*... **offers a possible explanation for** ....*
*This study **offers new proposals** ...*
*There is some evidence to suggest that the... **should be widely applicable**,*
*although the problem of ... **is likely to limit their use**.*

Writing up your thesis

You have now reached the end of the Tasks for this unit on the Introduction. You can now apply the ideas and language from this unit to drafting or revising the Introduction chapter for your thesis.

You may also find it helpful to visit this website for further examples of written academic English relevant for the Introduction:

http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/introductions.htm

Appendix to Unit 1

Skeleton of a thesis Introduction (original length 10 pages)

I thought it would be helpful for you to see an example of a strong Introduction to a qualitative thesis, so here are the 'bare bones' of a British student's opening chapter. Most of the content has been removed, as shown by the dots (…).

The **names** of the authors she cited have been changed to **letters**.

Where she included a long quotation, that is shown by QUOTATION. (Notice she used relatively few direct quotations; mostly she summarised what Authors had researched and found).

I have highlighted **in bold** her references to overall theories and specific concepts, to give you an idea of how, and how often, she mentioned the background ideas in the chapter.

As you read the skeleton, try to focus on the student's **overall argument** and the **language she uses** to develop it.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This is a study of …. Unlike earlier work in…., here the focus is exclusively on… Using audio data recorded at …., I first explore the …., describing recurrent patterns and variations; second, I examine the different roles and identities which are co-constructed by …; and third, I consider how. In this introductory chapter, I explain how my interest in… developed; describe the institutional context of…; and give a brief outline of the analytical frameworks which I draw on.

1.1 Background

An episode of talk between … is a form of service encounter, a genre which Author A (1976: 321) describes as "QUOTATION". My own interest in… was first stimulated by the work of Author B (2000), who looks at …., and Author C & Author D (2000), who discuss the routine sequences of… In order to explore these features further, using a framework which was informed by Author E's (1987) mapping of … as well as by the two papers mentioned above, I investigated encounters between…(Myself 2001a). I found that…. More precisely,….

The role of… is similar to that of …. As my next step I therefore made a contrastive study (Myself 2001b) of the discourse of … Although the encounters were longer than those in …, the generic structure of these encounters was broadly similar to …

Knowing that there was already a substantial body of work not only on… but also on …, I wished to explore this discourse type further in a context which would satisfy my preference for research which might eventually be of practical value. I became aware that X had become important for… In addition, it had recently been proposed that…

Despite the recognition of the importance of…, it appeared that…. was neglected. There was limited uptake of…A review of the relevant literature revealed that the need to provide… better training was also seen as pressing because, like the… described by Author F (1998), many were… Author G (2004), for instance, argues that "it is of paramount importance that the QUOTATION".

In sum, although the training of Y… has developed over the last thirty years, the training of Z has remained a low priority, confirming Author H's (1999a: 217) view that "QUOTATION". It also emerged

that, despite the growing interest in… with the notable exception of the work of Author H (1999, 2000/1), who… , there had been no specific studies of…

In the light of all these points, it seemed to me that here was a context in which my own initial findings about…might be of some value.

(1.2 Description of context for her study)

1.3 Analytical framework

As already mentioned, my intention at the outset of this research was, firstly, to identify the norms and practices of…; secondly, to examine how … enact their respective social roles and identities; thirdly, to investigate the extent to which these linguistic norms and practices are implicated in the construction of and orientation to…; and fourthly to develop a means of using my findings to inform training programmes, in particular by raising awareness of ways in which the…

On this basis, four research questions were formulated:

1. What are the typical patterns of staging and sequencing in the routines used by…
2. What variations are there in the enactment of these patterns?
3. What do such variations reveal about the participants' construction and understanding of…
4. How can the findings be used to improve… training?

In order to answer these four questions it was necessary first to record and transcribe examples of… This process is described in detail in Chapter 3.

A principle of organisation also had to be found for the ensuing analysis. Each of the four research questions demanded a slightly different analytical focus. For the first two steps, in which episodes of … were categorised and organised, and different transactional stages identified, I drew both on **Theory 1**, particularly as it has been applied to service encounters (see e.g. Author G 1987; Author B 2000), and Author J's (1988) idea of activity types… while, for the next step, in which… were examined in greater detail, I used techniques derived from **Theory 2** (see e.g. Author K 1976, 1980) and the Birmingham school of… (see Author L and Author M 1975, Author N 1994). My analysis of relational patterns is based on the ideas of Author O: his notion of…, which resurfaces in **Theory 3** (e.g. Authors P and Q 1987; Author R 2000; Author S 2003), and his ideas on… **Concept 1** (1974, 1981), which have been used to develop theories relating to roles and participation… (e.g. Authors T and U 1982; Author P 1988; Author V 1993). The discussion of roles and identities is also informed by **Concept 2** (Author W, Authors X and Y 1997) and, specifically, by Author Z's (1998) proposal that…

Finally, for training models I looked to the work of Authors AA and AB (2002) and their collaborators in the field of…, Author AC (2000) for her work with… and Authors AD and AE (1997, 2000) for the general principles involved in the use of… Underpinning the whole study, there are also the extensive literatures of **Fields 1, 2 and 3**, to which I will turn in the next chapter.

1.4 Outline of thesis

In this chapter I have
   - introduced the theoretical framework on which the study is based;
   - outlined the development of my interest in…, particularly…;
   - provided background information about… in Scotland;
   - indicated what I set out to achieve in this study, and how.

The remaining chapters are organised as follows. Chapter 2 contextualises the study in the relevant literature. Chapter 3 is an account of the research methodology and method. In Chapter 4 regularities and variations in… are described, while in Chapter 5 the… patterns are reviewed, with particular emphasis on… In Chapter 6, there is analysis of the construction of… through variations in… and topic and, in Chapter 7, detailed discussion of identity construction… Finally, in Chapter 8, the implications for … training are considered in the context of a review of this study and a consideration of the social meanings which are constructed through…

2 The Literature Review

Let's begin by considering *whether you need a literature review at all*. Assuming you do, we then look at what it should contain and how it can be organised, and at alternative styles of citation.

Do you need a literature review chapter?

Harry Wolcott took a radical view of the literature review in qualitative research:

> "I expect my students to know the relevant literature, but I do not want them to lump (dump?) it all into a chapter that remains unconnected to the rest of the study. I want them to draw upon the literature selectively and appropriately as needed in the telling of their story… Ordinarily this calls for introducing related research <u>toward the end of the study</u> rather than at the beginning, except for the necessary 'nesting' of the problem in the introduction".
>
> (Wolcott 1990: 17, underlining added)

Silverman (2000: 231) quotes those words of Wolcott's, but then says that the idea of not having a literature review chapter at all may be "too radical for most students (and their supervisors!)". He goes on to add:

> "Nevertheless, even if you decide to write the conventional literature review chapter, what [Wolcott] has to say is a salutary reminder that, in writing a qualitative research dissertation, you should cite other literature only in order to connect your narrow research topic to the directly relevant concerns of the broader research community. Making wider links should properly be left to your final chapter".

Task 2.1

Do you agree with the last sentence in that quotation from Silverman?

Are you planning to have a single Literature Review chapter or more than one?

Have you talked to your supervisors about what proportion of your thesis should be devoted to the Literature Review?

Principles

The review should be "written from a particular standpoint, to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the research topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of documents in relation to the research being proposed" (Hart 1998: 13). To achieve that, Silverman advocates what he called the **four principles of literature review**:
- Show respect for the literature
- Be focused and critical
- Avoid mere description
- Write up the review after your other chapters

Review Principle 1: Show respect for the literature

> Even though you are pursuing a narrow research topic, you should not show disrespect for previous research or disconnect what you are doing from the wider debate in the field. "Even producers of literature must know the literature, and a major criterion for evaluating work is whether or not it is put in a context of prior scholarship" (Marx 1997: 106).

Review Principle 2: Be focused and critical

> Respect can only get you so far; you need to show a critical perspective on what you have read. "Approach the literature with questions and remember that your goal is to advance it, not simply to marvel at its wonders" (Marx 1997: 106).

Review principle 3: Avoid mere description

> Silverman (2000: 229) says that every supervisor "has horror stories of literature reviews which were tediously and irrelevantly descriptive", rather than analytical and critical.

> Rudestam and Newton characterise this sort of review as "a <u>laundry list</u> of previous studies, with sentences or paragraphs beginning with the words 'Smith found…', Jones concluded…', 'Anderson stated…' and so on" (1992: 46, underlining added).

> They go on to say that the background literature can be described briefly, even in a single sentence, but that the most relevant studies "need to be critiqued rather than reported" (Rudestam and Newton 1992: 49).

Review Principle 4: Write up after your other chapters

> Silverman suggests writing the literature review <u>after</u> you have done the other chapters. Isn't that rather an odd suggestion? Surely most students aim to complete their literature review before 'starting their research', don't they?

Two possible disadvantages of writing your literature review *too early* are:

- Until you have completed the analysis of your data, you may not know which parts of the literature are relevant to discussing your findings

- You may be tempted to think of the literature review as relatively easy

---

Task 2.2

Can you think of any other potential problems that might arise if you start writing your literature review too early?

Content and organisation

The literature review should provide your readers with answers to the following questions:
- What do we already know about the topic?
- What do you have to say *critically* about what is already known?
- Has anyone else done anything similar or related to what you propose?
- Where does your work fit in with what has gone before?
- Why is your research worth doing, in the light of what has already been done?

Task 2.3 – What can go wrong in a literature review?

Below are supervisors' criticisms of four students' reviews. Read them carefully and then reflect on these questions:

Did your supervisors make criticisms like those of the literature review drafts you wrote during your <u>first year</u> of research? (Did they make any *other* criticisms?)

Could any of the comments A-D apply to your <u>current</u> literature review?

A. "Your draft review is basically little more than a list of previous research papers in the field. While it is clearly well researched, it doesn't give me a sense of what has been more significant and less significant. It is hard to know where you stand".

B. "You have given a chronological account, which might be fine for an introductory textbook but doesn't work well as a preface to your own research. Although I know what your research hypothesis is, I don't see it informing your review of the previous literature. Somehow we need to see the relevant themes and issues more clearly".

C. "The first part of your review deals with theory, often invoking big names from the past. The second half deals with practice – contemporary empirical findings. At the moment I don't see a coherent relationship between the two".

D. "In general, you haven't shown clearly enough what literature is relevant, and how, to your particular research topic…. You need to prune this material drastically and to increase the space devoted to your own critical understanding of the issues, discussed in relation to what you are setting out to show…. Your line of argument and the steps that you follow in pursuing that line need to be made much clearer; you need to impose a much more transparent structure on your discussion".

(Examples A-C have been adapted from Feak & Swales, 2009: 10-11);
Example D from Lynch & Anderson, 2012: 33)

The literature review needs to be organised so it leads your readers naturally and coherently to your research objectives. The review might be in one long single chapter; it might be spread over several shorter ones. Have another look at two of the thesis outlines from Unit 1:

Abstract
1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE
2. LITERATURE REVIEW
3. METHODOLOGY
4. FINDINGS 1: WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS COURSE HAVE?
5. FINDINGS 2: PRE-COURSE FACTORS AND IMPACT
6. FINDINGS 3: PEOPLE AND LEARNING PROCESSES - THEIR RELEVANCE TO IMPACT
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Abstract
1. Introduction
2. Overviews of 'listening', 'strategy' and 'interaction'
3. Comprehension and interpretation in listening
4. Second language strategies
5. Conversational adjustments
6. The teachability of strategies
7. Task design for spoken interaction
8. Interactional listening strategies: a study
9. Results and discussion: two analyses
10. Conclusions

Task 2.4

What is different about the <u>position</u> and <u>organisation</u> of the literature review in those two theses?

Which of the two literature reviews is structured more like the one you are planning for your thesis?

Within the literature review, it may be appropriate to use an organising principle such as **general-to-specific, chronological** (narrating the development of research or debate), **problem-solution** (evaluating alternative solutions to a problem), or **contrasting theories or procedures, etc.** (describing and evaluating alternatives).

Although the overall organisation of your review chapter(s) may be thematic, it may be appropriate to use some of those patterns above for <u>different parts</u> of your review. You may also choose to combine aspects of more than one pattern- for example, a discussion of *alternative theories or procedures* may have a historical (*chronological*) dimension; it might also be seen as a chain of *solutions* (based on previous theories or procedures) to the *problem*.

Citation styles

Your major decisions in *planning* your literature review are therefore <u>what</u> to include from previous research and <u>where</u> / <u>in which order</u> to mention it. When it comes to *writing up* the final draft of your review, you also have to decide <u>how</u> to include your citations – whether to quote directly from your source or whether to summarise (or paraphrase). You also need to decide <u>which related studies</u> you should discuss as a group, and which studies you should discuss alone.

There are two basic styles of citation:

1. **Integral citations** tend to focus the readers' attention more on the researcher and rather less on the research. For that reason they are also known as **author prominent** citations*.*

> <u>*Cutrone (2005) found that*</u> *the tendency of Japanese learners of English to avoid confrontation, by providing regular positive backchannelling, caused frustration in their native English conversational partners, who were unable to decide whether or not their message was really being understood.*

> <u>*Read's (2002) study compared*</u> *one-way, scripted and two-way, unscripted versions of an EAP listening test.*

> <u>*Miller (2002) examined*</u> *lectures from an ethnographic or generic perspective, but did not empirically assess how the discourse features so far identified might impact on listener's comprehension.*

2. Conversely, **non-integral citations** focus attention more on the research and less on the individual researchers involved. They are also known as **research prominent** or **information prominent** citations*.*

> *The role of students' note-taking in helping to make lecture content 'memorable' has long been a focus of applied linguistic research (e.g. Dunkel & Davy, 1989; Chaudron, Loschky & Cook, 1994).*

> *When the requirement to understand is combined with the need to produce, as it is in university tutorials and discussions, the international students' feelings of inadequacy and frustration are exacerbated (e.g. Leki, 2001; Liu, 2001; Morita, 2004).*

Task 2.5

Study the review extract below and look for answers to these questions:

1. Which did the student use more – **author prominent** or **research prominent** citation?

2. Which did she use more - **direct quotation** or **summary**?

(Some expressions have been highlighted in bold. We will come back to them later)

Collaborative learning: The socio-cultural perspective

As we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, metacognitive and cognitive strategies can promote foreign language reading performance, and text simplification is likely to produce more accessible texts for foreign language readers. In this chapter, **I will extend my review of** the theoretical framework underlying the design of my learning and teaching tasks, which are intended to encourage learners' foreign language development.

Introduction
Research on collaborative interaction in language learning classrooms **has drawn on** Vygotsky's (1978) notions of the *zone of proximal development*, *scaffolding*, and *private speech*, which **are claimed to** play an important role in facilitating foreign language   learners' language learning processes (de Guerrero & Villamil, 1994; 2000; Ewald, 2005; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Ohta, 1995; 2001; Oxford, 1997). **According to** Oxford (1997), collaborative learning, which has a strong connection with socio-cultural theory, centres on the notion that an individual's knowledge comes from communication with others.

The term *collaborative learning* **used in this study conveys a distinct meaning** from the term *cooperative learning*. That is, **following Oxford** (1997), cooperative learning **tends to be** more structured and is intended to enhance learners' cognitive, communicative as well as social skills in the target language, whereas collaborative learning **appears to be** less structured and attempts to engage learners through social interactions into knowledge communities. Oxford (1997) **defines** collaborative learning, which is relevant to the context of the study—in which students of mixed ability discuss the meaning of foreign language texts in small group activity— **as**:

> "*Collaborative learning is a reacculturative process that helps students become members of the knowledge communities whose common property is different from the common property of knowledge communities they already belong to*" (p.444).

Donato (2004) **emphasises** that collaborative work involves "a meaningful core activity and the social relations that develop as a result of jointly constructed goals for the common endeavour" (p.286). Collaboration, **in Donato's view**, also refers to the acceptance of members' contributions to the activity and the establishment of intersubjectivity within groups. **This notion is intended to distinguish** *collaboration* **from** the commonly-used term *interaction*, or what he calls "*loosely knit configurations of individuals*" (Donato, 2004, p.298).

In the next three sections, I will discuss three interrelated areas grounded on Vygotsky's theory—'*the zone of proximal development*', '*scaffolding*', and '*private speech*'—followed by studies on collaborative interactions in foreign language learning contexts.

Zone of proximal development

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the metaphor **Vygotsky (1978) proposed** as a way to explain the process of an individual's internalisation of knowledge and skills through social forms of mediation. More specifically, **the ZPD refers to** the distance between one's actual development achieved by oneself and one's potential future development through the assistance of the expert or more skillful peers (Cole, 1985; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Leontiev, 1987; Rogoff, 1995; van Lier, 1996). Vygotsky (1978) **characterised** the notion of the ZPD as follows:

> "*An essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement*" (p.90).

Again, Vygotsky **referred to** the actual development level, already established in the child's mental functions, and the level of potential development, which **is built up** by guided support from more capable individuals through problem solving activity (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p.266). The assistance from others eventually **becomes** one's self-regulation; in other words, through the support from others, an individual or learner **can** over an extended period **move** from other-regulation to self-regulation

(Ohta, 2001). **This process** of gradually moving from depending on others' guidance to becoming more independent in manipulating one's own language use and mental activity **is called** '*internalisation*' (Donato, 1994; Wertsch, 1985). **Vygotsky's notion** of how knowledge is internalised **is regarded as 'outside-in'**, because once interaction or relationships with others are established, knowledge **can** then **be** internalised, constituting the process of cognitive development.

For Vygotsky, these processes of internalisation **entail two crucial stages** of developmental learning: (1) the stage related to the social level and (2) the one related to the individual level. The social level **primarily involves** interactions between individuals, whereas the latter **concerns** the inner part of the individual. Vygotsky (1978, p.57) proposed that:

> "*Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals*".

Wertsch and Stone (1985) **emphasised the importance of** Vygotskian developmental theory in the educational context **and argued that** all developmental processes occurred from social processes and then internal functioning. **They summarised their views** on the internalisation processes as follows:

> "*We will argue, however, that the Vygotskian formulation involves two unique premises. First, for Vygotsky, internalisation is primarily concerned with social processes. Second, Vygotsky's account is based largely on an analysis of the semiotic mechanism, especially language, that mediates social and individual functioning. Thus, internalisation is viewed as part of a larger picture concerned with how consciousness emerges out of human social life. The overall developmental scheme begins with external social activity and ends with internal individual activity*" (Wertsch and Stone, 1985, p. 164).

We therefore need to take into consideration both the external (social) and the internal (individual) when it comes to the basic idea of internalisation, or individual development through social interaction (Donato, 1994; Oxford, 1997; Wertsch & Stone, 1985).

The concept of the ZPD and internalisation **has played a key role in** both psychology and pedagogies, including foreign language instruction. In order to integrate the notion of the ZPD into foreign language pedagogy, van Lier (1996) **argues** that the teacher needs to be advised to ensure that all kinds of teaching take place in the ZPD through pedagogical scaffolding. Likewise, Ellis (2003, p.180) **views the ZPD as the crucial construct** in language learning, because it **provides an insight into** why learners do not succeed in acquiring and using some foreign language structures, despite external forms of mediation; why they are able to use some structures with the support from others, but not independently; and how learners' internalisation process occurs.

In the next sections I turn first to the specific role of *scaffolding* within Vygotsky's socio-cultural view of foreign language instruction and then to the notion of *private speech*.

Task 2.6

Apart from citations using a verb, you can use a number of <u>citing phrases</u>, such as **<u>According to</u>** + <u>author's name</u>. They tend to occur at the start of a sentence.

Look again at the *Collaborative Learning* extract and see how many you can find.

Tense choice in citation verbs

Feak & Swales (2009: 51-52) offer what they call *general guidelines* for tense usage in the literature review. But they make the point that a writer's choice of tense is subtle and flexible; tense choice is not a question of grammatical rules but of appropriacy to academic norms – and to nuances of meaning.

I. Past Simple tense: for reference to a single study (often an integral citation of researcher activity, but also to research findings)

> Arslan (2007) **investigated** the performance characteristics of biodiesel as an engine fuel.

> The performance characteristics of biodiesel as an engine fuel **were investigated** by Arslan (2007).

> Biodiesel **was shown** to have strong performance characteristics as an engine fuel (Arslan 2007).

II. Present Perfect tense: for reference to an Area of Research (generally non-integral citations)

> The potential of biodiesel as an alternative to regular diesel **has been** widely **investigated** (Savage 2005; Pinnarat 2006; Arslan 2007).

> There **have been** several investigations of the potential of biodiesel as an alternative to regular diesel (Savage 2005; Pinnarat 2006; Arslan 2007).

> Many studies **have investigated** the potential of biodiesel as an alternative to regular diesel (Savage 2005; Pinnarat 2006; Arslan 2007).

III. Present tense: for reference to Generally Accepted Knowledge in the field

> The scarcity of known petroleum reserves **makes** (*or* in this case, **is making**) renewable energy resources increasingly attractive (Savage 2005; Pinnarat 2006; Arslan 2007).

Task 2.7

The text below is an extract from the Literature Review we looked at just now.
Does the student's choice of tenses fit the guidelines that Feak & Swales proposed?
This time, concentrate on the verbs in **bold**.

Zone of proximal development

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) **is** the metaphor **Vygotsky (1978) proposed** as a way to explain the process of an individual's internalisation of knowledge and skills through social forms of mediation. More specifically, **the ZPD refers to** the distance between one's actual development achieved by oneself and one's potential future development through the assistance of the expert or more skillful peers (Cole, 1985; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Leontiev, 1987; Rogoff, 1995; van Lier, 1996). Vygotsky (1978) **characterised** the notion of the ZPD as follows:

> "*An essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement*" (p.90).

Again, Vygotsky **referred to** the actual development level, already established in the child's mental functions, and the level of potential development, which **is** built up by guided support from more capable individuals through problem solving activity (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p.266). The assistance from others eventually **becomes** one's self-regulation; in other words, through the support from others, an individual or learner **can** over an extended period **move** from other-regulation to self-regulation (Ohta, 2001). **This process** of gradually moving from depending on others' guidance to becoming more independent in manipulating one's own language use and mental activity **is called** '*internalisation*' (Donato, 1994; Wertsch, 1985). **Vygotsky's notion** of how knowledge is internalised **is regarded as 'outside-in'**, because once interaction or relationships with others are established, knowledge **can** then **be** internalised, constituting the process of cognitive development.

Choice of reporting verb

Using a variety of reporting verbs will help you to make your writing more interesting for the readers. Although there are as many as 400 reporting verbs in English (Hyland 1999), in practice a much smaller number of verbs tend to predominate. Their relative frequency of use varies from discipline to discipline, as the table below shows.

Field	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6
Marketing	*suggest*	*argue*	*find*	*demonstrate*	*propose*	*show*
Linguistics	*suggest*	*argue*	*show*	*explain*	*find*	*point out*
Psychology	*find*	*show*	*suggest*	*report*	*demonstrate*	*focus on*
Sociology	*argue*	*suggest*	*describe*	*note*	*analyse*	*discuss*
Education	*find*	*suggest*	*note*	*report*	*demonstrate*	*provide*
Philosophy	*say*	*suggest*	*argue*	*claim*	*point out*	*think*

Task 2.8

Is your field one of the six shown in the table? (If not, focus on the discipline which you think is most closely related to yours).

Does the ranking of frequency match your experience as a reader of papers in the field? If not, which verb would you have expected to be the most frequently used?

Reporting verbs: their grammar and your attitude

> This section has been adapted from a text prepared for use at the University of Toronto by Martine Johnson, and revised in 2004 by Rebecca Smollett, Margaret Procter, and Jerry Plotnick. The University of Toronto offers a range of other very useful materials and advice at http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/english-as-a-second-language
>
> If you haven't already visited the website, I strongly recommend that you do.

There is a wide choice of reporting verbs in English and each requires one of four different grammatical patterns. Check through the Toronto lists and see whether the information matches the way you thought each verb works grammatically.

Pattern 1: Reporting verb + *that* + Subject + Verb

acknowledge	admit	agree	allege	argue	assert
assume	believe	claim	conclude	consider	decide
demonstrate	deny	determine	discover	doubt	emphasize
explain	find	hypothesize	imply	indicate	note
object	observe	point out	prove	reveal	say
show	state	suggest	think		

> *(a) Da Souza **argues that previous researchers have misinterpreted** the data.*
>
> *(b) Researchers **have demonstrated that the procedure is** harmful.*
>
> *(c) Positivists **find that social disorders are exacerbated by** class factors.*
>
> *(d) Singh **asserts that both states are essential**.*

Note that these verbs all differ in meaning—they cannot be used interchangeably. For example, the verb **argue** in sample sentence (a) indicates your judgement that the author's conclusion is based on evidence and reasoning, but that *other conclusions might be possible*.

On the other hand, the verb **demonstrate** in sentence (b) indicates your judgement that the researchers' evidence and reasoning are so convincing that *no other conclusion is possible.*

N.B. Some verbs in this category may also appear in a subordinate clause beginning with **As**:

> (e) **As** Da Souza **argues**, misinterpretations by previous researchers need to be corrected.
>
> (f) **As** researchers **have demonstrated**, the procedure is harmful.

This use of **As** conveys the impression that you accept the author's view, regardless of the reporting verb you choose.

Pattern 2: Reporting verb + Noun phrase

discuss   express   examine   describe   present   evaluate
criticise   define

(a) Cameron describes one such strategy.

(b) Clegg discusses the advantages of membership of the European Union.

Pattern 3: Reporting verb + somebody/something + *for* + noun/*-ing*

blame   censure   condemn   criticise   praise   thank

(a) Smith **criticized Jones** for his **use** of incomplete data (OR for using incomplete data).

(b) Both Smith and Jones **condemn previous researchers** for **distorting** the data.

(c) Banting **thanked Bristow** for his **contribution to** the discovery of insulin.

Pattern 4: Reporting verb + somebody/something + *as* + noun/*-ing*/*-ed*/adjective

appraise   assess   characterize   classify   define
depict   describe   evaluate   identify   interpret
portray   present   refer (to)   regard   view

(a) Jones **describes** the **findings as based on** irrefutable evidence.

(b) Smith **identified** the open **window as** the **source** of contamination.

(c) Benson and Anderson both **described** their **findings as tentative**.

Task 2.9

The fact that some of the verbs in those four lists express the attitude (critical distance, doubt, certainty) of the student/writer choosing them is obviously very important. You need to know which verbs will convey those attitudes to your readers.

As we said, if you use the verb 'argue' it suggests you think other conclusions are possible; if you choose 'demonstrate', it suggests you think no other interpretation is possible.

> Which verbs in the various lists do you think work like 'argue'? Circle them.
> Which ones work like 'demonstrate'? Underline them.

Writing up your thesis

You have now reached the end of the Tasks for this unit on the Literature Review. You can now apply the ideas and language from this unit to drafting or revising the relevant chapter(s) for your thesis:

Principles
- Show respect for the literature
- Be focused and critical
- Avoid mere description

Need for clear **organisation** criteria in ordering your sections

Citation styles
- Author prominent
- Research prominent
- Opening expressions (e.g. *According to*)

Tense choice
- Past
- Present Perfect
- Present

Reporting verb choice
- check grammatical structure
- take care over 'verbs with attitude'

You may also find it helpful to visit these webpages for further examples of written academic English relevant to reviewing previous research and to evaluating that work critically:

http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/sources.htm

http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/critical.htm

Appendix to Unit 2

Sample

Here is a longer extract (from a student's thesis draft), which may help to get you thinking about ways of developing your discussion of a <u>key concept</u> in your literature review.

In this section below, the student addresses the notion of 'social presence' in the context of her study of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in foreign language learning courses.

Here are some suggestions for what you could look for in her review section:

Her use of **citation style**, verb **tense** and **verb choice**.

Does the sequence of sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 help readers to follow the case she is making? What seems to be her organising principle?

Do you think she manages to avoid excessive repetition of expressions or structures?

2.3 Social presence

In this section, I discuss the concept of social presence, its connection with computer-mediated communication (CMC), and its influence in education.

2.3.1 The concept of social presence

Social presence theory was developed by Short, Williams, and Christie (1976) at a time before CMC had been conceptualized. They defined social presence as the "degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships" (Short et al., 1976: 65). With its main focus on telephony and telephone conferencing, social presence theory was developed to explain the impacts of a communication medium on the way people communicate and interact.

According to Short et al. (1976), social presence was an attribute of a communication medium. They speculated that communication media differ in their degree of social presence, which is determined by a medium's "capacity to transmit information about facial expression, direction of looking, posture, dress and nonverbal cues" (Short et al., 1976:65). For them, some communication media are perceived by communicators as having a higher degree of social presence (e.g., video) than others.

The origin of social presence lies in two social psychology concepts: intimacy (Argyle & Dean, 1965) and immediacy (Wiener & Mehrabian, 1968). Intimacy is "a joint function of eye-contact, physical proximity, intimacy of topic, smiling, etc." (Argyle & Dean, 1965: 293). According to Argyle and Dean's (1965) intimacy equilibrium theory, changes in one dimension, e.g. increasing physical proximity, will result in compensatory changes in the other dimensions. For example, "reducing eye-contact makes greater proximity possible, and that greater proximity reduces eye-contact" (Argyle & Dean, 1965:304).

Immediacy refers to "the relationship between the speaker and the objects he communicates about, the addressee of his communication, or the communication itself" (Wiener & Mehrabian, 1968:3). It is generated by both verbal and nonverbal behaviours (Gunawardena, 1995). Two forms of immediacy are distinguished: technological immediacy and social immediacy (Tu, 2001). Technological immediacy can be achieved by transmission of the maximum amount of information; social immediacy can be conveyed by speech with its associated verbal and non verbal cues.

Short et al., (1976) hypothesized that language may replace or even overcompensate for missing nonverbal information. In their teleconference research, they noticed that reduction of cues caused participants to change their behaviour. This principle of cue substitutability, supported by Argyle and Dean's equilibrium theory, suggests that other symbol systems can be adopted by communicators in order to express affective messages in contexts where nonverbal cues are unavailable (Gunawardena, 1995), such as is the case in text-based CMC.

2.3.2. Social presence and CMC

Communication researchers started applying social presence theory to CMC in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Lowenthal, 2009). The theory has had a considerable effect on CMC research over the years, and social presence is now considered a key concept in determining the level of interaction and the effectiveness of learning in an online environment (Garrison et al., 2000; Lobry de Bruyn, 2004).

The concept has been redefined by some CMC researchers. For Gunawardena (1995), social presence is "the degree to which a person is perceived as a 'real person' in mediated communication" (p.151). Garrison et al. (2000) defined social presence as "the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as 'real' people (i.e., their full personality), through the media of communication being used" (p.94). For Picciano (2002), social presence in an online course "refers to a student's sense of being in and belonging in a course and the ability to interact with other students and an instructor although physical contact is not available" (p.22). Tu and McIsaac (2002) characterised social presence as "the degree of feeling, perception, and reaction of being connected by CMC to another intellectual entity through a text-base encounter" (p.140).

Visual cues are critical to the establishment of social presence in face-to-face contexts (Garrison et al., 2000) and their absence can result in unemotional or undersocial communication (Walther & Burgoon, 1992). Hiltz (1994) noted that the lack of nonverbal cues in written CMC may limit information that serves to enhance other communicators' perception, to regulate social interaction, and to provide a social context for communication. Social presence is especially important in text-based settings, where nonverbal cues that help to establish and maintain social presence through recognition are not available (Garrison et al., 2000:100)

Tu and McIsaac (2002) examined social presence in an online learning environment, where the participants were 51 graduate level students. Their findings suggested that social contexts - such as familiarity with recipients, informal relationships, better trust relationships, personally informative relationships, positive psychological attitude towards technology and more private locations - positively influence learners' perception of social presence.

Privacy also influences the degree of social presence (Tu, 2001). The level of privacy is influenced by CMC users' perception in addition to the actual quality of security of CMC systems (Tu, 2002b). When users perceive less privacy in a setting where they access CMC, their perception of social presence decreases. (Tu, 2001). In Tu and McIsaac's (2002) study, the participants ranked e-mail as the most private system and bulletin board as the least private. One-to-one real time discussion is considered more private than many-to-many real time discussion. CMC users who have a better knowledge of computer systems will perceive low privacy because of insecurity of the systems (Tu, 2002b).

2.3.3. Social presence and education

Social presence is a key factor in improving the effectiveness of educational processes (Gunawardena, 1995; Ubon & Kimble, 2003), "as it helps increase social interaction, encourage learning satisfaction, initiate in-depth discussions and promote collaborative learning" (Ubon & Kimble, 2003:2). Social presence can "support the cognitive and affective objectives of learning" (p.3). When learners perceive a higher degree of social presence, they are more likely to engage in higher order critical thinking (Garrison et al., 2000; Rourke et al., 1999) and to be more satisfied with their learning experience (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997).

Visual cues are an essential aspect of establishing social presence in face-to-face learning settings. Providing multiple nonverbal or paralinguistic cues, oral communication in a face-to-face environment is a rich medium (Garrison et al., 2000). Social climates created by CMC are different from those in a traditional face-to-face classroom. Even two-way interactive video and audio media - which can transmit facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice - create interaction patterns that are different from face-to-face communication patterns (Gunawardena, 1995).

Bruce (1996) claimed that image quality, resolution and synchrony may influence the use of facial information in video communication. He argued that temporal information possibly conveys "subtleties in the timing of expressions and gaze which could be important for their interpretation" (p.174). So when the video frame rate is low and/or the audio channel is slow in compensating for delays caused by video compression, interpersonal perception may suffer.

O'Malley et al. (1996) found evidence to support Bruce's view. They examined performance on a map task with learners participating in three experiments, which focused on the possible effects of (1) video-mediated versus audio-only interaction, (2) size of video image and (3) timing delays. Findings of the first two experiments showed that the learners in video-mediated interaction had to say more to achieve the same level of task performance than those in audio-only interaction. The results of the third experiment showed that the 'delay' factor in both video and audio interactions produced interruptions, which created problems in turn-taking management, and that the learners in the video communication group gazed far more than their face-to-face peers. The researchers concluded that remote communication, no matter whether visual cues are available or not, makes learners more cautious.

When a medium is used for an educational purpose, teachers have to ask whether the chosen communication channels are beneficial to students' quality of learning. The application of text-based CMC in education may be more questionable, in terms of the level of social presence, than audio and video CMC. When cues are fewer, social presence is lower, and when social presence decreases, so does the sense of community (Rovai, 2002). Students who perceive a higher degree of social presence in a community will be more willing to participate actively in group and community activities.

Aragon (2003) proposed further strategies to establish and maintain social presence within online environments. Unlike other researchers, who placed the main responsibility of creating social presence on instructors, he divided the responsibility of establishing and maintaining social presence in an online course between three roles: course designers, instructors and participants.

Table 2.5   Aragon's (2003) strategies to establish and maintain social presence

Course Design	Instructors	Participants
Develop welcome messages	Contribute to discussion boards	Contribute to discussion boards
Include student profiles	Promptly answer e-mail	Promptly answer e-mail
Incorporate audio	Provide frequent feedback	Strike up a conversation
Limit class size	Strike up a conversation	Share personal stories and experiences
Structure collaborative learning activities	Share personal stories and experiences	Use humour
	Use humour	Use emoticons
	Use emoticons	Use appropriate titles
	Address students by name	
	Allow students options for addressing the instructor	

In sum, online language teachers need to be aware of the impact of social presence on different learning situations before selecting a communication medium for a course. Without this knowledge, they will not be able to have their learners and themselves pay attention to the use of strategies to establish and maintain social presence.

3 Methodology

(In this unit I use the word *Methodology* as a general term to cover whatever you decide to include in the chapter where you discuss alternative methodological approaches, justify your chosen research method, and describe the process and participants in your study).

The Methodology chapter is perhaps the part of a qualitative thesis that is most unlike its equivalent in a quantitative study. Students doing quantitative research have an established conventional 'model' to work to, which comprises these possible elements:

- Overview of the Experiment/Design
- Population/Sample
- Location
- Restrictions/Limiting Conditions
- Sampling Technique
- Procedures
- Materials
- Variables
- Statistical Treatment

(If your research adopts a mixed-methods approach, then you will also find that model useful for the quantitative chapters).

However, for students writing up an exclusively qualitative thesis, the shape of the methodology chapter is less clear-cut:

"the straightforward character of a quantitative methods chapter unfortunately does not spill over into qualitative research reports. At first sight, this simply is a matter of different language. So, in reporting qualitative studies, we do not talk about 'statistical analysis' or 'research instruments'. But these linguistic differences also reflect broader practical and theoretical differences between qualitative and qualitative research. More particularly, in writing up qualitative research, we need to recognise:

- the (contested) theoretical underpinnings of methodologies
- the (often) contingent nature of the data chosen
- the (likely) non-random character of cases studied

(Silverman 2000: 234)

Task 3.1

Can you explain what Silverman means by 'contested underpinnings', 'contingent data' and 'non-random cases'?

Do those terms apply to the methodological approach you have adopted in your research?

Silverman's advice on the best way to deal with these three potentially problematic aspects of writing up qualitative research is to:

- Make explicit what your theoretical assumptions are
- Spell out the factors that made you choose to work with your particular data
- Explain how you can extrapolate from your study site to other contexts

Murcott (1997) argues that the key questions for the qualitative methodology chapter are:

How did you go about your research?
What overall strategy did you adopt and why?
What design and techniques did you use?
Why those and not others?

In his map *Written study, structure and functions*, which we looked at (page 3) in Unit 1, Adrian Holliday says qualitative writing requires coverage of the following issues:

In the 'Research Methodology' section:
- How you position yourself in relation to current and past discussion within which your research methodology is located

In the section on 'Description of Research Procedure':
- How you chose your core setting and relevant peripheral data sources
- What the readers need to know about the research setting
- How you developed a research strategy that is appropriate for the setting
- How you proceeded in gaining access and collecting data
- What you did as research activities and what data you collected
- How you have structured your analysis and arrived at your choice of themes and headings
- What your system is for representing the data, e.g. coding, referencing, anonymising

---

Task 3.2
Study Murcott's and Holliday's questions. Do you think all of Murcott's questions are covered in Holliday's list?

Task 3.3
On the next two pages are the headings used by two PhD students in their qualitative Methodology chapters. (The 'practices' mentioned in the second thesis refer to medical practices, or health centres, where she carried out her study)

Decide whether you think the students have addressed Holliday's questions.

Has either of them covered *other* issues that were not included in Holliday's list?

Chapter 3. Research methodology and method

          3.4.3 Patient confidentiality
          3.4.4 Research assistants
          3.4.5 Audio-recording

     3.5 Ethnography
          3.5.1 Practices
          3.5.2 Receptionists
          3.5.3 Patients

     3.6 Organisation of data
          3.6.1 Transcription
          3.6.2 Categories of interaction

Task 3.4

The first student's *Research Methods* chapter was 34 pages long; the second student's *Research Methodology and Method* chapter was 47 pages.

Compare their coverage with what <u>you</u> have drafted, or plan to include, in your Methodology chapter. Do you think they wrote <u>too much</u>?

Have you discussed chapter lengths with your supervisors?

On this issue of length and detail, Holliday (2007: 53, underlining added) has written:

> Qualitative researchers… can easily underestimate the need for detail in their description of procedure, thus overlooking an important aspect of the demonstration of rigour. One area that requires such detail is the <u>degree of engagement with the setting</u>… Honarbin-Holliday, in her study of two Iranian art departments, demonstrates the rigour of her engagement in the section of her thesis entitled 'Deconstructing the researcher's methodological behaviours' as follows:
>
> > "The process of collecting data depends on meticulous timekeeping and constant planning and re-planning, always looking ahead in order to be ready for diversions. It is my experience that diversions do emerge and no matter how well prepared, events do not necessarily develop according to plan… The fact was that I felt privileged to be a researching artist, and since I had been given the permission to be at these institutions I wished to adopt strategies that would enable me to use my time in the best possible way. Making sure that I would arrive a few minutes earlier, and leave when the staff and students did, helped my status as a colleague, and a co-worker. I kept to a schedule of two full days per week at Tehran University and two mornings, or one morning and one afternoon, at Al-Zahra University. These could not always be the same days, since different tutors came on different days. I did try to keep at least one day per week at Tehran University, and one afternoon at Al-Zahra University, as a constant. These became my days when the students or the tutors could locate me on the campuses, should they wish to discuss particular issues".
> >
> > (Honarbin-Holliday 2005: 47-48)

Task 3.5

Do you plan to describe your research setting in such detail?
Which part of your Methodology chapter will be the most detailed – and why?

Language in the qualitative methodology chapter

Different use of language in the Methodology chapters of qualitative and quantitative theses reflects the different assumptions of the two broad approaches to academic research. In their book on writing up experimental research, Weissberg & Buker (1990) were able to state that "several grammatical conventions <u>govern</u> the method section… These concern choosing the correct verb tense and verb voice" (1990: 97, underlining added).

Notice that the word *govern* implies a fixed and strict set of rules. They went on to say:

> The procedures you use in carrying out your study should be described in the Simple Past tense. Sentences included under Method that are not written in the Past tense usually do not refer to the procedures used in the study being reported. Instead, they may describe standard procedures that are commonly used by others…
>
> You can use either the Active or the Passive voice when you describe the procedure:
>
> - *We applied stress to the rubber segments in gradually increasing increments*
> - *Stress was applied to the rubber segments in gradually increasing increments*
>
> The Passive voice is used to describe procedure in order to <u>depersonalise</u> the information. The Passive construction allows you to omit the agent (usually "I" or "we"), placing the emphasis on the procedure and how it was done.
>
> (Weissberg & Buker 1990: 101)

Since qualitative research recognises, and even <u>foregrounds</u>, the role played by individuals – the researcher, the informants and other participants – we might expect that the verb voice used in the methodology chapter will be Active rather than Passive, in order to make the description **less personal**.

A second important function of the Passive in English is to do with **information sequence**. In written English it is the norm for <u>old</u> (or *known*) information to come towards the beginning of the sentence and for <u>new</u> information to come later. The Passive voice provides a mechanism for doing that. Compare these two versions of the same text – which seems to flow better?

Version A:

> *There are 188,000 lakes in Finland. Many people are now very concerned about them. Chemicals have polluted most of the larger lakes. A Finnish government report recently confirmed this.*

Version B:

> *There are 188,000 lakes in Finland. They are now a cause of concern to many people. **Most of the larger lakes** <u>have been polluted</u> by chemicals. **This** <u>was recently confirmed</u> by a Finnish government report.*

The reason why Version B sounds more natural is that all four sentences have the old information before new; in the case of the third and fourth sentences that is achieved by making the old information the Subject of <u>a Passive verb.</u>

> **Task 3.6**
> In the Methodology section below, the student was writing about issues of access to the health centres where she carried out her research.
>
> Did she use the Passive at all? If you can find any cases of verbs in the Passive voice, underline them, and decide why you think she chose to use that voice.

3.4.2 Access

The problem of access was twofold. First there was the question of physical access to practices, which have tight security and are designed to keep out intruders. For example, arriving at the first practice I attended early on a mid-December morning, I found myself in a cold, wet car park before daylight, unable to get in to the practice to set up my equipment before the front doors opened to patients because the back door was also locked and had no bell. This also happened at the second practice, though in better weather conditions. By the time I approached the third practice, experience had taught me that it would be better to begin recording just after the front door was opened.

The second problem of access related to when it was appropriate either to ask questions of receptionists which would clarify work practices or simply to engage in rapport-building chit-chat while present at the front desk. At the first practice I began by asking questions during periods when the receptionists were not occupied with patients, either directly or on the telephone. However, I quickly realised that the receptionists had to use these quiet periods to complete paperwork and other tasks resulting from encounters with patients and, thereafter, remained silent unless spoken to, listing questions to ask when receptionist were off duty. This was made easier by the fact that both practice and reception managers at the first two practices had allocated large amounts of their time to giving me detailed explanations of how reception desks were run and also invited me to seek further information from them whenever I wished. This extensive coverage also proved useful later at the third practice, where only a short explanation of practice procedures was given in advance by the practice manager, although one of the receptionists at the practice also provided a running commentary on work practices.

> **CAUTION!**
> **Although in this unit I have chosen extracts from successful PhD theses where the student writers adopted a personal style in the methodology chapter, you should bear in mind that even the qualitative researchers, such as Silverman, who advocate this style recommend that you check with your supervisors whether it is advisable to adopt it, in the context of your particular study, your School's norms, and the conventions of the field:**
>
> > "Some universities… still have a pretty fixed idea of what a methodology chapter (or section) should contain. Therefore it is worth discussing with your [supervisors] whether a 'natural history' format is appropriate to describe the methodology that you have chosen".
> >
> > (Silverman 2000: 236)

Writing up your thesis

You have now reached the end of the Tasks for this unit on the Methodology chapter. You can now apply the ideas and language from this unit to drafting or revising that chapter for your thesis.

You may also find it helpful to visit this website for further examples of written academic English relevant for describing and discussing your methodological approach:

http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/methods.htm

Appendix to Unit 3

Methodology chapter sample

The extract below illustrates a PhD candidate's use of a mixture of 'personal'/Active and 'impersonal'/Passive in the *Procedure* section of her methodology chapter. I have highlighted the Active expressions and put the Passives in bold.

In each case, decide whether you think it would be <u>possible</u> to replace the expression with a first-person Active verb (with "I").

Then decide whether you think it would be <u>necessary</u> or <u>more appropriate</u> to do so.

4.3.3 Procedure

My research adopted a case study approach. The 12 voluntary participants **were divided into three groups** (Group 1, 2, 3). Four of them **were paired with** a partner they were not familiar with before the study.

At the beginning of week 4, all the participants **were required to** do the first task with their assigned partner through instant exchanging in an online text-based CMC environment. Then, they saved their MSN 'written' exchanges by copying and pasting them to a word processing program and sent me the file at the end of the week 4. I corrected and marked their written exchanges and sent them back individually by email. I also provided the learners with explicit feedback with explanations of the errors they made in written records in a later face-to-face session.

After receiving feedback, students in Group 1 and 2 carried out the first task orally with their partner in voice-based CMC environments (Group 1 with the use of microphones and webcams; Group 2 with the use of microphones only); students in Group 3 carried out the same oral activities in a face-to-face environment in week 6.

All the participants had to record their spoken performances. Participants in the two synchronous groups recorded their online spoken practice using Audacity software, which was free for downloading and **was provided** on the class website. They **were required to** familiarize themselves before the study with the software by following the user instructions given on the website. Participants in Group 3 **were asked to** record their face-to-face spoken practice by using an MP3 player. All the participants needed to submit their sound files to me by email. And then they **were invited to** repeat their spoken activities publicly in the subsequent face-to-face sessions.

After listening to the files of each pair, each pair **was given** their marks and feedback by email, pointing out each learner's pronunciation and grammar errors. I also asked the learners to practise those common pronunciation errors that appeared in their sound files in the following face-to-face sessions after pointing out the errors most of them made and providing them with correct sounds for those errors.

All the participants had to receive instruction in regular face-to-face sessions and then practised given tasks at an appointed time after the classes. Dörnyei (2001a) claims that "making the teaching materials relevant for the learners" (p.29) is one strategy classroom teachers can use to generate students' initial motivation. He suggested that teachers can discover the topics students want to learn and build them into the curriculum as far as possible (Dörnyei, 2001b). Following his suggestion, I provided a number of topics to the participants and had them select their favourite topics at the first session of the course. Then I created course materials **which were based on** the learners' topic selection.

Some French learning websites **were also chosen** to be teaching content of the course and presented to learners in the classroom. The use of these authentic materials **was intended to** make French 'real' to the participants and therefore enhance their language–related values and attitudes (Dörnyei, 2001b).

The semester constituted cycles of three-week practice on three tasks. The task practice procedures and task content **were posted** on the class website in order that learners could follow the design of the study and complete the tasks appropriately. Additionally, they **were invited to** post questions or share information on the classroom bulletin board, where I provided course-related information for those students who were absent from the classes or who learned slowly during the classes to catch up with the course outside the classroom.

4   Your Data Chapters

Tools for discussing your data

Biggam (2011) discusses the various tools and techniques available to describe and analyse research data: tables, graphics, diagrams and statistical analysis for quantitative data; and, in the case of qualitative data, such tools as interview transcripts, informants' texts (e.g. diaries and blogs) and field notes.

Task 4.1
What forms of data are you using in your thesis?

A typical qualitative data chapter might comprise the following elements:

Introduction
- Scene-setting for the chapter, explaining the general area(s) to be covered
- Locating the gap in knowledge which the chapter addresses
- Explaining how the chapter fills that gap
- Providing an overview of what is in the chapter

Main section
- Relating themes/findings to the relevant research literature
- Presenting (extracts from) the data
- Describing/summarising that data
- Interpreting the data, using illustrative examples

Conclusion
- Concise summary of the main findings

Task 4.2: Introduction to a data chapter

In this session we will be discussing a sample data chapter extract (in Appendix A on pages 42-53). It comes from a study of ways in which international students and a British teacher 'co-construct' the discourse of their English lessons and play different participant roles in that process.

First, study the ten lines of the Introduction (section 6.0). Which of these potential elements does the student include?
- Scene-setting for the chapter
- The gap in knowledge
- How the chapter addresses that gap
- Overview of the chapter

Task 4.3: The 'research story'

In Unit 1 we looked at the notion of three story types that a researcher can adopt when writing up a qualitative study. Which of the three types do you find in the Data Chapter sample:
- a Hypothesis Story
- an Analytical Story
- a Mystery Story?

Task 4.4: Relating your data discussion to the research literature

In the Data Chapter extract, look in particular at the places where the student refers to previous work, which I have underlined. At what stages in her data discussion does she mention these various studies?

Caution in interpretation

The interpretation of qualitative data involves questioning the basis for our assumptions; in a quantitative study, such 'questions' may be answered statistically. So in your data discussion you have to take care over the degree of certainty you express when offering reasons for why things are as they are in your data, and when interpreting your research findings.

This cautious aspect of academic writing is known as **hedging**. We talk about hedged claims being *'tentative', 'limited', 'moderate'* or *'modest'*. On the other hand, claims that are stronger than the data permits are said to be *'overstated'*, *'exaggerated'*, or *'immoderate'*. Cases where a writer has provided no support at all would be criticised as *'unfounded'* or *'unwarranted'* claims.

Language Box: Expressing caution

Modal verbs   *must / should / may / might / could (have… …ed)*

Full verbs   *appear to / seem to (have…   …ed)*

    suggest   point to   believe   think

Adverbs   *apparently / perhaps / possibly / potentially*

    relatively / comparatively

    arguably / conceivably / presumably (?)

Nouns   *possibility   potential   (on the) evidence (available)*

Adjectives   *possible / potential / plausible / probable / likely / reasonable to assume*

> **Task 4.5** On pages 46 and 52 you will find an inserted instruction to identify the student's use of hedging expressions. Find them and underline them.
>
> <u>Which form</u> of hedging has she used most, in those two sections?

Writing up your thesis

You have now reached the end of the Tasks for this unit on writing the Data chapter(s).

You can now apply the ideas and language from this unit to drafting or revising the data discussion and interpretation for your thesis.

You may also find it helpful to visit this website for further examples of written academic English relevant for this aspect of your study:

http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/discussions.htm

Appendix A:

Extract from a data chapter in a qualitative PhD thesis

The extract on pages 42-53 is from doctoral research into classroom interaction in an English for Specific Purposes course. The study focused on the ways in which students and teacher contributed to lessons and played different participant roles at different stages of the lesson.

It is a longer extract than we have used up to now, because – as we saw in Holliday's writing-up 'map' - the Data Discussion chapters represent a sizeable part of a qualitative thesis.

For the purposes of Tasks 4.2-4.5 in this Unit, **you do not need to read the whole extract**; we will be concentrating on particular sections.

However, I strongly recommend you to read the whole extract at some point, to get an idea of how to develop an extended discussion of data.

To help your reading for the Tasks, I have marked up the text as follows:

<mark>yellow highlighting</mark> = where the student provides an orientation for the reader, telling us where she is taking us next (or later)

<u>underlining</u> = where she refers to the research literature

bold = where she announces **a main finding** of her study or where her study **breaks new ground**

Chapter 6: Negotiating classroom process

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the various frames of reference present in the discourse, arguing that the discourse of the study is a hybrid consisting of different *discourse worlds* – the outside world, language learning world and other world. This chapter will look at another aspect of classroom discourse and process – the characteristics of phases of the lesson, the movement from one phase to another, and how the rituals of classroom life are co-constructed and negotiated by discourse participants, both explicitly and implicitly. It will address the second research question:

RQ 2. What are the characteristics of the discourse at different stages of the lessons?

The chapter begins by looking briefly at notions of socialisation in the classroom, and co-construction of classroom process. It then goes on to look at the lesson data, identifying and focusing on four phases of the lesson sequence: *pre-plenary*, *plenary*, *pre-groupwork* and *groupwork*.

6.1 Views of classroom process

In seeking to investigate and analyse the characteristics of different phases of the lessons in the study, it may be useful first to consider notions of how classroom discourse is constructed, and the contributions of the individual participants. This section will look at this issue, discussing briefly issues surrounding socialisation, co-construction and negotiation of classroom process.

The nature of classroom process and the classroom as a social arena has been investigated both in general and in language education. In general education, as discussed in chapter 2, one emphasis has been on equality and opportunity, looking at issues such as the participation of ethnic minorities and socio-economically disadvantaged students in school settings. Studies have also examined the relationships between second language classroom settings and power differences in society (e.g. Kanaris 1996). Another related strand of research, more relevant to the present study, has looked at how students are *socialised* into the educational environment.

6.1.1 Socialisation

Mehan, in his longitudinal study of elementary classrooms, mentions how "the teaching-learning process unfolds in naturally occurring school situations and provides the parameters for the socialisation of students into the classroom community" (Mehan 1979:1). Allwright also talks about this process of socialisation, in particular the teacher's contribution:

> [LONG QUOTATION]

Allwright draws a distinction between *internal* and *external* socialisation. He sees internal socialisation as "…the development of behaviour appropriate to the classroom as a social setting", while "external" socialisation is defined as "…the development of patterns of behaviour appropriate to the world outside and beyond the classroom" (Allwright 1996: 214). He sets out the various types of socialisation forces at play in the language classroom context:
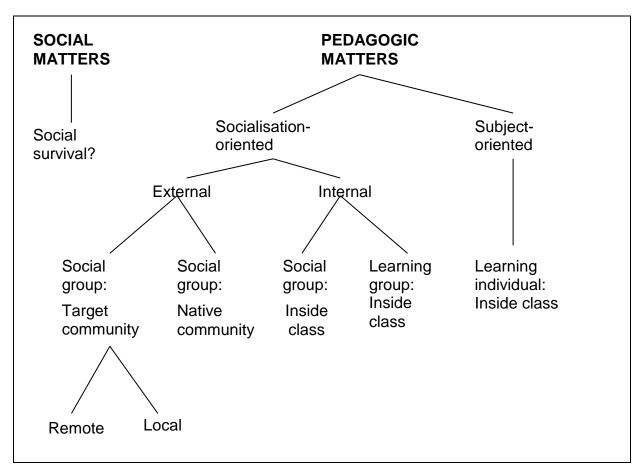
```
        SOCIAL                              PEDAGOGIC
        MATTERS                             MATTERS

          |                                    /\
                                              /  \
        Social                    Socialisation-      Subject-
        survival?                  oriented           oriented
                                     /\                  |
                                    /  \
                              External    Internal
                               /\          /\
                              /  \        /  \
                Social      Social    Social   Learning    Learning
                group:      group:    group:   group:      individual:
                                                Inside      Inside class
                Target      Native    Inside    class
                community   community  class

                  /\
                 /  \
            Remote    Local
```

Figure 6.1: Socialisation forces in the classroom (Allwright 1996: 215)

Breen (1985) also looks at this issue, and in particular discusses the extent to which the social reality of the classroom may be used as a language teaching resource. He challenges the conception of the classroom as "experimental laboratory" in which learners are exposed to input, which is seen as leading unproblematically to intake, arguing that the *social context* must also be considered.

Willett (1995) addresses issues related to the socialisation of ESL children in mainstream classrooms, specifically at how "through socially significant interactional routines, the children and other members of the classroom jointly constructed the ESL children's identities, social relations, and ideologies as well as their communicative competence" (1995: 473). The scope of this type of work relating to children seems to cover both internal and external socialisation in Allwright's terms. However, the concept of external socialisation, though relevant in the case of primary or secondary school, is perhaps less relevant in the case of adult learners – although there may be an element of normative instruction as to how to behave in the unfamiliar cultural settings of the English-speaking world. This chapter will focus on the *internal* classroom world.

Allwright's (1996) model divides internal socialisation into two parts, the *social group* and the *learning group*. Kramsch also touches on this theme of the social and pedagogic in her discussion of the *microworld* of classroom interaction:

>   [LONG QUOTATION]

This recognition of a double focus in the classroom echoes Erickson's identification of two sets of procedural knowledge drawn upon in the language classroom context. The first is knowledge of the *academic task structure*, defined as "…a patterned set of constraints provided by the logic of sequencing in the subject matter content of the lesson" (1982: 154). The second is familiarity with the

social participation structure, "… a patterned set of constraints on the allocation of interactional rights and obligations of various members of the interacting group" (loc. cit). This chapter will go on to look at how these dual demands of the task and the social setting are dealt with and accommodated in the discourse of the lessons in the study.

6.1.2 Co-construction

Although socialisation is a joint process, the concept of internal socialisation seems to emphasise the role of the teacher and the institution, arguably playing down somewhat the role that students may play in the process. This chapter will discuss examples of **students seeming to contribute to the foundation or adaptation of activity "rules"**. Another concept may be applied when investigating the formation of classroom norms - *co-construction* - a concept that seems to put more emphasis on the influence of the learners on this process. Kramsch touches on the issue of participant roles:

> [LONG QUOTATION]

Slimani describes a situation in which all classroom participants may make a contribution to the ongoing discourse:

> [LONG QUOTATION]

Breen and Littlejohn discuss the *procedural negotiation*, aimed at reaching agreement as to ways of working in the classroom. They mention the non-explicit nature of teachers' and learners' interpretations of process:

> LONG QUOTATION

Here, they raise the issue of mismatches in the needs of individuals in the group and point out the potential negative effects of disharmony at the level of process. They see the aim of procedural negotiation as a bringing to light of teachers' implicit interpretations of the syllabus and individual students' learning agendas – making these *explicit.* The contributors to their collection discuss and exemplify explicit negotiation of course content, focus, pace, methodology and assessment in a variety of contexts.

However, in addition to the explicit negotiation that may take place in the classroom, it is possible that *implicit* **procedural negotiation also takes place throughout classroom process**, at a less discernible micro level. **This** *co-construction* – the contribution that students and teachers make together to the formation and maintenance of the norms of classroom process - **may take several forms.** This chapter will look at the characteristics of the different phases of the lessons in the data, and will discuss them as co-constructed discourse events, which appear to perform several functions simultaneously.

Investigating classroom process in terms of phases of the lesson, **a division can be made in terms of interactional mode between plenary and groupwork.** This chapter will focus on these, and **will also propose two further categories** in the lessons in the study - *pre-plenary* and *pre-groupwork*.

6.2 The pre-plenary phase

This term is used here to describe a phase of a lesson immediately before a plenary phase. In the study, pre-plenary phases occur at the beginning of the lessons, and also throughout, as the process moved from groupwork to plenary. This section will discuss examples of both of these from the data.

6.2.1 The beginning of the lesson

During data collection, filming and observation began a few minutes before the lessons started, largely to avoid disruption. As a result, **the beginnings of the ten lessons are documented**, along with the periods immediately before. This section will look at one example in detail, Lesson 1: Trends.

Overview Lesson 1: Trends

Stage	Plenary	Non-plenary	Notes	Lines in transcript
1	Plenary, T introduces Lesley, T greets student back from holiday, T asks who has done homework, T gives instructions for checking homework task		Instructions 1	1-28
2		Groupwork, SS check vocabulary homework from previous week		29-31
3	Plenary, T checks answers and explains vocabulary, introduces topic of facts and figures / trends, gives instructions for discussion task		Checking 1 Lead in 1 Instructions 2	32 - 171
4		Groupwork, SS discuss trends in own countries		172 - 182
5	Plenary, T checks answers, gives instructions for homework vocabulary grouping task, explains context and gives instructions for pairs pre-listening labelling diagram task		Checking 2 Instructions 3	183-400
6		Individual work, SS do labelling task		401
7	Plenary, T checks answers, gives instructions for 1st listening task		Checking 3 Instructions 4	402 - 434
8		Individual work, SS listen and answer questions		435
9	Plenary, T gives instructions to check answers in groups		Instructions 5	436
10		Groupwork, SS check answers		437
11	Plenary, T checks answers, gives instructions for 2nd listening task		Checking 4 Instructions 6	438
12		Individual work, SS listen and complete graph		474
13	Plenary, T gives instructions to check answers in groups		Instructions 7	475
14		Groupwork, SS check answers		476
15	Plenary, T checks answers, gives instructions for 3rd listening task		Checking 5 Instructions 8	479 - 516
16		Individual work, SS listen for reasons for falls and rises		517
17	Plenary, T gives instructions to check answers in groups		Instructions 9	518
18		Groupwork, SS check answers		519 - 521
19	Plenary, T checks answers, gives instructions for reading task		Checking 6 Instructions 10	522 - 573
20		Groupwork, SS read and complete graph		574
21	Plenary, T checks answers, T gives instructions for homework		Checking 7 Instructions 11	575 – 610

We see the teacher at the beginning of the lesson instructing the students to check their homework in pairs:

Data extract 6.1: Lesson 1 *Trends*

26.	T	Em... Did anyone do...the vocabulary homework ...from last week?
27.	SS	Yes, yes
28.	T	No? If you haven't done it then you can le- leave it till... later on em `/Looking round, quizzical expression leans over to table behind and looks through file/`
29.	SS	`Talking and looking through files`
30.	T	Anyone... `/Turns round/` actually do it? `/walks forward, leans over to table behind and looks through file/` OK? Has anybody not done it? `/Turns round/`
31.	S	Yeah `/Laughs/`
32.	T	Not done it ... `/looks round/` Two of you right... OK... well those of you have `/volume up walking forward pointing/` just very briefly see what the others have `/gestures/` some of the answers, OK? Remember the… vocabulary down here at the `/points to HO/` bottom. OK? Just check from the answers if you've done it `/smiles and nods at S/`
33.	SS	`Loud laughter`
34.	S	No problem!
35.	SS	`Begin interacting`

(ELTT 10 Task 4.5: Identify the hedging in the next two paragraphs)

At this point the students are seated in three groups. As seen on the video recording, at the beginning, the teacher does not seem to have the attention of the whole class. He begins to call their attention with intermittent questions, exchanges with individuals and small groups, while looking around at the class. His first address to the whole class is made when only one or two students seem to be paying attention, by looking at him and not talking to other students. The teacher elicits a response from one or two students. He pauses, addresses them all again looking round. He positions himself in front of the board at this stage, but also moves between there and the nearby groups. He then pauses again, looks at his papers. He then addresses the class again with a question, and looks at one student's file. He pauses again, then asks them another question and gets an answer from one student. He echoes the student who answers him and identifies two students. Throughout this phase, the volume of student talk gradually decreases, and more students look up and appear to pay attention. The first plenary address "OK" seems to signal that he wants all their attention. At this point he raises his voice, stands in front of the board and points at the handout. The group falls silent.

This pre-plenary phase is characterised by an "open" expression on the part of the teacher, fairly quiet addresses using rising intonation, and gaps within and between the addresses to the class. At this stage he seems to be not quite "on stage" or "off stage" - he addresses the class, looks back at his notes, arranges his papers, then looks up and addresses them again. He uses what might be termed "brick wall questioning" - asking questions to a group, many of whom he knows are not listening. It seems that the purpose of these questions is not to elicit an answer, but more to function as a signal, to gain the attention of the class. As questions requiring an answer from the whole class, they are unsuccessful, but they seem to fulfil their function as signals that tell the class to stop talking and listen. During this pre-plenary phase the students talk together, take out papers and organise objects on their desks. At the point where the teacher says "OK" (line 32, shown by an arrow on the transcript above), the students fall silent. The volume of his voice increases at this point, and he positions himself in front of the board.

6.2.3 During the lesson

In addition to establishing the first plenary phase at the beginning of the lesson, the two teachers in the study repeatedly establish plenary phases during lessons. Throughout the ten lessons in the study, there were 49 plenary stages, an average of 4.9 per lesson. ("Plenary phase" here is used to describe a

period of the lesson when the teacher addresses and seems to demand the attention of the whole class, "groupwork" as any form of group or pair activity).

Analysis of the lessons shows a regular movement between plenary and groupwork. Lesson 1: *Trends* shows the most movement between these two modes, with 11 plenary stages and 10 group or individual work stages. In contrast, Lesson 5: *Trends Mingle* consists of two plenary stages and one long groupwork stage in the middle. At the beginning of each of these plenary stages, the teacher attempts to gain the attention of the class. An example of this is the following, coming after a groupwork activity:

Data extract 6.2: Lesson 10 The Euro

134.1	T	OK. Right, can we stop now, because we, we'll have to stop now, alright? Em. Alright, is that OK? Alright. Very, very quickly, OK, very, very quickly, can em, somebody just, just say what, what the first text, text A was actually about?

In this address to the class, the teacher uses "OK" and "alright" repeatedly, and asks the class twice to stop talking. Throughout this phase, the students continue to talk, their volume gradually decreasing as the pre-plenary phase progresses.

Table 6.1: Examples of pre-plenary, T calling attention of class

LESSON 4		
159	T	OK, I'll give you one more minute, and then stop. One more minute.
160	SS	`Talk`
161	T	OK!`/claps hands twice,loud/` right OK can you stop there? Can you stop there?
162	SS	`Talk`
163	T	`/Bangs pen on desk twice/` OK, can you stop?
164	SS	`Talk more quietly`
165	T	OK, stop.
166	SS	`Gradually stop talking`
167	T	Right do, don't worry if you haven't got, don't worry if you haven't told each other all the information, that's … that's not so important. OK? Right, right. Did you find that easy?

LESSON 6		
275	*T to pair*	Agreement? Are you in agreement? OK, summarise it. Right, good. And you're both happy?
276	*T*	`/To all/` Jonathon Snodgrass has a taxi coming to take him to the airport in about five minutes, OK? You've got five minutes to try and finish off.
277	SS	`Talk, laugh, seem animated`
278	T	`/Walks around near the front of the room/` The taxi is waiting to take em `/Loud/` I think it's Mr Berkworth so it's going to take, he needs to go to the airport, so the taxi's waiting
279	SS	`Quieten down, still talking a little`
280	T to Yolanda & Gloria	Do you have a deal? Yes, yes. `/Laugh/`
281	T to all	OK that's the taxi, if you don't go now you'll miss your plane, right let's stop there.
282	SS	`Quiet`
283	T	OK well done. Let's – how did you feel about that, are you feeling, em, how did you feel, how did you feel? Are you happy?

LESSON 10		
129	T	OK. I'll give you one more minute, one more minute and then we stop. `/Starts giving out HOs to SS who have stopped talking/`
130	SS	`Some talk`
131	T	OK.
132	SS	`Some talk`
133	T	Are, you, are you alright?
134	SS	`Some talk`

135	T	I'll give you a copy of the other...OK?
136	SS	`Some talk`
137	T	OK. Right, can we stop now, because we, we'll have to stop now, alright? Em. Alright, is that OK? Alright. Very, very quickly, OK, very, very quickly, can em, somebody just, just say what, what the first text, text A was actually about?
138	Jules	The creation history of the *** the <u>Euro</u>?

In these examples, the teachers call the students' attention and bring the groupwork to an end, beginning a plenary phase. As at the beginning of lesson 1, there is a transition phase between the groupwork and plenary. In each case this seems to be a gradual transition, as the teacher repeatedly addresses the class, with gaps between each address. With each teacher address, more students stop talking, until they are all quiet. The teachers use several addresses to the class, but do not seem to expect a sudden halt to the groupwork activity. The groupwork is allowed to gradually come to an end, allowing students to speak beyond the first indication that they should stop.

<mark>This section has discussed how the plenary phases were begun in the study. The next section will look at the functions and features of those plenary phases.</mark>

6.3 The plenary phase

It could be argued that the plenary is the archetypal teaching mode, in that it is the one most associated with traditional teaching styles, and is also the one which is probably most cross-culturally familiar. It seems probable that students from all cultures, assuming they have experienced formal education, will be familiar with the teacher-fronted plenary. Three main activity types are identified in the plenary phases in this study, summarised in the following table:

Table 6.2: Summary of plenary activities in the data

Plenary Activity	Definitions	No. of examples in the data
Instructions	Teacher addresses whole class to instruct students to undertake an activity, or take part in groupwork	**47**
Checking answers / eliciting outcomes or opinions	Teacher addresses whole class to elicit answers, outcomes or opinions from students after individual work, groupwork or homework.	**28**
Lead in	Teacher addresses whole class to introduce a new topic or focus	**9**

<mark>This section will look at</mark> the features of the two most frequent types of plenary activity in the data - *checking* and *instructions* - <mark>and will consider one example of each</mark> from the data in detail, mentioning other similar episodes and relevant interview data. The lesson transcriptions also show these stages.

6.2.1 Plenary checking

In the analysis, *checking* has been applied as a category to cover a relatively wide range of plenary activities. At one end of the spectrum are examples of quick verification of short answers, in closed tasks such as cloze exercises or matching. At the other extreme there are longer, more free-ranging discussions, with digressions into other side-topics. This full range has been classified into one category as they are all plenary activities arising out of the previous group or individual activity, or in some cases homework. <mark>This section will begin with</mark> the briefest form of checking, closed-response exercises. The following is an example taken from Lesson 1: Trends.

Data extract 6.3: Lesson 1 Trends

313	*T*	Yes. That, that might well be true, yes. OK. Em... Let's have a quick look at the vocabulary. A quick run through some of the vocabulary items. OK. Upward, downward or horizontal. No change. /Gestures. Looking at HO/
314	S	Mm hm
315	T→	OK, so fall obviously is... downwards, yeah. Climb?
316	SS	Upward
317	T	OK, rise?
318	SS	Up
319	T	Up Even out?
320	Catalina	Horizontal?
321	T→	Horizontal. Good. yeah. Right. Even out means, that. /Draws curve on WB/ This. When a change ... ends, and then it becomes horizontal.
322	Catalina	Yeah
323	T→	OK, it becomes stable. To even out. OK? Decline?
324	SS	Down
325	T	Down. Good. OK go up?
326	SS	Up.
327	T	OK. Up Recover?
328	SS	Up
329	T	Up
330	Toru→	What it means, recover?
331	T→	Recover, well, OK, can anyone explain recover?
332	SS	Em ...
333	Elena	When you
334	T	Hm?
335	Elena	To be sure?
336	T	Hm. Well when, when do you normally
337	Reiko	To get, get
338	T	Use the word recover?
339	Reiko	Get well.
340	T→	Yes, get well, exactly. So if you've been ill, you, perhaps you've had flu or something, or cold, and you recover, means it's your illness is gone, you recover.
341	Reiko	Rise up, rise again?
342	T	Yes. So, basically yes, So, if you can imagine a trend that's been falling, and then it recovers, and begins to go back up. That's how it's used. /gestures/ Em, decrease?
343	SS	Down.
344	T	Down. OK Drop?
345	SS	Down.
346	T	Down. Improve?
347	SS	Up.
348	T	Up. Deteriorate?

This sequence involves an IRF (Initiation, Response, Feedback) pattern, (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). It is rhythmic, and speeds up as it progresses. It increases in volume, involving more and more students giving choral responses. However, within this checking sequence, there are other elements present outside of the IRF pattern. In line 315, the teacher models the IRF pattern by asking and providing the answer himself, adding the comment "obviously". From line 316 to 320 the checking follows the "classic" IRF pattern. In line 321 the teacher steps out of the pattern in order to use the board and provide additional explanation of a vocabulary item. Catalina answers "yeah" – she communicates with the teacher as an individual, a feature not present in the ritualistic IRF checking model, although it may in fact occur in classroom discourse. The teacher then re-establishes the IRF sequence in line 323, and it continues until line 329. In line 330, Toru breaks the pattern by asking a question about the meaning of a word. The teacher then asks if anyone in the class can explain it. From line 360 to 371, we see Elena and Reiko attempting to provide an explanation, and the teacher evaluating their suggestions, and providing further explanation. In line 342, he re-establishes the IRF sequence.

In this sequence the teacher and students step in and out of IRF discourse. The teacher seems to re-establish the IRF sequence very easily, by using one word "decrease", with rising intonation. It seems that the checking discourse, however formulaic and elliptical, is permeable to embedded spontaneous

contributions, in the form of explanation, use of the board, questions, elicitation of examples, and so on. Further examples of IRF checking with such embedded elements can be found in the data, for example:

Table 6.3: Plenary IRF checking with embedded features

EXAMPLE A: LESSON 1		
84	T	Supplier OK /writes <u>supplier</u> on WB/ eight <u>shares the responsibility of owning or running a business?</u>
85	S	Partner
86	T	Partner, OK partner yeah /writes <u>partner</u> on WB/ Alright? Em...
87	SS	Talk quietly
88	T →	A useful phrase that you might, or might not know /taps WB/ is a person who shares the responsibility for owning the business but not running the business, of, is not involved in the managing of the business, is a special kind of partner. Anyone know? The person who perhaps invests money in the company.

EXAMPLE B: LESSON 1		
319	T	Up Even out?
320	Catalina	Horizontal?
321	T →	Horizontal. Good. yeah. Right. Even out means, that. /Draws curve on WB/ This. When a change ... ends, and then it becomes horizontal.
322	Catalina	Yeah
323	T	OK, it becomes stable. To even out. OK? Decline?

EXAMPLE C: LESSON 1		
327	T	OK. Up. Recover?
328	SS	Up
329	T	Up
330	Toru →	What it means, recover?
331	T	Recover, well, OK, can anyone explain recover?
332	SS	Em ...
333	Elena	When you
334	T	Hm?
335	S	To be sure?
336	T	Hm. Well when, when do you normally
337	Reiko	To get, get
338	T	Use the word recover?
339	Reiko	Get well.
340	T	Yes, get well, exactly. So if you've been ill, you, perhaps you've had flu or something, or cold, and you recover, means it's your illness is gone, you recover.
350	Reiko	Rise up, rise again?
360	T	Yes. So, basically yes, So, if you can imagine a trend that's been falling, and then it recovers, and begins to go back up. That's how it's used. /gestures/ Em, decrease?

EXAMPLE D: LESSON 1		
348	*T*	Up. Deteriorate?
349	SS	Down.
350	T	Down. Yes. That's a bit of a hard word to say, dete, deteriorate.
351	SS	Deteriorate.
352	T →	The stress is on the "e"
353	SS	Laugh
354	T	The stress is here. De- te- ri- or...ate. /writing on wb/ Deteriorate. Pick up?
355	SS	Up
356	T	Yep. And that's very similar to recover. Hit a low?

EXAMPLE E: LESSON 2		
60	*T*	<u>Steady</u>?
61	S →	<u>Steadily</u>
62	T	Any changes in the spelling?
63	SS	Yes, y becomes i
64	T	Y becomes i. Right. OK, fine. /Writes on WB/

65	SS	`Some whisper`
66	T	OK, em... <u>gradual</u>?

EXAMPLE F: LESSON 2		
94	*T*	<u>Significantly</u>. <u>Dramatic</u>?
95	SS	<u>Dramatically</u>
96	T	How do you spell it?
97	SS	.... dramatic..
98	T	is it ly? It should be c, a?
99	SS	l, l, y
100	T	OK? "Cally" on the end. `/writes on WB/`
101	SS	`Write`
102	T	OK? So you add on this "ally", right? But when you say it, you don't say it "drama-ti-cally".
103	SS	`Laugh`
104	T	Dramatically. OK? Almost as if there's no l, no a in here, sorry. OK? OK, dramatically. And the last one.... <u>negligible?</u>

Closed-response checking in this data seems to be permeable to embedded features, exhibiting spontaneous contributions from teacher and students. For example, the teacher may provide vocabulary explanation, or use the plenary mode as an opportunity to convey attitudes or construct him/herself in a particular way. In closed-response checking the students may also ask questions.

<u>Erickson (1982) discusses classroom discourse in terms of</u> ritual, concluding that it lies on a midpoint between ritual and spontaneity, basing this analysis on examples taken from a general education, first-grade mathematics lesson. <u>He emphasises</u> the co-constructed, negotiated nature of the discourse event, in which the students and teacher are seen as "doing a lesson together" (1982: 153). <u>He argues that</u> in order to do this, they must draw on both the *academic task structure* and *social participation structure*. <u>Participants are seen as</u> working within these two sets of constraints, resulting in a "midpoint" position. <u>Nunn (2000) also discusses the issue of ritual</u> in classroom discourse, <u>looking at</u> teacher-fronted language classroom discourse <u>and arguing that</u> although it exhibits ritualistic features, there is room for implicit negotiation within it, as participants adapt to the contributions of their interlocutors. <u>He proposes the notion of</u> *negotiated ritual* to describe this balance. This term seems appropriate for the **closed-response checking** above – within a ritualistic framework there is space for negotiation, as teacher and students break the pattern for a variety of purposes.

In contrast, checking of **open-response tasks** exhibits a less ritualistic structure. In the following example, the students have been looking at two letters in terms of their format. The teacher asks them to give feedback in plenary:

Data Extract 6.4: Lesson 2 Letter-Writing 1

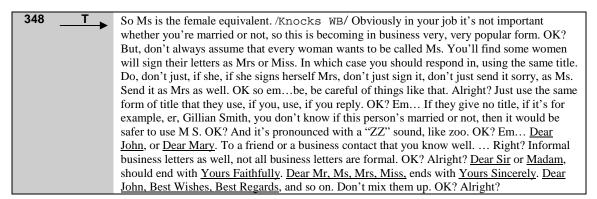| 159	T	`/Comes in with dictionaries and puts them on the tables/` OK, can we just check some of your ideas, er in number one, what can you notice about the layout of the paragraphs? Can you notice about the layout of the paragraphs?
160	S	Second letter has er, er *** er reference and the office ***
161	T	Right we, we'll come back to that just in a moment Oh, sorry `/laughs/` But, Em, thinking only about the paragraphs. Paragraphs in both letters, are they the same or different?
162	Catalina	Same
163	T	They're the same, OK.
164	Catalina	Same
165	T	So just comment then on, on, on the, the style of the paragraph
166	S	Mm?
167	T	I mean where does it begin?
168	S	Mm, it is er company
169	Catalina	The first letter we don't know the person who is
170	T	Who sends `/to Catalina/`
171	Catalina	Who the letter send
172	T	Ah no. Just think `/snaps fingers/` only about, only think about the paragraphs

173	Reiko	Paragraphs
174	T	Here. Don't, don't think about Dear Sir or Dear Mr,
175	Amir	***
176	T	Just only about the paragraphs
177	Reiko	They are simple?
178	Amir	***
179	T	Say again?
180	Amir	Starts for me are understandable, so
181	T	OK, right
182	Amir	Both paragraphs the same style
183	T	Right, same style. Right so they both starting where? Inside, inside the letter, or?
184	S	Outside
185	Amir	No, on the same side
186	T →	Yeah the same, same side. OK. Sometimes in letters of course you find that the first line of a paragraph begins slightly in,
187	SS	In, yeah, mm
188	T →	Doesn't it, like this indented. In this particular style of letter, there's no indentation at all, it's simply that, OK? Alright? `/writes examples on WB/`Now `/knocks WB twice with pen/`for this, when you want to begin a new paragraph, all you do is
189	S	Blocks
190	T	Indent
191	S	Indent
192	T →	The second time `/writes on WB/`You see?
193	S	Yes
194	T	But in this one how does this change paragraphs?
195	SS	`Some talk quietly`
196	T	What do you see? How
197	S	*** blank?
198	T	Do you get a new paragraph?
199	Amir	Full stop and
200	T	Yes, full stop and
201	SS	A blank, blank
202	T	A space.
203	SS	A space, space
204	T →	Yes. `/Writes on WB/`Mm hm OK? Alright? So this one, this style over there, has indented and, or, at the margin, the margin `/writes on WB/` the margin is indented. OK? In this case the margin starts on the left, ... OK?`/knocks WB twice with pen/` And if you're going to make a new paragraph with this style, you indent a second time, or third time, or a fourth time. This one, you make a space... after each paragraph.
205	Reiko	`Yes /quietly/`
206	T →	OK? Alright so in er, business letter writing you're more likely to see this style. `/knocks WB with knuckle/` You do see this as well, but I think generally this is becoming more of a universal style... Alright?
207	S	Is....indented popular than
208	T →	It's still quite popular yes, but I, I think this one, this style is becoming more popular, grad, gradually. OK. It's becoming what you might say is a universal style, used by
209	S	Lots of
210	T	Various countries. OK? Alright, em, some other things then, in number two, it asks you about punctuation, can you see any... punctuation? Any...

(ELTT 10 Task 4.5: Identify the hedging in the next two paragraphs)

In this sequence the teacher begins by asking for comments on the style of the paragraphs in the letters. The students initially respond with comments about other aspects of the letters, such as the references and the fact that they are from companies. Although he comes back to these points later in the sequence, he twice brings them back to the theme of paragraph style. This suggests that, although the analysis task was open, his checking "agenda" is not - he has a particular point to make about that aspect of letter format, and wants to cover it first. He elicits the answer, the students give their ideas, the teacher gives them feedback, and then he provides a normative explanation (examples indicated by arrows). So what we have here is a sequence following a pattern that might be termed *IRFI* – Initiation, response, feedback and *instruction*. This cycle is repeated several times in this particular checking sequence, as the teacher goes through different points. In each case he begins by asking

questions and eliciting ideas, then evaluates them, then adds some normative statements. At the point where he gives a normative statement, he sometimes knocks the whiteboard, and may use repetition:

Data Extract 6.5: Lesson 2 Letter-Writing 1

348　　T →	So Ms is the female equivalent. /Knocks WB/ Obviously in your job it's not important whether you're married or not, so this is becoming in business very, very popular form. OK? But, don't always assume that every woman wants to be called Ms. You'll find some women will sign their letters as Mrs or Miss. In which case you should respond in, using the same title. Do, don't just, if she, if she signs herself Mrs, don't just sign it, don't just send it sorry, as Ms. Send it as Mrs as well. OK so em…be, be careful of things like that. Alright? Just use the same form of title that they use, if you, use, if you reply. OK? Em… If they give no title, if it's for example, er, Gillian Smith, you don't know if this person's married or not, then it would be safer to use M S. OK? And it's pronounced with a "ZZ" sound, like zoo. OK? Em… <u>Dear John</u>, or <u>Dear Mary</u>. To a friend or a business contact that you know well. … Right? Informal business letters as well, not all business letters are formal. OK? Alright? <u>Dear Sir</u> or <u>Madam</u>, should end with <u>Yours Faithfully</u>. <u>Dear Mr, Ms, Mrs, Miss,</u> ends with <u>Yours Sincerely</u>. <u>Dear John, Best Wishes, Best Regards</u>, and so on. Don't mix them up. OK? Alright?

So it seems the teacher is using the open-response checking sequence as a framework within which to provide instruction. He uses a form rather reminiscent of Socratic dialogue to guide the students towards the learning points, asking them series of questions as he leads up to his instructional discourse. Both his closed-response and open-response checking sequences appear to operate as frameworks with particular points that are permeable to additional instruction on language, student questions, normative instruction and so on. The point of permeability to instruction in all cases is at the end of the IRF cycle. However, as the tasks become more open in these examples from the data, the type of embedded instruction changes, to reflect the focus of the activity, in the examples given above.

Table 6.4: Closed and open-response checking examples

Task type	Examples	Type of instruction
Closed-response checking	Lesson 1: Vocabulary matching	***IRF + Language instruction / questions*** Pronunciation model / correction Grammatical information Clarification of meaning
Open-response checking	Lesson 2: Analysis of letters	***IRF + Usage instruction / questions*** Normative statements / mini-lectures about letter-writing

To conclude, in this data set **the IRF cycle seems to be a flexible framework**. It is a structure that may provide the **rituals of group participation** (e.g. choral checking), the sense of a **shared journey** towards a learning point, (e.g. Socratic dialogue), the **flexibility for student contributions** (e.g. questions) and the **space for normative instruction** (e.g. mini-lectures).

The next section will look at the other main activity present in the plenary sequences in the data – **instructions**.

Appendix B: Useful language for the Data Chapters

INTRODUCTION

Scene-setting
This study / thesis aims to explore… in general and… in particular…
My intention is to illuminate / bring to light / reveal….
The issue of … has grown in importance in the light of recent ….

Locating the gap
Although….. , previous work has not specifically addressed…
Concerns have been expressed about…
So far, however, there has been little discussion about ….
However, insufficient attention has been paid to ….
In addition, no research has taken into account…

Filling the gap
My study is designed to remedy that weakness by…
My main focus will be on this under-researched area of…

Orientation
This chapter will begin by/with… before addressing… and finally…
In this chapter I begin by/with… before considering…

MAIN SECTION

Relating to previous research
My findings are broadly similar / rather different to those of..
This suggests similar / different perceptions of… to those of… in earlier work by…
This also chimes with the findings of…, who reported that ….
Like… / Unlike…

Presenting the data
I have used … as the organising principle for presenting extracts from…
The first transcript extract shows…
The next three questionnaire comments illustrate…
In the next episode, we have a clear example of…

Describing / summarising the data
This extract is an interesting example / instance / case of ….
These findings suggest that in general ….
As can see, … tend to…

Interpreting the data
One possible reason / influence / factor could be….
The reason for this is not clear from the data, but it may have something to do with….
It may be that these participants consider….
The tendency to… might be…. / might suggest…
One of the themes to emerge from these self-reports / comments / diaries is….

IMPORTANT: If you are writing up mixed-methods research, you will find useful expressions for your
quantitative data discussion at Manchester University's Academic Phrase Bank:
http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/discussions.htm

5 The Final Chapter

Task 5.1

Do you cycle? Do you know what 'freewheeling' is? If not, see whether anybody else in the class does.

Then read Silverman's comments (below) on what the point of the final thesis chapter is.

Since all reports, including dissertations seem to end with a set of 'conclusions', you cannot finally let go until your concluding chapter is written.

Having cycled painfully to the top of the hill, the great temptation at this point is to relax and freewheel down to the finish. In practice, such relaxation of effort is reflected in the all too common 'summaries' found in the final chapter of dissertations.

Although summaries are often quite useful devices at the end of the data analysis chapters, I suggest that **you should never write a summary as your concluding chapter**. If you readers need a summary at this point, then your macrostructure is not in place. If it is in place, then what you have said should already be crystal clear. So resist the temptation of a final downhill freewheel.

But do you even need a final chapter? Cannot your thesis stop after you have finished your data analysis?

Think of a musical example. Classical symphonies typically end with a fast movement marked *allegro* or *presto*. Rather than a mere recapitulation of earlier themes, they take them up and develop them still more. As such, they seem designed to provide listeners with some of the most stimulating material in the composition. So your final chapter is, indeed, necessary. **But it should function to stimulate your readers by demonstrating how your research has stimulated you**.

(Silverman 2000: 250, my emphasis)

What to include?

The conventional final chapter of a thesis has two main functions:
- to **refer back** to what you have written, reminding the reader of your argument, and giving some sort of evaluation and/or interpretation
- to **point forward** to what you think might happen in the future, with suggestions or recommendations, or predictions or warnings.

In addition, according to Phillips and Pugh (1994: 59-60),

In the most general terms [your final chapter] is a discussion as to why and in what way… the theory you started with is now different as a result of your research work. Thus your successors (who include, of course, yourself) now face a different situation when determining what their research work should be, since they now have to take account of your work.

Task 5.2

Can you be your own successor? How?

In their analysis of conclusions to *quantitative* dissertations, Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) suggest there are six potential elements:

A.   **Restatement of** hypothesis (or purpose)
B.   **Summary** of main points / findings; whether they support the hypothesis; whether they align with, or differ from, other researchers' findings
C.   Possible **explanations** for the findings; and/or **speculations** about them
D.   **Limitations** of the study
E.   **Implications** of your findings
F.   **Recommendations** for future research and **practical applications**

Task 5.3
Below are the headings of the final chapters of three qualitative theses. Compare them with the quantitative elements listed by Hopkins and Dudley-Evans.

What <u>additional components</u> can you find in the qualitative theses?

---

8   CONCLUSIONS
8.1   Research questions and main findings of the study
8.1.1   Classroom discourse "layers" and discourse worlds
8.1.2   Characteristics of stages of the lesson
8.1.3   Participant perceptions of rights and responsibilities
8.2   Relationship to previous research
8.3   Limitations of the study

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
7.1   Conclusions
7.2   Limitations of the study
7.3   Professional recommendations
7.4   Autobiographical reflection

8. Review of the research and implications for receptionist training
8.0 Introduction
8.1 Review of the research
        8.1.1 Attitudes of subjects
        8.1.2 Method of data collection
        8.1.3 Problems during data collection
        8.1.4 Problems resulting from the research design
        8.1.5 Performance of researcher
        8.1.6 Summary
8.2 Social meaning in front-desk discourse
8.3 Receptionist training
        8.3.1 Feedback sessions
        8.3.2 Recommendations for training
8.4 Future directions
8.5 Conclusion

From that small sample of Conclusions chapters, it looks as if a possible qualitative equivalent of Hopkins & Dudley-Evans 'model' would contain these potential elements:

- (concise) **Recapitulation of purpose and findings**

- **Relationship with previous research**

- **Limitations of your research (Anticipation of criticisms)**

- **Problems arising during the research**

- **Implications of your findings**

- **Recommendations (for research; for action / policy /change)**

- **Your contribution to research**

- **Autobiographical reflection**

Task 5.4

Think about that list of possible sections. Can you think of <u>any others</u> that you will need to include in your own Conclusions chapter?

Language Boxes: Useful expressions for a qualitative final chapter

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<div align="center">

Recapitulation of purpose and findings

</div>

The aim / purpose / objective of my study was to...

This research was intended / designed to...

This thesis had the aim of exploring whether...

What I found was that…   a tendency to...

One of the themes to emerge from my analysis of… was…

The findings suggest that X is a strong motivational factor for…

I found that X was a major perceived influence on....

The participants/informants showed some / a clear preference for...

Relating to previous research

These findings are broadly in line / harmony with those of researchers such as…

These findings are consistent with previous research

The findings run counter to the conventional / widely expressed view that...

My findings are (to some extent) at odds with those of…

Although these findings are generally compatible with … there are several areas in which they differ from…

(Task 5.5 is linked with this section)

Limitations of your research / Anticipation of criticisms

Some common expressions for stating limitations of research scope:

I should stress that my study has been primarily concerned with...

My/This analysis has concentrated/focused on…

The findings of my study are restricted/limited to…

I have addressed only the issue/influence/role of…

I should make clear that I have deliberately/intentionally not…

Typical openings for stating that certain conclusions should <u>not</u> be drawn:

However, the findings of my study do not imply that…

My findings cannot / should not be taken / read as evidence for…

Unfortunately, the nature of my data does not allow me/us to determine whether…

The lack of… means that we cannot be certain/sure that…

(adapted from Swales & Feak 2012: 372)

Problems arising during the research
(Fill in this box as part of Task 5.6)

Implications of your findings

My study offers suggestive evidence for …

The study appears to support the argument for a change in...

On the face of it, this would suggest that X may be an important factor in…

If the tentative conclusions of my study are confirmed by… then there will be a case for…

Recommendations

For future research:

I think possible areas for further research / investigation include...

Future research into… should / might usefully focus in particular on.. in other contexts.

One avenue for further study would be research into the specific…

Without further research into... it will not be possible to…

It is important / relevant to investigate (whether)...

For future action/policy:

Your contribution to research   *(Task 5.7 is linked with this section)*

Autobiographical reflection   *(Task 5.8 is linked with this section)*

Task 5.5: Relating to previous research

In the thesis extract below, the student relies a great deal on the hedging verb *seem*. Can you think of ways of using <u>alternative expressions</u> for the cases highlighted, in order to add variety and reduce the level of repetition in the text?

8.2 Relationship to previous research

This section will give a brief overview of the findings of the study and their relationship to previous work in these areas.

In terms of the first research question, which looked at the issue of "layers" of classroom discourse, the findings of this study seem to build in particular on the work of some of the researchers reviewed in Chapter 3. Many of these studies characterise classroom discourse in terms of functions, and the concept of the classroom-rooted and non-classroom variety of discourse is present in more than one analysis, as discussed in Chapter 5. The findings of Chapter 6, in the investigation of the second research question, looked at the features of the stages on the lesson, in particular the plenary checking stage and IRF discourse. The notion of the spontaneous contributions within IRF cycles seems to echo Erickson's (1982) notion of spontaneity and ritual in classroom discourse. White & Lighbown's (1984) finding that questions are frequent in classroom discourse seems to be borne out by the prevalence of checking sequences in the data, with their dependence on questions. Likewise, the existence of question types seems to be confirmed in the data, which exhibits both *display* and *referential* questions. White & Lightbown's (1984) finding that teachers tend to repeat and rephrase questions seems to ring true in the analysis of instructions in this study. The analysis of the data in relation to the third research question, and the issue of subgroup activity during plenary and groupwork, seems to follow closely on from Hancock (1998), with his notion of *off-record* discourse. Slimani's findings as regards the diversity of perceptions of salience seem to be borne out in this study, which shows some students more focused on vocabulary, for example, while others are more focused on interaction.

One of the main concepts from earlier work which has been applied to this study is that of the discourse world (Edmondson 1984). This concept has proved to be a useful one in the description of the layers of classroom discourse identified in the data. More generally, the findings of Chapter 7 seem to back up the various assertions in the literature that participants do seem to make an active contribution to the ongoing process. Their engagement in individual and subgroup activities makes a contribution to the overall process, as does task adaptation and spontaneous contributions. Reluctance to interact may require the teacher to give a further instruction, again influencing the overall process of classroom communication.

Task 5.6: Problems arising during the research

In qualitative studies the researcher is expected to be open about difficulties which came up in the research process and to comment on how they were dealt with. This is much less common on quantitative research, where control over the research instruments is seen as a requirement. The extract below is a good example of a student's effective open discussion of the practical and methodological problems that surfaced during her study.

Focus on the highlighted expressions to do with <u>problems</u>, their <u>effect</u> and their potential <u>resolution</u>.

Choose the ones you think might be useful **for your own final chapter**; add them to the empty Language Box on *Problems arising during the research* (page 59).

8.1.3 Problems during data collection

Several problems arose during data collection. The most serious of these was the failure to obtain recordings of telephone calls by patients to either Practices A or B, which led to the abandonment of the plan to analyse interaction through this channel. As a result there was only limited evidence for the performance of a gatekeeping role by receptionists, since most appointments were made by telephone. Only 42 appointments were made at the front desk and many (37.5%) of those were prioritised because they were made after consultations at the request of doctors, giving a very partial picture of discourse patterns for appointment-making. This was a great disappointment because it eliminated the possibility of giving full consideration to how discourse elements contributed to the negotiation of access by patients.

A second problem was observance of the conditions stipulated by the research ethics committee. In order to ensure that non-consenting patients were excluded from recordings I had to be in a position to observe patients approaching the reception desk. As a result, when receptionists were absent, patients sometimes addressed me directly. When questions were asked about medical matters I was able to apologise and explain that I was unable to help but I was sometimes drawn into general discussion with patients which, strictly speaking, the ethics committee had wanted me to avoid. There were also a number of occasions when I was unable to avoid overhearing personal information about patients who had not consented to be recorded. The decision was made to remain close to the desk in order to ensure that recorded data were ethically sound but this did result in some inappropriate involvement on my part.

The third problem concerned the research assistants who accompanied me to practices, explained the research to patients and obtained their consent. In the main they were treated courteously, even by those patients who did not consent. There were, however, a number of patients at Practice B who were verbally abusive towards them and a jacket belonging to one research assistant was stolen when she left it unattended for a couple of minutes at this practice. As well as illustrating the type of problem faced by staff at Practice B, these two episodes are reminders that not everyone viewed the research assistants favourably. Although both made major contributions to the research by persuading relatively high numbers of patients to consent, it is also possible that their individual personalities and styles attracted particular types of patient and caused some bias in the results.

8.1.4 Problems resulting from the research design

There were two features of the research design which may have affected the quality of the findings. The first was the decision to make audio recordings, rather than video recordings. Although there were sound reasons for this decision (see Section 3.1.1), the absence of a visual record limited the analytical possibilities, both in relation to the participation framework and the relational behaviour of participants.

For example, because I was unable to observe moves which were made non-verbally, I made some assumptions about the use of eye contact by receptionists to signal openings and had no evidence of the non-verbal moves which might have contributed to the performance of closings.

A second shortcoming of the research design was the limited value of the ethnographic information. Although the short questionnaires yielded useful information about age and gender, patients found it difficult to remember when or how often they attended practices, with the result that their answers to these questions were not reliable. I also concluded that, for close analysis of encounters, such as those in Chapter 7, it would have been useful to have far more information about patients. For example, if participants had been invited to comment on the interaction or to provide respondent validation of my own interpretations, it would have reduced the potential for error as well as providing insights from alternative perspectives (see Bloor 1997). If an ethically and practically sound manner of obtaining this information could be found, it would be a useful addition to future studies.

Whereas the pursuit of respondent validation would have complicated the research design, the interviews with receptionists could have been simplified and targeted more carefully on topics relevant to the analysis. Dingwall (1997) points out that informality will not bring the observer closer to the truth, and that sociological interviews are always forms of account (see Scott and Lyman 1981), which are more likely to represent views of the natural order of the social setting rather than its day-to-day reality. It might therefore have been better to pose more clearly defined questions to receptionists, as well as inviting them to comment retrospectively on recordings and transcriptions. Similarly, the research diary which was kept during visits to practices could have been targeted more carefully on relevant information, such as the paralinguistic features of closings.

Writing about the contribution of your thesis to the field

This can be a tricky section to write, even for native speakers. Your first (and perhaps your most important) readers are your thesis examiners, and part of their job is to decide whether your work is good enough to pass and then how good it is as a contribution to the field.

You need to strike a carefully judged balance between emphasising the elements that are distinctive and innovative in your work, and playing the role of the humble and modest PhD candidate. It could be that it is for this reason that many PhD students decide <u>not</u> to include a 'My Contribution' section in their thesis.

If you think you might want to include one in your thesis, the next Task (optional) gives you the chance to discuss and practise achieving that balance.

Task 5.7: Contribution to research

Chapter section 7.6 below is an adapted version of a PhD student's final draft. Read it carefully, find the places where she refers to her contribution, and decide whether you would advise her to modify her wording - either to make it <u>stronger</u> or <u>weaker</u>.

Then focus on her 'contribution' expressions; if you think they would be useful in your own final chapter, add them to the bottom box on page 60.

[CMC stands for *computer-mediated communication*]

7.6 Contributions

In addition to the provision of some directions for future research, my study has made three major contributions to the literature on computer assisted language learning and teaching, since research in these three areas is relatively new and the related literature is still limited.

Firstly, my participants were early-stage learners developing their oral skills in CMC. Among the four skills, speaking has been considered the most difficult to acquire for language learners, especially for those at beginner-level. My study should contribute doubly to the understanding of the development process of beginners' oral skills in CMC environments.

Secondly, the target language of my study was French, research into the learning of which is limited in comparison to that involving English. Although some Canadian researchers have conducted studies in relation to French (e.g. Swain & Lapkin, 2005; Lapkin & Swain, 2004; Lapkin, Swain & Smith, 2002), they have been in the Canadian immersion context where French is learnt as a second language, rather than a foreign language, as in this study. As a result, my findings should enhance our knowledge of the learning process of FFL learners, particularly those whose first language is non-alphabetic.

Finally, my investigation of the concept of social presence increased the originality of my study. Although its application to CMC started in the late 1980s (Lowenthal 2009), the concept and its impact on learners' acquisition of language skills remain unfamiliar to many teachers who include synchronous CMC in their curriculum. Therefore, I hope that the findings of my study could attract other language teachers' attention to this concept.

Task 5.8: Autobiographical Reflection

In some fields, such as education, it is acceptable (and increasingly expected) for the qualitative researcher to include a section describing their <u>personal journey</u> - how doing the research has brought about change in their beliefs and attitudes, in their approaches to professional and academic issues, and so on.

Is this something you intend to include in your final chapter?
Is it something you have discussed with your supervisor? (If not, do!)

If you do want to include an autobiographical section, the extract below may help you shape your ideas. (The student uses two acronyms in the text: <u>DELTA</u> stands for Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults; <u>TEFL</u> stands for Teaching English as Foreign Language).

Underline any expressions about **change and learning** that you think might be useful.
Add them to the empty Language Box on *Autobiographical Reflection* (page 61).

7.4   AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REFLECTION

Undertaking this research study has been an invaluable learning experience. I have gained some understanding of the nature of research and of the cyclical, sometimes messy, nature of the research process. I have learned, for example, that things do not fit neatly into categories and that research can be frustrating and sometimes tedious, yet at other times immensely rewarding and even exhilarating.

This research study has also provided some key ideas which have helped me examine my own professional values, and guidelines for possible changes to my own future practice. As well as adopting the course provider recommendations above for DELTA courses, I intend to explore further the impact of other teacher education courses with which I may be involved, since I now have a growing awareness of how impact might be affected by process factors. I have also begun to question how my colleagues and I come across as course tutors, how much attention we pay to our participants' beliefs about teaching, how much we value what they bring to the classroom and the role that affective factors might play in relation to participants' experiences of our teacher education courses. The research process has also encouraged me to view my own TEFL context within the wider educational field and has provided a wealth of resources from which we can learn in order to improve the quality of TEFL teacher education and development.

Writing up your thesis

You have now reached the end of the Tasks for this unit on writing the Final Chapter.

You can now apply the ideas and language from this unit to drafting or revising the concluding chapter of your thesis.

You may also find it helpful to visit this website for further examples of written academic English relevant for drawing conclusions:

http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/conclusions.htm

Appendix to unit 5

Complete final chapter

I thought you might find it helpful (and inspiring) to read the example below, which is shown exactly as it appeared in an EdD thesis. It illustrates how the Conclusions chapter can provide a concise and effective ending to a qualitative study.

As you read it, think back to my quotation from Silverman at the beginning of this unit:

> Classical symphonies typically end with a fast movement marked allegro or presto. Rather than a mere recapitulation of earlier themes, they take them up and develop them still more. As such, they seem designed to provide listeners with some of the most stimulating material in the composition. So your final chapter is, indeed, necessary. **But it should function to stimulate your readers by demonstrating how your research has stimulated you**.

See whether you think this final chapter does that for you as a reader.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1   CONCLUSIONS

Overall
There was considerable variation in 'journeys' through the Diploma experience. Broadly, eight different journey types were perceived within this group of teachers (Appendix Twelve). The interviewees' experience can be represented as a continuum, with life-changing impact at one end, a pedestrian experience at the other and varying degrees of experience in between.

Impact
Although the degree of impact varied, virtually everyone acknowledged that they had benefited considerably from the course. The perspective of the majority was that impact of the DELTA is substantial, sustained and relevant to subsequent teaching practice. This is a fundamentally optimistic picture of CPD and in line with researchers such as Powell et al (2003), Day (1999), Inglis et al (1992), Cope et al (1992), Bradley and Howard (1992), Williams, R. (2005) and Burchell et al (2002).

The five main areas of impact found in the data (Figure 4.1, p72) extended to: (a) propositional knowledge; (b) practical classroom aspects; (c) personal and psychological aspects; (d) organisational aspects; and (e) aspects relating to the wider TEFL profession. This shows some parallels with Harland and Kinder's typology (1997). The impact described by interviewees was sometimes delayed, a finding in accord with Freeman (1989), Prosser et al (2006) and Knight (2006).

A key accomplishment I would claim for the present study is a five-part typology of impact depth (Figure 4.4, p78): changed beliefs and values; changed teaching persona; development of reflective skills; development of critical thinking skills; and identifying the course as a key developmental experience.

Background to taking the course
Interviewees' motivation could be categorised into three broad types: extrinsic motivation, relating to institutions; extrinsic motivation, for personal reasons; and intrinsic motivation. A key finding was that those who gave intrinsic reasons ultimately described deep outcomes which corresponded to at least two of the five 'inner core' areas of deep impact described above (Figure 5.2, p102).

Where intrinsic motivation was absent or unacknowledged, deep impact was possible but less predictable. A key issue here is receptivity to learning: those who cited intrinsic reasons for taking the course were almost, by definition, receptive to learning from the outset. Those whose arrival on the programme was for extrinsic reasons often had to develop this 'receptivity' during the course.

A curious finding was that those interviewees who already had a strong professional self-identity before coming on the programme, and were therefore more confident of their skills, were least likely to describe 'deep' impact, and more likely to describe clashes of perspective with the course tutors. In this sense the DELTA appears to function better for those seeking a stronger sense of professional identity.

Virtually all those interviewed stressed that substantial prior teaching experience, before coming on the course, was the vital bedrock for learning on the DELTA.

Learning experiences
Highly favoured modes of learning were: discussion, interaction, experiential learning, reflection, mentoring, modelling, receiving constructive feedback on teaching practice. Transmission of propositional knowledge was not favoured by anyone in the study. This relates to the writings of Williams, M. (2003), Williams, R. (2005), Singh and Richards (2006), Lamb (1995), Roberts (1998), Gaudart (1994), Freeman (1994) and Kolb (1993).

Feedback on assessed practice was seen as a key learning tool, but the quality of feedback often came in for criticism. Some trainees identified a lack of balance between the positive and the negative, and many felt that positive feedback was as vital in language teacher education as in language teaching. Mentoring support, both during and following the course, was felt to be relevant and valuable by many interviewees, although this is not always offered by institutions.

The DELTA tutors, and their teaching styles, were universally experienced as critical to the success of the exercise. 'Good' tutors were seen as excellent models, enthusiastic about the DELTA course, providing good positive feedback and a lot of support, and inspirational to the trainees. 'Poor' tutors were seen as those who were not engaged, those who lectured, those who tended mainly to give negative feedback, those who were incongruent in their teaching styles and those who failed to acknowledge existing skills and prior learning. Thus the requirements of a DELTA tutor, if the programme is to run successfully, are much more than technical competence in their field of education.

Fellow course participants were also seen as important in a successful DELTA programme. Some interviewees even said that their learning from other students was the most important aspect of their learning. This connects with writing by Day (1999), Dadds (1997) and Eraut (1994). This suggests also that some attention to group cohesion is an important aspect of the DELTA tutor's role.

Developmental continuity
The possible explanations for impact lead to a tentative theory of developmental continuity, in other words, suggestions as to why and in what circumstances CPD has a chance of working. Further research would need to be conducted to establish whether this theory holds or not, but it is consistent with the data in the present study. In Chapter Five I discussed the PRACTICE – THEORY – PRACTICE model. The data suggests that CPD is most effective when the two transition phases, at the beginning and the end of the course (and model), are both smooth and pro-actively managed, that is, professional development is seen to have continuity. In the case of the DELTA, the pre-course transition has continuity if (see Chapter Five):
- *participants are independently motivated (whether intrinsic or extrinsic)*
- *participants' professional self-identity is such that they recognise their own learning needs in relation to the DELTA*
- *pre-course experience is sufficient to be a basis for effective learning*
- *the DELTA provides opportunities to bring learning from prior practice into the course experience, and to draw upon this during the course.*

The post-course transition has continuity if DELTA graduates (see Chapter Four):
- *can work in an establishment where their qualification and new-found skills are recognised*
- *can start to apply the learning from the course to their practice*
- *have the chance for their increased motivation, enthusiasm and changed professional identity to*

consolidate and flourish (in the ideal world with support in the form of mentoring).
A key point is that the impact of the course is determined not solely by the course itself but also by important pre- and post-course factors.

A hybrid model of CPD and its wider implications
The solidity of this PRACTICE – THEORY – PRACTICE model is further supported by the fact that the DELTA offers a 'complete' package or an 'integrated unit'. The DELTA has the characteristics of a pre-service professional education course in that it involves academic learning, pedagogical learning and classroom training (see Chapter Four). However, in contrast to the 'front-loading' of theory on many initial professional education courses, criticised by writers such as Eraut (1994) and Freeman (1994, 2002), the DELTA takes place *after* teachers have already started their teaching careers, with the result that the theoretical learning on the course is seen as more relevant and can be better integrated into their practical classroom experience.

In this sense the DELTA is a hybrid model of professional development, an in-service course with pre-service characteristics, and is consistent with Eraut's claim that '*the potential of work-related … mid-career professional education is underestimated*' (1994, p12). The receptivity to in-service learning generated by prior teaching experience, as many participants in this study have testified, together with the opportunity during the course to integrate theory and practice, to which they also bore witness, provide a potentially solid foundation for impact to take place. Although this study was specific to the DELTA context, it is nevertheless possible that this hybrid model may contain some pointers to the ways in which CPD in general could be developed in other fields of education in the future.

Methodology
The theme of 'retrospective' perceptions proved to be a viable method of accessing material. Although Bennett (1999) was investigating adults' perceptions of their schooling, there are considerable parallels in this respect: '…*retrospective autobiographical reflection offers a different kind of perspective on the meaning and benefits of formal education than that offered by other forms of evaluation. With the advantage of both hindsight and maturity, and with the ability to apply the 'test of time', adults can more easily identify the worth of both key features and critical phases in their earlier schooling*' (p173).

Although other methods may well have been possible, the phenomenographic case study also proved to be a satisfactory way of approaching the subject area of this project, given its particular emphasis on collective experience, and recurrent or shared themes.

The viability of semi-structured interviews had already been established at the pilot stage. The main study also showed that the interview process was not merely fruitful from a research perspective but also represented a meaningful exercise for the interviewees themselves. Many said they had both enjoyed and gained something from taking part in the study.

7.2   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It should be borne in mind that the study has a number of limitations:
- There were no interview questions specifically relating to learning processes, professional self-identity and post-course transitions, which, upon analysing the data, appear to be concepts of some importance in the study. This is perhaps one of the weaknesses of an exploratory study but does suggest a direction for further research.
- Due to the limitations of part-time doctoral study and full-time work, the main study interviews were held within a relatively short time period with only transcription time in between. More time between interviews to analyse/ponder/read would have been useful. Transcribing the interviews did provide some thinking time but this was only ever fleeting in the circumstances.
- The possibility of bias existed since I interviewed four of my own students. However, I have been transparent about this and I believe they were very honest in what they said (their transcripts certainly do not read any more positively than the others; in fact, they are quite blunt about some of the more negative issues).
- The research method uses only interviews, but it is difficult to access retrospective perceptions in any other way. I have tried to use DELTA documentation where appropriate and have also checked the findings with two other DELTA-qualified teachers.

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7.3   PROFESSIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

I present this in three sections: to the DELTA validating body, to DELTA course providers and to prospective DELTA trainees.

A.   TO CAMBRIDGE ESOL (DELTA VALIDATING/AWARDING BODY)

1.   Previous teaching experience
In view of the findings reported in Chapter Five, previous teaching experience appears to be an important foundation on which to base the DELTA learning experience. It is therefore advisable that the importance of sufficient experience should continue to be emphasised.

The Cambridge ESOL webpages pertaining to the old, now superseded (since September 2008), DELTA suggest that two years is a recommended minimum. The webpages pertaining to the new DELTA modules (see Appendix One for more details), however, state that '*Candidates … will normally have an initial ELT qualification and will have had at least **a year's ELT experience** but these are not requirements*' (my emphasis) and '*…previous teaching experience is strongly recommended… This is to ensure that candidates have sufficient prior knowledge and experience to benefit from the course'* (p4). The Handbook (p3) also states that for Modules 1 and 3 teaching experience is recommended but that for Module Two ('Developing Professional Practice') it is required.

Although the Cambridge ESOL website still suggests a minimum period of pre-course teaching experience, this has been reduced by a year, and more is being left to the course providers' discretion. The website makes a brief statement (see previous paragraph) about the link between the course and prior teaching experience but does not make clear how important this is to the integration of theory and practice during the course. Reducing the recommended prior experience to one year may not be advantageous since teachers are likely still to be at the 'survival stage' of teaching. In addition, they are likely only to have experienced one teaching context; being able to relate new learning to more than one context allows for better integration of learning and a stronger foundation upon which to address the demands of the written assignments.

2.   Course tutors
Chapter Six demonstrates that it was not only tutor knowledge and skills which were deemed important; tutor qualities such as engagement, enthusiasm and understanding, and behaviours such as modelling and supporting were also viewed as highly relevant. Cambridge ESOL produces thorough stipulations on the extensive training that new DELTA course tutors must undertake before being accepted as authorised course tutors. While these clear training guidelines are praiseworthy in their detail, it may be useful to highlight the interpersonal and affective as well as cognitive aspects of being a tutor. This is reflected in Freedman's recommendation (1985, p252) that Diploma trainers needed '*interpersonal training in which communication skills are fostered*'.

3.   Modes of learning
Certain DELTA modules may now be offered on-line (see Appendix One). It would be helpful if these include discussion forums that are both tutor-mediated and non-tutor-mediated. Chapter Six of the thesis has shown that interaction with fellow students was perceived useful in both scaffolding learning and providing much-needed emotional support. Course providers of both on-line and face-to-face courses could also pair/group participants so that they have a formal opportunity for peer support during their course.

4.   Research course impact
Given that Cambridge ESOL view DELTA as their '*flagship teaching qualification*' (Zeronis, 2007, p4), perhaps the time has come for them to conduct some large-scale research of their own into the impact of the DELTA. When considering major changes to the structuring of the DELTA, Cambridge ESOL conducted a wide-ranging evaluation and review process (Zeronis, 2007, p5). The DELTA was modularised as a result (see Appendix One). Once the new Delta modules have been running for several years, the time might be ripe for Cambridge ESOL to commission an independent research study, possibly a comparison of perceptions between those who took the new modular DELTA and those who took the previous, non-modular version. Chapter Four of this thesis suggests that there is some considerable perceived impact; it

would be worthwhile for this to be confirmed/refuted on a wider scale, not simply as an evaluation study but as an investigation into the value of the DELTA for its graduates and the learning outcomes generated by the course, in the manner of Bird et al (2005), Butcher and Sieminski (2006), or Powell et al (2003).

B.   TO DELTA COURSE PROVIDERS

PRE-COURSE

1.   Pre-course experience
Candidates should have sufficient pre-course experience (see point 1, pp144-145).

2.   Readiness
Chapter Five suggests that motivation needs to be in place if the applicants are to be able to engage with the course in sufficient depth for the impact to be substantial. This can be discussed at interview, but schools should engage with their own teachers about their readiness to take the course, and if possible facilitate the emergence of personal motivation without 'pushing' them.

One way of helping to manage participants' expectations and stimulate receptivity towards the professional learning experience may be to include on a course website transcripts or audio texts with DELTA graduates discussing the professional changes they experienced and the best way to prepare for the course.

3.   Pre-course tasks
Pre-course tasks could be set which encourage teachers to reflect on their teaching. This might help to strengthen motivation and sharpen feelings of receptivity towards professional development, but the findings in Chapter Five also suggest that relating learning to previous experience was a common process. Raising awareness of the complex factors which make up any teaching context may help to lay in place the foundation upon which this integration process can be based.

DURING THE COURSE

1.   The course teaching team (Chapter Six)
A teaching team should comprise at least three tutors (Freedman [1985, p252] also recommends '*more than one or two trainers*'), all of whom, as far as possible: have recent classroom experience; keep up-to-date with methodology/techniques; have been trained in giving post-observation feedback to experienced teachers; have an understanding of both adult and teacher learning; adopt a personal teaching style where they engage both on an individual and group level with course participants, and value what participants bring to the course.

2.   Learning processes (Chapter Six)
A programme should include a variety of different learning processes, with lecturing kept to a minimum. Participants should be encouraged to capitalise on their own learning styles and strengths, and on supporting/learning from each other.

3.   Exploring pre-course experience (Chapter Five)
A programme should explore not only beliefs, but also participants' previous experience. Participants should be explicitly helped to relate new learning to previous experience and vice versa, and to adopt/modify new learning so that it is relevant to their work situation.

4.   Mentoring (Chapter Six)
An ideal programme should provide support for improving teaching, also recommended by Freedman (1985, p252), as training alone is not enough (Elmore, 2000, p47). A mentoring scheme where course participants share a teaching situation with experienced teachers is ideal. The helping processes should include: receiving feedback on non-assessed teaching; planning and teaching lessons together; being supported through the process of constructing a lesson plan.

POST-COURSE

Post-course support
DELTA graduates should continue to be supported in their post-course teaching, since it has been shown that impact is not necessarily immediate and the potential benefits are vulnerable unless the process is fully supported. In addition, academic managers should utilise the enthusiasm, motivation and confidence that many DELTA graduates bring to their teaching, through asking them to mentor other teachers and expanding their roles in other ways.

C.   TO PROSPECTIVE DELTA COURSE PARTICIPANTS
These recommendations form different types of 'preparedness' for the DELTA experience.

1.   When to take the Diploma course
The findings in Chapter Five suggest that it is helpful if prospective participants feel 'ready' and are not simply undertaking the course at the behest of an employer. If participants can be honest with themselves about their motivations for doing the course, this may help them and their tutors. Future DELTA participants would do well to reflect on the most appropriate time for their own professional and life circumstances.

Developing receptivity to a professional development experience may be helped by talking to another person in the same position, and talking to more experienced colleagues who have already taken the DELTA course (as Chapter Five suggests that motivation can be socially constructed).

2.   Managing expectations: Possibility of major changes
Prospective DELTA candidates should be prepared for change and for honest and constructive feedback on their teaching. The findings in Chapter Six show that this is not always easy; being prepared in advance may help to ease the process.

3.   Managing expectations: Types of change
Chapter Four shows that impact can come in many forms. Trainees can organise their own expectations of the course by reflecting on the areas where change might happen, the areas in which they feel learning 'needs' to take place, and the kind of knowledge/skills/ behaviours/approaches they would like to acquire. One means of achieving this might be to analyse their own lessons in a structured way, for example, why certain approaches/techniques/materials seem to 'work' or not 'work' in class. Talking to former DELTA participants, especially if they are familiar colleagues, about the impact they perceived might also help to clarify, organise and widen expectations of the course.

4.   Professional identity (Chapter Five)
Pre-Diploma teachers might benefit from reflecting on their own professional identity as an EFL teacher. In their own view, where do they see themselves, both on their own career trajectory and also on the teaching trajectory from novice to advanced teacher? Where are they now and where would they ultimately like to be? How closely do they identify themselves with the overall community of EFL practitioners and with their own teaching community?

5.   Preparation for integrating theory and practice
DELTA trainees may benefit from reading EFL methodology books and attending teacher development sessions prior to the course, and from trying to relate what they read/hear to their own teaching. The purposes are partly to familiarise themselves with concepts/terminology, but more importantly to begin the process (Chapter Five) of anchoring new learning within their own prior knowledge and experience.

6.   Learning styles (Chapter Six)
Before/during the course Diploma participants could consider how they normally prefer to learn. They need to optimise what works best for them while remaining open to other methods. When making the choice of whether to take a full-time, part-time or distance learning option (see Appendix One), this point should also be borne in mind.

7.   Integrating theory and practice
During the course it is advisable for DELTA participants to keep their own learners in mind. The findings in Chapter Five suggest that interviewees learned through relating new ideas to their own prior teaching and the context(s) with which they were familiar.

8.   Seeking professional support during the course
If mentoring support is not provided as part of the course structure, participants could seek out another EFL teacher with whom they can discuss ideas, lesson plans and new theoretical concepts. Although they will no doubt gain help from fellow participants, interacting with another person who is not undergoing the same experience might provide the mentoring opportunity that the interviewees in this study so appreciated (Chapter Six) and which many writers advocate (for example, Day, 1999; Elmore, 2000; Dadds, 1997; Singh and Richards, 2006).

7.4   AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REFLECTION

Undertaking this research study has been an invaluable learning experience. I have gained some understanding of the nature of research and of the cyclical, sometimes messy, nature of the research process. I have learned, for example, that things do not fit neatly into categories and that research can be frustrating and sometimes tedious, yet at other times immensely rewarding and even exhilarating.

This research study has also provided some key ideas which have helped me examine my own professional values, and guidelines for possible changes to my own future practice. As well as adopting the course provider recommendations above for DELTA courses, I intend to explore further the impact of other teacher education courses with which I may be involved, since I now have a growing awareness of how impact might be affected by process factors. I have also begun to question how my colleagues and I come across as course tutors, how much attention we pay to our participants' beliefs about teaching, how much we value what they bring to the classroom and the role that affective factors might play in relation to participants' experiences of our teacher education courses. The research process has also encouraged me to view my own TEFL context within the wider educational field and has provided a wealth of resources from which we can learn in order to improve the quality of TEFL teacher education and development.

Final words
Whatever criticisms of the DELTA have been made by the participants in this study, the strongest single theme in their evaluations of their own learning is that this is a sound, valuable, well-integrated programme, containing most of the key ingredients of successful learning and development, and which none of the twenty interviewees regretted having taken. My own view, today, is that this fundamentally optimistic picture nevertheless leaves the DELTA as fruitful ground for further study aimed at refining the programme to the point where it is a model of educational excellence.

6 The First Few Pages

Task 6.1

Have you read any other PhD theses in the course of your research?

If so, when you were deciding whether a particular thesis was <u>relevant to your work</u>, which parts of the thesis did you read?

Write in the numbers 1, 2, 3 etc. next to the parts listed below, to show <u>the order in which you would read them</u> to decide whether it was worth reading the whole thesis.

NB: One of the parts listed is not normally part of a thesis.

Title	**Abstract**
Contents	**Acknowledgments**
Introduction	**Literature review**
Methodology chapter	**Data discussion chapter(s)**
Conclusion	**References**
Appendices	**Index**

At the beginning of his section on Writing Up, Silverman (2000) emphasises the importance of 'the first few pages':

> If you follow my advice and devote most attention to your data analysis chapters, then you may tend to treat these beginnings as routine matters, speedily disposed of. However, <u>the impression you create at the start of your dissertation is very important</u> and the writing of the first few pages should never be regarded as…a triviality"
>
> (2000: 221, underlining added)

Task 6.2

Who do you want your thesis to impress?

Who do you need to impress most – or, perhaps, first?

What sort of impression do you want to create with your 'first few pages'?

The Title

Titles should catch the reader's attention while properly informing them about the main focus of your research (Silverman 2000: 222)

Some students keep to the thesis title they composed in their first year of research; others change their title towards the end of their research, when they know precisely what their final thesis will be.

The title for your thesis is only 'fixed' from the point when you send in an *Intention to Submit* form to your College office (see the copy on page 79). You do that at least two months before you expect to submit the thesis, to allow the College time to find and invite two academics to act as Examiners of your thesis. The title that appears on your thesis has to be the same as in your *Intention to Submit* form. However, it is possible for the Examiners to recommend a change of title at the oral examination, for example, if they feel you should give greater emphasis to a particular aspect of your work.

Task 6.3
Here are two versions of a PhD thesis title. One was the student's working title and the other her final title. Which one do you think was which – and why do you think that?

Early-stage French as a Foreign Language in Taiwan: a case study involving L2 oral proficiency, motivation and social presence in synchronous computer-mediated communication

Early-stage L2 oral proficiency development in synchronous CMC

Task 6.4
Have a look at the six thesis titles below. Comment on format, punctuation (including capital letters) and use of abbreviations

---

1. *Front desk talk: A study of interaction between receptionists and patients in general practice surgeries*

2. *Developing interactional listening strategies in a foreign language: A study of two classroom approaches*

3. *Classroom discourse and participation in an English for Specific Purposes context*

4. *Noticing tasks in a university EFL presentation course in Japan: Their effect on oral output*

5. *Extensive reading and L2 development: a study of Hong Kong secondary learners of English*

6. *Systematising EAP materials development: Design, evaluation and revision in a Thai undergraduate reading course*

Title writing task
Is your current title a 'single' title, like number 3 above, or it a two-part title with a colon, like the others? Write it out as a two-part title. Then ask another student to suggest any improvements or corrections. See whether you think they would enhance your title.

The Abstract

Some books on academic writing say that the Abstract is often what the student writes last, in reporting their own research. But in the case of a PhD thesis, the Abstract has to be submitted some weeks ahead of handing in the thesis, so you will probably find yourself making changes and adjustments to your thesis text *after* you have sent in the Abstract.

It is worth taking time and trouble over the Abstract because, for many potential readers of your work, it will be on the basis of your Abstract that they decide whether or not to read the whole thesis.

Classically, a full abstract contains the following elements:

- **B**ackground   the key background information in brief
- **P**urpose   the principal aim and scope of your research
- **M**ethod   concise summary of the method(s) you used
- **R**esults   the main findings of your study
- **C**onclusion   the overall conclusion and/or recommendations

---

Task 6.5

Check the thesis abstract below. Has the student included all five classic Abstract components? Write in **B**, **P**, **M**, **R** or **C** against each sentence.

The original text was set out as four paragraphs. Mark the places where you think the student divided it.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the potential benefits for language development of the inclusion of *Focus on Form* (FoF) tasks in a university EFL oral academic presentation course in Japan. Previous work on FoF activities suggests that they can help learners to notice divergences between their spoken output and the target language, and to reconsider their hypotheses about the target language, and that this process might lead to subsequent improvements in their output. While the majority of previous research involves FoF that is controlled by the teacher, this study examines how the students noticed and reflected on language without the teacher's direct assistance. In addition, sociocultural theory looks at ways in which cognitive development arises from social interaction. This study adopted this approach in identifying ways in which the students made language gains. The students were asked to note down any new language they had noticed and, working from transcripts of their recorded presentations, to collaborate in groups in scrutinising their own oral output and correcting any mistakes they found in it. Recordings of their discussions were also included in the noticing data. Meanwhile, recordings of the students' oral output, as represented by a series of class presentations, were made in order to see whether there was any development in the use of the form that the students attended to during the

noticing tasks. An analysis of the data revealed that the students noticed more language forms as they became more practised in the noticing tasks. In general, they focused their attention on a wide variety of forms, although there was a degree of variation at the individual level, and there was evidence that group tasks resulted to more noticing than tasks completed alone. Tracking the students' spoken English over seven months revealed improvements in the vocabulary and grammar forms the students had focused on. As regards sociocultural theory, the thesis also shows how elements of 'dialogic interaction' in the students' collaboration helped enhance their knowledge and use of English. These include contributions from a more capable peer (although expert roles switched even within a single discussion), collective scaffolding, and the achievement of intersubjectivity. The study suggests that students are able to notice language form and make language gains through form-focused elements in task-based instruction. In particular, group work within such a framework might benefit language learning, both in terms of the amount of noticing it promotes, and of the effects of collaboration, from which learners can gain new insights into the second language.

The key to writing an effective abstract is to have a clear focus on being <u>concise</u> and selecting only the <u>most salient</u> details of your research. There is always a word limit or a space limit. As you will see on the next page, the *Intention to Submit* form for PhD theses at Edinburgh requires you to type your Abstract into roughly half a page - or around 300 words, depending on your paragraph breaks.

(When the time comes, check the *Intention to Submit* form for your College to make sure it is still the same).

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

See the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees available at:
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment

Name of Candidate:		*UUN*	S
University email:			
Address :			
Post Code:			

Degree Sought:		*No. of words in the main text of Thesis:*	
Title of Thesis:			

Insert the abstract text here - the space will expand as you type

This box will only allow you to type as far as the end of the page, which will probably be about 280-300 words. You cannot use a font smaller than Pitch 12. Let's see how many words it will end up at... This box will only allow you to type as far as the end of the page, which will probably be about 280-300 words. You cannot use a font smaller than Pitch 12. Let's see how many words it will end up at...

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The Contents Pages

Task 6.6

Does anybody actually read the Contents Pages?

What are they for?

What do you think is their most important purpose?

Task 6.7

On the next two pages are single-page extracts from the Contents of two theses. Do you think one is better – in the ways you have mentioned in Task 6.6?

The Contents Pages

The Acknowledgments

The Acknowledgments are the most personal part of your thesis, where you have the opportunity to express your gratitude to all the people who have helped you over the three or more years you have spent on your PhD research. Obviously, your Acknowledgments will not be assessed and you will not be failed on the basis of what you write there. However, from a socio-cultural perspective, there are certain constraints on what is appropriate.

Task 6.8
Examples A-C were quoted in an article on cultural expectations in academic writing (Bloor & Bloor, 1991) and come from international Master's students' dissertations. Read them and see whether, in each case, you think anything about what the student has written is inappropriate. (Or do they seem OK to you?).

A.   *I owe a debt of gratitude to (NAME), my supervisor whose perspicacious advice and guidance has enabled me to carry out this arduous study. Her amazing zeal is only matched by her wondrous teaching skills and impressive learning.*

B.   *I owe a great deal of my work to my wife, who is only a nurse and scarcely knows English nor teacher training, but did her best to collect materials and send them to me.*

C.   *The work of writing this dissertation has been a cooperative venture and I am grateful to (NAME of friend), who helped me a great deal.*

Task 6.9
It is not only non-native writers who can find it difficult to strike the right stylistic note. Below is an extract from a US student's Acknowledgments. What do you think of his choice of content and language?

Before you read it, check that you understand the meaning of the word 'insane'.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the ten exemplary school library media specialists who helped with this research for their participation. I would like to thank the members of my committee for their extreme patience in the face of numerous obstacles. I would like to thank my fellow doctoral students—those who have moved on, those in the quagmire, and those just beginning—for their support, feedback, and friendship. I would like to thank the staffers at CLIS and in the HCIL for the "noms" and the last minute favors. I would like to thank the new assistant professors for sharing their dissertation woes, and a glimmer of hope for post-dissertation normalcy. I would like to thank my friends, especially the "Usual Suspects," for accepting nothing less than completion from me. I would like to thank my insanely large / largely insane family for taking the blows and giving me a chance to thrive.

http://hdl.handle.net/1903/9915

Task 6.10 – and lastly…
It is <u>usual</u> for a PhD student to thank their supervisor. Do you think it is <u>necessary</u>? What might be the consequences of not including her/him in the Acknowledgments?

Writing up your PhD (Qualitative Research)

Independent Study notes (for students using the IS version of the course)

Unit 1 – Structure and Introduction

Task 1.1 Mason does not mention quantitative research explicitly.

She makes positive comments on what qualitative studies allow researchers to do; by implication she is saying that quantitative research <u>cannot</u> do those things. Her basic point is captured in the list of aspects - richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity – that qualitative research aims for; in contrast, (she says) quantitative research finds them an embarrassment and an inconvenience.

(The final part of Task 1.1 is an open question).

Task 1.2 It is an <u>unfolding story</u> because, Holliday's words, it is "an interactive process in which [the writer] tries to untangle and make reflexive sense of her own presence and role in the research".

(Parts 2-4 of Task 1.2 = open questions)

Task 1.3 There is evidence that the three non-science fields use both **"we"** and **"I"**, while the three science fields do not use **"I"**.

Reasons? - Apart from any beliefs/attitudes that science is more 'neutral' and 'impersonal', there is the practical fact that the table shows data from journal articles (not PhD theses). It could be that it is more common for research papers submitted to journals in Marketing, Philosophy and Sociology by **single** authors, and for most/all papers sent to science journals to be written by **two or more researchers**.

Task 1.4 I would say: in the Acknowledgments (for all types of PhD thesis), and in the case of a qualitative thesis I would expect to find **"I"** in most chapters – perhaps not in the Literature Review.

Task 1.5 What is very odd is the writer's use of the Passive. One would expect the most personal expression in a thesis to be in the Acknowledgements; here there's no mention of **"I / me / my"** and an avoidance of Active verbs.

Tasks **1.6-1.8** are open questions.

Task 1.9 Firstly, there is a difference in numbers: Holliday's seven boxes and Silverman's five elements. Secondly, they use different terms for what seem to be the same things: e.g. Holliday's *Description of Research Procedures* and Silverman's *Methodology*; and H's *Conclusion* versus S's *Final Chapter.* (In Unit 5 we will see why Silverman chose to avoid the word *conclusion*).

I think the student's Chapter 1 = Silverman's A; her Chapters 2+3 = his B; her Chapter 4 = C; her Chapters 5-7 = D; and her Chapter 7 = E. Do you agree?

1.10 This is quite difficult to tell from the Contents Pages, but in fact the first and third set of contents are from qualitative theses. The middle one was a 'mixed-method' study; the "two analyses" in Chapter 9 were quantitative and qualitative.

1.11 The data chapters were Chapters 4-7. As you will see, the student did not call her final chapter "Conclusions'.

1.12 I think the 12 listed items represent ten different elements:
- Statement of a gap / lack of research
- Reason for student's interest
- Method of research
- Research questions

- Terminology
- Context for the study
- Signposting/orientating the reader
- Specific focus of study
- Research aim
- Value/benefit of the study

1.13   The 'justification' appears in the sentence beginning "*As far as I am aware…*"

Unit 2 – The Literature Review

Task 2.1 is an open question. The important point here is to get supervisors' guidance.

2.2   Another problem is that in some fields research develops rapidly, so 'early' sources may become out of date.

2.3   Open questions, again, but the key is for students to be self-critical about their literature review and make sure there is a clear development of argument and themes.

2.4   The main difference lies in the scope of the two students' literature reviews. The first student presented her review in a single chapter (with headings for separate sub-sections, which do not appear in the Contents here). The second spread her review over six chapters (2-7), each on a theme relevant to her research. It is also the case that the first is from a qualitative thesis, while the second student carried out 'mixed-methods' research; that might have been one factor in the first student's decision to make her literature review relatively short.

2.5   Question 1 – I think she used a roughly similar number of the two types of citation. I reckon there are five author prominent citations, and four research prominent).

Question 2 – according to my reading, there are six direct quotations and ten summaries. Generally, the advice to students in Britain is to use <u>summary</u> rather than direct quotation, since a good summary is considered to show a better grasp of a topic than (merely) using the original authors' words.

(In case it's helpful, at the end of these notes on Unit 2, you will find my annotated copy of the whole extract, with colour coding to show the two types of citation and the student's use of summary and direct quotation. The specific details matter less than the overall 'picture' – namely, that this student chose to use the various citing devices at the academic writer's disposal, and avoided making her text over-repetitive).

2.6   I found four in the extract: '**According to** Oxford…'; '**Following** Oxford…; '**In Donato's view**…; and '**For Vygotsky**…'. The advantage of these citing phrases is that they offer a very economical way of showing an author's ideas and arguments, without having to keep repeating **Author + reporting verb**.

2.7   Yes, I think the student's use of tenses does match the Feaks & Swales advice. In this particular case, though, one factor in tense choice is that the Soviet psychologist Vygotsky did his research in the early 20th century and died in the 1930s; for that reason there is a tendency to used Past Simple when citing him. On the other hand, his sociocultural theory and various concepts like the ZPD are still current in various academic fields; I just tried googling for Present Simple "Vygotsky argues" and found some 8,000 hits; "Vygotsky argued" (Past Simple) brought me 11,000 hits – a smaller difference than one might expect, for someone who died 80 years ago!

2.8   These are open questions.

2.9   In the same group as '**argue**' I would put the following: *allege* (though this would be found mainly in law texts); *assert, assume, deny, object, portray, depict, regard* and *view*. In other words, I think a sentence using any of those reporting verbs could be followed by a sentence where the student cites evidence or arguments <u>against</u> the view expressed by the author(s) just cited.

In the '**demonstrate**' group I would put: *prove, reveal* and *identify.* I would not expect the student to follow the use of any of those reporting verbs with reasons for not accepting the point just cited.

My annotated version of the Collaborative Learning extract:

Pink = **research prominent** citation, with several sources listed at end
Light blue = **author prominent** citation, with name near/at the beginning

Yellow = where the student **summarises** source material
Green = where she uses **direct quotation**

Grey = **citing phrases** (instead of reporting verbs)

Collaborative learning: The socio-cultural perspective

As we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, metacognitive and cognitive strategies can promote foreign language reading performance, and text simplification is likely to produce more accessible texts for foreign language readers. In this chapter, **I will extend my review of** the theoretical framework underlying the design of my learning and teaching tasks, which are intended to encourage learners' foreign language development.

Introduction
Research on collaborative interaction in language learning classrooms **has drawn on** Vygotsky's (1978) notions of the *zone of proximal development*, *scaffolding*, and *private speech*, which **are claimed to** play an important role in facilitating foreign language   learners' language learning processes (de Guerrero & Villamil, 1994; 2000; Ewald, 2005; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Ohta, 1995; 2001; Oxford, 1997). **According to** Oxford (1997), collaborative learning, which has a strong connection with socio-cultural theory, centres on the notion that an individual's knowledge comes from communication with others.

The term *collaborative learning* **used in this study conveys a distinct meaning** from the term *cooperative learning*. That is, **following Oxford** (1997), cooperative learning **tends to be** more structured and is intended to enhance learners' cognitive, communicative as well as social skills in the target language, whereas collaborative learning **appears to be** less structured and attempts to engage learners through social interactions into knowledge communities. Oxford (1997) **defines** collaborative learning, which is relevant to the context of the study—in which students of mixed ability discuss the meaning of foreign language texts in small group activity— **as**:

> *"Collaborative learning is a reacculturative process that helps students become members of the knowledge communities whose common property is different from the common property of knowledge communities they already belong to"* (p.444).

Donato (2004) **emphasises** that collaborative work involves "a meaningful core activity and the social relations that develop as a result of jointly constructed goals for the common endeavour" (p.286). Collaboration, **in Donato's view**, also refers to the acceptance of members' contributions to the activity and the establishment of intersubjectivity within groups. **This notion is intended to distinguish** *collaboration* **from** the commonly-used term *interaction*, or what he calls "*loosely knit configurations of individuals*" (Donato, 2004, p.298).

In the next three sections, I will discuss three interrelated areas grounded on Vygotsky's theory— '*the zone of proximal development*', '*scaffolding*', and '*private speech*'—followed by studies on collaborative interactions in foreign language learning contexts.

Zone of proximal development

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the metaphor **Vygotsky (1978) proposed** as a way to explain the process of an individual's internalisation of knowledge and skills through social forms of mediation. More specifically, **the ZPD refers to** the distance between one's actual development achieved by oneself and one's potential future development through the assistance of the expert or

more skillful peers (Cole, 1985; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Leontiev, 1987; Rogoff, 1995; van Lier, 1996). Vygotsky (1978) **characterised** the notion of the ZPD as follows:

> "*An essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement*" (p.90).

Again, Vygotsky **referred to** the actual development level, already established in the child's mental functions, and the level of potential development, which **is built up** by guided support from more capable individuals through problem solving activity (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p.266). The assistance from others eventually **becomes** one's self-regulation; in other words, through the support from others, an individual or learner **can** over an extended period **move** from other-regulation to self-regulation (Ohta, 2001). **This process** of gradually moving from depending on others' guidance to becoming more independent in manipulating one's own language use and mental activity **is called** '*internalisation*' (Donato, 1994; Wertsch, 1985). **Vygotsky's notion** of how knowledge is internalised **is regarded as 'outside-in'**, because once interaction or relationships with others are established, knowledge **can** then **be** internalised, constituting the process of cognitive development.

For Vygotsky, these processes of internalisation **entail two crucial stages** of developmental learning: (1) the stage related to the social level and (2) the one related to the individual level. The social level **primarily involves** interactions between individuals, whereas the latter **concerns** the inner part of the individual. Vygotsky (1978, p.57) proposed that:

> "*Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals*".

Wertsch and Stone (1985) **emphasised the importance of** Vygotskian developmental theory in the educational context **and argued that** all developmental processes occurred from social processes and then internal functioning. **They summarised their views** on the internalisation processes as follows:

> "*We will argue, however, that the Vygotskian formulation involves two unique premises. First, for Vygotsky, internalisation is primarily concerned with social processes. Second, Vygotsky's account is based largely on an analysis of the semiotic mechanism, especially language, that mediates social and individual functioning. Thus, internalisation is viewed as part of a larger picture concerned with how consciousness emerges out of human social life. The overall developmental scheme begins with external social activity and ends with internal individual activity*" (Wertsch and Stone, 1985, p. 164).

We therefore need to take into consideration both the external (social) and the internal (individual) when it comes to the basic idea of internalisation, or individual development through social interaction (Donato, 1994; Oxford, 1997; Wertsch & Stone, 1985).

The concept of the ZPD and internalisation **has played a key role in** both psychology and pedagogies, including foreign language instruction. In order to integrate the notion of the ZPD into foreign language pedagogy, van Lier (1996) **argues** that the teacher needs to be advised to ensure that all kinds of teaching take place in the ZPD through pedagogical scaffolding. Likewise, Ellis (2003, p.180) **views the ZPD as the crucial construct** in language learning, because it **provides an insight into** why learners do not succeed in acquiring and using some foreign language structures, despite external forms of mediation; why they are able to use some structures with the support from others, but not independently; and how learners' internalisation process occurs.

In the next sections I turn first to the specific role of *scaffolding* within Vygotsky's socio-cultural view of foreign language instruction and then to the notion of *private speech*.

Unit 3 – Methodology

Task 3.1 *Contested underpinnings* are underlying assumptions are controversial or disputed.

Contingent data: data that 'happened to be' available at the time it was collected; for example, if a classroom researcher happened to record a lesson in which a pupil cried, that data could well be interesting abut might not be typical, even of the context in which it occurred.

Non-random suggests some bias or unconscious influence on the selection of cases; a researcher who asked his closest colleagues to participate in a survey might end up with responses similar to those he would have given himself, if the reason for his friendship with those people was a similarity of outlook on the topic under study.

3.2   Murcott's first three points seem to me to be covered, but Holliday's list does not explicitly include the second part of Murcott's final point - "Why those <u>and not others</u>?"

3.3   Holliday does not specifically mention **ethics**; both the students do (in sections 4.4.3 and 3.1.6). The writer of Chapter 4 also discusses the **problems she anticipated** she might encounter in collecting her data. Both writers mention the **participants** in the context of their research: teachers, receptionists, etc.

3.4-3.5   (open questions)

3.6   There are several cases that may, at first, look like a Passive which are not Passives, in fact, but the Verb TO BE+ Adjective; those are shaded grey in the text below. The four real Passives are <u>underlined</u>.

3.4.2 Access

The problem of access was twofold. First there was the question of physical access to practices, which have tight security and are designed to keep out intruders. For example, arriving at the first practice I attended early on a mid-December morning, I found myself in a cold, wet car park before daylight, unable to get in to the practice to set up my equipment before the front doors opened to patients because the back door was also locked and had no bell. This also happened at the second practice, though in better weather conditions. By the time I approached the third practice, experience had taught me that it would be better to begin recording <u>just after the front door was opened</u>.

The second problem of access related to when it was appropriate either to ask questions of receptionists which would clarify work practices or simply to engage in rapport-building chit-chat while present at the front desk. At the first practice I began by asking questions during periods when the receptionists were not occupied with patients, either directly or on the telephone. However, I quickly realised that the receptionists had to use these quiet periods to complete paperwork and other tasks resulting from encounters with patients and, thereafter, remained silent unless spoken to, listing questions to ask when receptionist were off duty. <u>This was made easier</u> by the fact that both practice and reception managers at the first two practices had allocated large amounts of their time to giving me detailed <u>explanations of how reception desks were run</u> and also invited me to seek further information from them whenever I wished. This extensive coverage also proved useful later at the third practice, where only <u>a short explanation of practice procedures was given</u> in advance by the practice manager, although one of the receptionists at the practice also provided a running commentary on work practices.

(Appendix Task) The answer to the first question is that it *is* possible to replace all the student's Passives with Actives, as shown in the version below.

But on the second point - whether it is necessary or more appropriate to use the Active in every case – that is a matter for individual judgment.

4.3.3 Procedure

My research adopted a case study approach. I divided the 12 voluntary participants into three groups (Group 1, 2, 3). I paired four of them with a partner they were not familiar with before the study.

At the beginning of week 4, I required all the participants do the first task with their assigned partner through instant exchanging in an online text-based CMC environment. Then, they saved their MSN 'written' exchanges by copying and pasting them to a word processing program and sent me the file at the end of the week 4. I corrected and marked their written exchanges and sent them back individually by email. I also provided the learners with explicit feedback with explanations of the errors they made in written records in a later face-to-face session.
After receiving feedback, students in Group 1 and 2 carried out the first task orally with their partner in voice-based CMC environments (Group 1 with the use of microphones and webcams; Group 2 with the use of microphones only); students in Group 3 carried out the same oral activities in a face-to-face environment in week 6.

All the participants had to record their spoken performances. Participants in the two synchronous groups recorded their online spoken practice using Audacity software, which was free for downloading and which I provided on the class website. I required them to familiarize themselves before the study with the software by following the user instructions given on the website. I asked participants in Group 3 to record their face-to-face spoken practice by using an MP3 player. All the participants needed to submit their sound files to me by email. And then I invited them to repeat their spoken activities publicly in the subsequent face-to-face sessions.

After listening to the files of each pair, I gave each pair their marks and feedback by email, pointing out each learner's pronunciation and grammar errors. I also asked the learners to practise those common pronunciation errors that appeared in their sound files in the following face-to-face sessions after pointing out the errors most of them made and providing them with correct sounds for those errors.

All the participants had to receive instruction in regular face-to-face sessions and then practised given tasks at an appointed time after the classes. Dörnyei (2001a) claims that "making the teaching materials relevant for the learners" (p.29) is one strategy classroom teachers can use to generate students' initial motivation. He suggested that teachers can discover the topics students want to learn and build them into the curriculum as far as possible (Dörnyei, 2001b). Following his suggestion, I provided a number of topics to the participants and had them select their favourite topics at the first session of the course. Then I created course materials which I based on the learners' topic selection.

I also chose some French learning websites to be the teaching content of the course and presented to learners in the classroom. I intended the use of these authentic materials to make French 'real' to the participants and therefore enhance their language–related values and attitudes (Dörnyei, 2001b).

The semester constituted cycles of three-week practice on three tasks. I posted the task practice procedures and task content on the class website in order that learners could follow the design of the study and complete the tasks appropriately. Additionally, I invited them to post questions or share information on the classroom bulletin board, where I provided course-related information for those students who were absent from the classes or who learned slowly during the classes to catch up with the course outside the classroom.

Unit 4 – Your Data Chapters

Task 4.1 (open question)

4.2 The student's Introduction is basically an overview of the chapter.

4.3 I think it is an Analytical Story

4.4 She refers to previous research through section 6.1, where she discusses alternative views of classroom process

4.5 Below are my annotated versions of the two pairs of paragraphs. In the paragraphs on page 46 she uses the verbs **seem** and **appear**:

> At this point the students are seated in three groups. As seen on the video recording, at the beginning, the teacher does not seem to have the attention of the whole class. He begins to call their attention with intermittent questions, exchanges with individuals and small groups, while looking around at the class. His first address to the whole class is made when only one or two students seem to be paying attention, by looking at him and not talking to other students. The teacher elicits a response from one or two students. He pauses, addresses them all again looking round. He positions himself in front of the board at this stage, but also moves between there and the nearby groups. He then pauses again, looks at his papers. He then addresses the class again with a question, and looks at one student's file. He pauses again, then asks them another question and gets an answer from one student. He echoes the student who answers him and identifies two students. Throughout this phase, the volume of student talk gradually decreases, and more students look up and appear to pay attention. The first plenary address "OK" seems to signal that he wants all their attention. At this point he raises his voice, stands in front of the board and points at the handout. The group falls silent.
>
> This pre-plenary phase is characterised by an "open" expression on the part of the teacher, fairly quiet addresses using rising intonation, and gaps within and between the addresses to the class. At this stage he seems to be not quite "on stage" or "off stage" - he addresses the class, looks back at his notes, arranges his papers, then looks up and addresses them again. He uses what might be termed "brick wall questioning" - asking questions to a group, many of whom he knows are not listening. It seems that the purpose of these questions is not to elicit an answer, but more to function as a signal, to gain the attention of the class. As questions requiring an answer from the whole class, they are unsuccessful, but they seem to fulfil their function as signals that tell the class to stop talking and listen. During this pre-plenary phase the students talk together, take out papers and organise objects on their desks. At the point where the teacher says "OK" (line 32, shown by an arrow on the transcript above), the students fall silent. The volume of his voice increases at this point, and he positions himself in front of the board.

On pages 52-53 we find a wider variety of hedging expressions. As well as using **seem** and **appear**, the writer used **modal verbs** (*may* and *might*) and the verb **suggest** (rather than a stronger one like *indicate*). The word **reminiscent** is a sort a hedge, too, because it means "reminding us of something *similar* but not identical" and it is made weaker by having the word **rather** place in front of it.

> In this sequence the teacher begins by asking for comments on the style of the paragraphs in the letters. The students initially respond with comments about other aspects of the letters, such as the references and the fact that they are from companies. Although he comes back to these points later in the sequence, he twice brings them back to the theme of paragraph style. This suggests that, although the analysis task was open, his checking "agenda" is not - he has a particular point to make about that aspect of letter format, and wants to cover it first. He elicits the answer, the students give their ideas, the teacher gives them feedback, and then he provides a normative explanation (examples indicated by arrows). So what we have here is a sequence following a pattern that might be termed *IRFI* – Initiation, response, feedback and *instruction*. This cycle is repeated several times in this particular checking sequence, as the teacher goes through different points. In each case he begins by asking questions and eliciting ideas, then evaluates them, then adds some normative statements. At the point where he gives a normative statement, he sometimes knocks the whiteboard, and may use repetition:
>
> **[Data Extract 6.5: Lesson 2 Letter-Writing 1]**
>
> So it seems the teacher is using the open-response checking sequence as a framework within which to provide instruction. He uses a form rather reminiscent of Socratic dialogue to guide the students towards the learning points, asking them series of questions as he leads up to his instructional discourse. Both his closed-response and open-response checking sequences appear to operate as frameworks with particular points that are permeable to additional instruction on language, student questions, normative instruction and so on. The point of permeability to instruction in all cases is at the end of the IRF cycle. However, as

the tasks become more open in these examples from the data, the type of embedded instruction changes, to reflect the focus of the activity, in the examples given above.

Unit 5 – The Final Chapter

Task 5.1 Literally, 'freewheeling' is when the cyclist stops pedalling, usually when going downhill, to save energy. Metaphorically, it means making little or no further effort to do whatever it is you are doing – in this case, "down to the finish" of your PhD.

5.2   Doing something, such as PhD research, over several years means that one is a different person at the end of the process than at the beginning. In this sense, one's later self can be a successor to one's earlier self.

5.3   My answer to this question takes the form of the potential elements of a qualitative thesis, which is appears at the top of page 58.

5.4   (open question)

5.5   Some suggestions for alternative expressions are in my version below. In some cases, I would simply remove the hedging verb **seem** and leave the other verb unhedged, to make a *stronger claim* for the findings.

8.2 Relationship to previous research

In terms of the first research question, which looked at the issue of "layers" of classroom discourse, the findings of this study build in particular on the work of some of the researchers reviewed in Chapter 3. Many of these studies characterise classroom discourse in terms of functions, and the concept of the classroom-rooted and non-classroom variety of discourse is present in more than one analysis, as discussed in Chapter 5. The findings of Chapter 6, in the investigation of the second research question, looked at the features of the stages on the lesson, in particular the plenary checking stage and IRF discourse. The notion of the spontaneous contributions within IRF cycles echo Erickson's (1982) notion of spontaneity and ritual in classroom discourse. White & Lighbown's (1984) finding that questions are frequent in classroom discourse seems to be borne out by the prevalence of checking sequences in the data, with their dependence on questions. Likewise, the existence of question types appears to be confirmed in the data, which exhibits both *display* and *referential* questions. White & Lightbown's (1984) finding that teachers tend to repeat and rephrase questions rings true in the analysis of instructions in this study. The analysis of the data in relation to the third research question, and the issue of subgroup activity during plenary and groupwork, is on very much the same lines as Hancock (1998), with his notion of *off-record* discourse. Slimani's findings as regards the diversity of perceptions of salience are borne out in this study, which shows some students more focused on vocabulary, for example, while others are more focused on interaction.

One of the main concepts from earlier work which has been applied to this study is that of the discourse world (Edmondson 1984). This concept has proved to be a useful one in the description of the layers of classroom discourse identified in the data. More generally, the findings of Chapter 7 tend to back up the various assertions in the literature that participants make an active contribution to the ongoing process. Their engagement in individual and subgroup activities makes a contribution to the overall process, as does task adaptation and spontaneous contributions. Reluctance to interact may require the teacher to give a further instruction, again influencing the overall process of classroom communication.

5.6   This is an open question. Different students will find different expressions useful for their particular study.

One useful feature I would point out is the student's use of 'modal+HAVE+past participle' expressions in her final paragraph, as a way of pointing, in retrospect, to potential improvements in her research: **could have been simplified and targeted more carefully**, and **might therefore have been better to**…

5.7   My advice to the student who wrote this section would be to adjust the balance in her claims as to how her study has contributed to the field. Some of her expressions seem too strong to me, while others could be made stronger. In the version below I have used yellow to show where I would strengthen a claim, and green where I would tone it down.

7.6 Contributions

In addition to the provision of some directions for future research, my study has made three ==particular== contributions to the literature on computer assisted language learning and teaching, since research in these three areas is relatively new and the related literature is still limited.

Firstly, my participants were early-stage learners developing their oral skills in CMC. Among the four skills, speaking has been considered the most difficult to acquire for language learners, especially for those at beginner-level. My study should ==contribute to our understanding== of the development process of beginners' oral skills in CMC environments.

Secondly, the target language of my study was French, research into the learning of which is limited in comparison to that involving English. Although some Canadian researchers have conducted studies in relation to French (e.g. Swain & Lapkin, 2005; Lapkin & Swain, 2004; Lapkin, Swain & Smith, 2002), they have been in the Canadian immersion context where French is learnt as a second language, rather than a foreign language, as in this study. As a result, my findings should enhance our knowledge of the learning process of FFL learners, particularly those whose first language is non-alphabetic. [I think the student's claim "should enhance our knowledge" is fine]

Finally, my investigation of the concept of social presence increased the originality of my study. Although its application to CMC started in the late 1980s (Lowenthal 2009), the concept and its impact on learners' acquisition of language skills remain unfamiliar to many teachers who include synchronous CMC in their curriculum. Therefore, I hope that the findings of my study ==will== attract other language teachers' attention to this concept.

5.8   The expressions of personal change and learning that I would highlight are shown in yellow in the version below.

7.4   AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REFLECTION

Undertaking this research study ==has been an invaluable learning experience==. ==I have gained some understanding of== the nature of research and of the cyclical, sometimes messy, nature of the research process. ==I have learned==, for example, that things do not fit neatly into categories and that research can be frustrating and sometimes tedious, yet at other times immensely rewarding and even exhilarating.

This research study has ==also provided some key ideas which have helped me== examine my own professional values, and ==guidelines for possible changes to== my own future practice. As well as adopting the course provider recommendations above for DELTA courses, ==I intend to explore further== the impact of other teacher education courses with which I may be involved, since ==I now have a growing awareness of== how impact might be affected by process factors. ==I have also begun to question== how my colleagues and I come across as course tutors, how much attention we pay to our participants' beliefs about teaching, how much we value what they bring to the classroom and the role that affective factors might play in relation to participants' experiences of our teacher education courses. The research process ==has also encouraged me to== view my own TEFL context within the wider educational field and ==has provided a wealth of resources from which we can learn== in order to improve the quality of TEFL teacher education and development.

Unit 6 – The First Few Pages

6.1   Individual opinions and experiences will vary on this issue. The item in the list that should <u>not</u> be there is the Index. PhD students do not (yet) have to produce an index for their thesis, though I suppose in future that might be required/expected as it can be done automatically. Without an index, readers of a thesis may well use the Contents Pages to get an overview of how the thesis will develop.

When I read a thesis as an **examiner**, the first parts I actually <u>see</u> are the Title and the Abstract, because those are sent out (based on the *Intention to Submit* form) when one receives the invitation to act as examiner. Later, when I receive the thesis itself, I tend to read the Contents Pages first, and then skim the References (to see how much of the literature review is likely to be new to me). I usually skim the Conclusion next and after that probably begin to read chapter by chapter.

I don't know whether my reading behaviour is typical. Ask your supervisors what <u>they</u> do!

6.2   Before you submit it, the first readers you need to impress are obviously your supervisors. Once it has been submitted, the next readers will be the external and internal examiners. I suppose the impression I wanted to create when I presented my thesis was one of competence.

6.3   The first title is the final one for the submitted thesis. The second title was the student's original 'working title'; her supervisors felt the student should make clear that her thesis was a study of learners of French as a foreign language (because relatively few theses are) and that she should avoid the abbreviation CMC, in case future potential readers might be unfamiliar with the abbreviation.

6.4   As you may already know, it is quite common for thesis titles to be in two 'halves', separated by a colon. It is quite a useful of dividing up what might otherwise be quite dense information. But this is a convention and not a rule.

Something else to think about is whether you should use abbreviations which you can expect potential readers of your thesis to know. As you see, one student used **EAP** (for English for Academic Purposes) while another spelt out English for Specific Purposes (rather than **ESP**). Do you know what **L2** means, in the fifth title?

6.5   The version below shows how the student divided his abstract into four paragraphs. The blue letter inserted at the end of a sentence indicates which element of the abstract 'model' I think the sentence represents.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the potential benefits for language development of the inclusion of *Focus on Form* (FoF) tasks in a university EFL oral academic presentation course in Japan. **[P]** Previous work on FoF activities suggests that they can help learners to notice divergences between their spoken output and the target language, and to reconsider their hypotheses about the target language, and that this process might lead to subsequent improvements in their output. **[B]** While the majority of previous research involves FoF that is controlled by the teacher, this study examines how the students noticed and reflected on language without the teacher's direct assistance. **[P]** In addition, sociocultural theory looks at ways in which cognitive development arises from social interaction. **[B]** This study adopted this approach in identifying ways in which the students made language gains. **[P?]**

The students were asked to note down any new language they had noticed and, working from transcripts of their recorded presentations, to collaborate in groups in scrutinising their own oral output and correcting any mistakes they found in it. **[M]** Recordings of their discussions were also included in the noticing data. **[M]** Meanwhile, recordings of the students' oral output, as represented by a series of class presentations, were made in order to see whether there was any development in the use of the forms that the students attended to during the noticing tasks. **[M]**

An analysis of the data revealed that the students noticed more language forms as they became more practised in the noticing tasks. **[R]** In general, they focused their attention on a wide variety of forms, although there was a degree of variation at the individual level, and there was evidence that group tasks resulted to more noticing than tasks completed alone. **[R]** Tracking the students' spoken English over seven months revealed improvements in the vocabulary and grammar forms the students had focused on. **[R]** As regards sociocultural theory, the thesis also shows how elements of 'dialogic interaction' in the students' collaboration helped enhance their knowledge and use of English. **[R]** These include contributions from a more capable peer (although expert roles switched even within a single discussion), collective scaffolding, and the achievement of intersubjectivity. **[R]**

The study suggests that students are able to notice language form and make language gains through form-focused elements in task-based instruction. **[C]** In particular, group work within such a framework might benefit language

learning, both in terms of the amount of noticing it promotes, and of the effects of collaboration, from which learners can gain new insights into the second language. **[C]**

6.6   Open question – what do you think? (I gave my answer in 6.1).

6.7   I think the first one makes better use of spacing and indentation to help readers grasp the development and relationship of parts.

6.8   Here are the three acknowledgments, with my comments:

> A.   *I owe a debt of gratitude to (NAME), my supervisor whose perspicacious advice and guidance has enabled me to carry out this arduous study. Her amazing zeal is only matched by her wondrous teaching skills and impressive learning.*
>
> This is a culturally very interesting case. Because of (what we think is) the very 'flowery' expressions of praise, British readers of text A tend to think the student was being either **unduly flattering** about his supervisor, or alternatively that he was being **sarcastic** (wishing to imply that the supervisor did <u>not</u> give helpful advice, was a <u>poor</u> teacher and did <u>not</u> know a great deal about the subject).
>
> Presumably the student was from a country where this sort of praise and admiration was expected and would not have seemed excessive. Of course, whether students should 'fit in with' local British expectations and assumptions is a matter for debate.
>
> B.   *I owe a great deal of my work to my wife, who is only a nurse and scarcely knows English nor teacher training, but did her best to collect materials and send them to me.*
>
> What this student probably wanted to do was emphasise that his wife had helped him with the <u>logistics</u> of his research (collecting and sending 'data') but did not help him with the <u>content</u> of his study. But the overall effect is rather patronising.
>
> C.   *The work of writing this dissertation has been a cooperative venture and I am grateful to (NAME of friend), who helped me a great deal.*
>
> And in this example we seem to have the 'opposite' of text B: this student rather implies that his friend has actually contributed rather more to the dissertation than is permitted!

6.9   The Acknowledgment begins relatively formally
> *I would like to thank the ten exemplary school library media specialists who helped with this research for their participation. I would like to thank the members of my committee for their extreme patience in the face of numerous obstacles.*

The third sentence also begins formally, apart from the choice of the word *quagmire* to refer to the difficulties of being a PhD student:
> *I would like to thank my fellow doctoral students—those who have moved on, those in the **quagmire**, and those just beginning—for their support, feedback, and friendship.*

Then a sentence with words I don't understand; I assume the people referred to would know what they mean:
> *I would like to thank the **staffers at CLIS** and in the **HCIL** for the "**noms**" and the last minute favors.*

Finally, two sentences that mix thanks with playful insults:
> *I would like to thank my friends, especially the "**Usual Suspects**", for accepting nothing less than completion from me. I would like to thank **my insanely large / largely insane family** for taking the blows and giving me a chance to thrive.*

6.10   An open question to complete this course. I hope you have found the materials helpful during the demanding stage of writing-up. If you have suggestions for ways of improving them, please send them to Dr Joy Northcott, the ELTT 10 course director: Joy.Northcott@ed.ac.uk

Good luck with writing-up and for your viva!

Prof. Tony Lynch
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