MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES:
A STUDY OF THE VIEWS OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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Christopher Hugh Beard

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ABSTRACT

One of the features of second language teaching and learning literature has been the emergence of multiple perspectives. While this has been welcomed as a strength of the second language profession, the manner in which teachers cope with a multiplicity of seemingly divergent viewpoints has received scant research attention.

The aim of the present study has been to investigate the extent to which teachers experience doubt or uncertainty as a result of divergent views, as well as exploring the strategies they use for interpreting and accommodating these views. The study is qualitative in nature and uses a teacher questionnaire, a student questionnaire, and teacher interviews to form an interpretive account of six tertiary-level English as a Second Language teachers' responses to multiple perspectives.

The results obtained indicated that divergent views did cause the teachers surveyed to experience a degree of uncertainty and doubt, which for some, created confusion and eroded confidence. Their uncertainties appeared to stem from an inclination to interpret divergent views in antithetical terms, despite the modifying influence of contextual factors. They shared several strategies for analysing conflicting claims, which included referring to their students needs and investigating the source and rationale of a point of view. The six teachers' preparedness to accommodate alternative positions was influenced by their experiential knowledge, popular ideas about teaching and learning, and institutional factors which promoted certain pedagogic practices.

It seems that until now teachers have been provided with few strategies for interpreting and analysing divergent views. Further research needs to be carried out to explore the reality and effects of competing conceptual frameworks on classroom practitioners. The study concludes with practical suggestions on ways in which teachers could be assisted to cope with multiple perspectives in the language teaching and learning field.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the extent to which six teachers experience doubt or uncertainty as a result of divergent views evident in multiple perspectives. The six teachers who agreed to participate in the study work at the same educational institution, are native speakers of English, and represent a spread of English teaching experience.

An investigation into the effects of multiple perspectives stemmed initially from my own second language (L2) training and teaching experience. On the basis of teaching experience in a number of L2 institutions, including a language school in the Middle East, and having undertaken three separate L2 teacher training courses, it became apparent that, apart from a tentative acceptance of communicative language teaching, the L2 profession was characterised by disparate conceptions of language learning and diverse teaching practices. Alternative sources of authority appeared to provide divergent views of teaching and learning. Although these divergent views stimulated curiosity and encouraged reflection, they also added to the uncertainties of classroom teaching.

In New Zealand, English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching assumes various forms in private language schools, polytechnic faculties, university language centres, and high school classes. The teachers working in these settings have gained various types of qualifications which include postgraduate diplomas, polytechnic certificates, College of Education diplomas, and specialised certificates and diplomas from British colleges (Haddock, 1998). These qualifications are based on courses which compete for candidates and, in some cases, appear to represent fundamentally different approaches to language teaching and learning. It is conceivable that when teachers from these various training backgrounds find themselves working in the same institution, they encounter views which differ sharply to their own.

There appears to have been relatively little research into the effects of divergent views on classroom practitioners. Why is this so? First, it seems that the proliferation of theories and practices is regarded positively by a relatively young and dynamic L2 profession that

seeks an expanding knowledge base. The latest teaching practice is welcomed as an ingredient that adds richness to a thick, pedagogic pea-soup. Second, attempts to identify and examine potentially negative effects of divergent views and pedagogies are perhaps viewed suspiciously as covert attempts to limit exploration. It may be feared that once contradictions and ambiguities begin to be viewed less than positively, the L2 pendulum may swing from an open-minded inquiry to an insulated prescriptivism. Bloom (1987) has observed that open-mindedness is lauded as the great insight of our times. Third, the individual differences of teachers, students, and teaching situations have emerged as a focus for research. Consequently, researchers have sought particular interpretations for particular situations. The uncertainty that teachers experience as a result of multiple perspectives may therefore be accepted as an inevitable by-product of the multiple realities they face. Yet, the potential for teachers to experience unresolved doubts and a loss of confidence as a result of conflicting points of view has rarely been explored.

The proliferation of multiple perspectives in L2 teaching has been accompanied by the increased popularity of eclecticism. It appears that eclecticism is a natural outgrowth of the current smorgasbord of teaching approaches, since its relativist position appears to diffuse tensions which arise between competing truth claims. However, it is not clear how teachers incorporate eclectic strategies into their personal teaching approaches. Do they intuitively adopt a range of techniques in the hope that they provide added variety without sacrificing coherent lessons? Or do they carefully select practices that appear suited to particular contexts? The extent to which teachers consciously adopt eclectic strategies needs to be investigated, particularly if an eclectic outlook is seen to be indispensable in a multiple perspectives environment.

Localised interpretation is preferred to universal theory in the current postmodern age (Carrell, 1998) and this appears to have affected the credibility of global statements such as "Learners need grammar instruction" within the L2 profession. Complex variables such as contextual factors and learner characteristics are offered as reasons as to why the act of teaching must be interpreted in shades of grey. It is not the purpose of the present study to explore the epistemological assumptions that accompany this view, rather it is to examine the extent to which teachers can cope with discrepant views of teaching and learning. Although teachers' "It depends" statements suggest that they think in shades of

grey, the possibility that they adopt antithetical interpretive frameworks for resolving conflicting claims has yet to be negated. Therefore, comments made by teacher participants in the present study that are made with particular conviction and certainty will be carefully noted.

Teachers are presented with examples of various approaches and methods in teacher training programmes so that they become aware of the various pedagogic options. Interestingly, this is the extent to which many teacher training courses deal with the problems associated with shopping in a methodological supermarket. Student teachers are expected to negotiate the aisles on their own and pick out products which they think will satisfy their tastes. There appears to be an assumption that they will resolve the pedagogic ambiguities themselves, as if they have a natural instinct for aligning teaching practices with the changing contexts that they encounter. It seems that he role of teacher training in preparing teachers for multiple perspectives needs to be investigated.

There is an assumption that a high degree of flexibility is required in a multiple perspectives environment. However, the notion that teacher flexibility increases in such an environment has yet to be fully established. Indeed, the potential for teacher flexibility to *decrease* may indeed be present.

The current research, which examines the impact of multiple perspectives, should help to redress the lack of research investigating teacher uncertainty. More information should be obtained about the processes by which teachers interpret and adopt views contrary to their own. Past teacher change models which have sought to explain the processes by which teachers make sense of new teaching practices have often depicted rosy outcomes (Pennington, 1995), where innovations are accommodated and the teacher's methodology is further developed. It is the intention of the current study to examine whether teachers fail to make sense of and are confused by divergent views, in addition to exploring teacher attitudes towards the range of pedagogic options currently available.

The primary intent of this research then, is to examine the extent to which six teachers at one L2 institution experience uncertainties as a result of their exposure to multiple perspectives on L2 teaching and learning. The research questions that guide the

exploration of these concerns comprise the following:

1.   To what extent do the teachers experience doubt or uncertainty as a result of divergent views of second language teaching and learning?

2.   What are the teachers' strategies for interpreting divergent views of second language teaching and learning?

3.   What are the factors which assist the teachers' accommodation of divergent views of second language teaching and learning?

For the present study, *perspective* refers to a point of view based on certain conceptions of teaching and learning. Also, the terms *approach* and *method* are sometimes used to describe features of language teaching pedagogy. Following Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.16), *approach* refers to "the source of practices and principles in language teaching", while *method* refers to an instructional system which promotes particular types of activities, envisages certain learner and teacher roles, and guides teachers' moment-to-moment decisions.

The next four chapters will elaborate on the issues and questions raised above: the postmodern background to the proliferation of multiple perspectives, diverse L2 learning theories and practices, the nature of teacher thinking and uncertainty, and accommodation strategies employed by teachers. Chapter 5 provides a context for the research methodology. Chapters 6 and 7 present the results and the interpretation of those results, while Chapter 8 concludes the study.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND TO MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the key concepts related to postmodernism and its effect on education. Postmodernism's rejection of modernist premises and focus on local and particular interpretations is explored, along with the increased complexities and uncertainties that accompany postmodern thinking. The resultant proliferation of perspectives which have emerged in L2 literature is also discussed.

2.1 Postmodern perspectives

Grenz (1996) writes that the arrival of postmodernism marked a new way of viewing reality. The modernist notion of an objective world that exists "out there" is rejected by postmodern thinkers who argue that we construct the world using the concepts we bring to it. This means that many views and many worlds are constructed and that knowledge assumes a subjective quality:

> By replacing the modern world view with a multiplicity of views and worlds, the postmodern era has in effect replaced knowledge with interpretation (Grenz, 1996, p.40).

While Grenz has stated that postmodernism defies definitive description, many writers have sought to describe its characteristics. For example, Boyne (1990, p.9) refers to postmodernism as "a set of cultural projects united by a self-proclaimed commitment to heterogeneity, fragmentation and difference". Ross (1988, p.xv) notes that with postmodern culture "everything is contestable; nothing is off-limits; and no outcomes are guaranteed". Carr (1998, p.3) has observed the demise of the universal: "There can be no common theoretical or practical discourse enshrining cross culturally applicable canons of rationality, knowledge and truth". He notes the constructivist position which states there can be no true representation of how the universe really is - only explanatory models or metaphors.

Postmodernists also argue that societies are bound together by legitimising myths or

"narratives" that explain the world and sustain social relations (Grenz, 1996). Whereas modernists believed that they had dispensed with the myths of premodern peoples by appealing to universal laws, postmodern thinkers argue that the modern outlook is just another narrative. For example, the scientific method is referred to as a myth that was born out of the Christian narrative which speaks of a rational God who orders the universe (Grenz, 1996). According to postmodernists, "history can be viewed as a series of transitions from one defining myth to another; older narratives inevitably wane and are replaced by newer ones" (Grenz, 1996, p.45). This view was popularised by Thomas Kuhn (1970), who described the history of science in terms of "paradigm shifts", that is, changes of theories within normal science brought about by new discoveries. Ellis (1970) predicts the flourishing of "abnormal" science which he describes as new paradigms or major theories. He contends that the more frequent periods of abnormal science will shatter normally unquestioned assumptions underpinning society's laws, social practices, and moral codes.

The plurality of conflicting legitimising myths has led to the demise of metanarratives - narratives which make claims of universality. There is no longer a search for one system of myths that unites human thought and endeavour. Grenz (1996) notes for instance, that since the Second World War the grand narratives of scientific progress have lost credibility.

Carr (1998) has noted how relativism has challenged objectivist categories of traditional epistemology. The German philosopher Hegel negated the notion that truth, in the sense of thesis and antithesis, is related to a horizontal line of cause and effect (Schaeffer, 1998). Instead of a horizontal line of cause and effect, he proposed a triangle, in which the truth claims of a thesis and an antithesis are brought together in synthesis. In other words, all possible positions are relativised. Schaeffer (1998) observes that Hegel's proposition revolutionised the concept of truth and knowing in the Western world. Carr (1998), for instance, has noted how the Marxist assimilation of knowledge to ideology has produced the notion that ideas evolve from the interplay of social class and power.

Further, philosophical developments such as phenomenology and existentialism have attached a strong subjective dimension to human understanding. Michael Polyani (cited in

Carr, 1998) uses the idea of the tacit dimension to explain how the agent's engagement with the world interferes with the objective analysis of phenomena. Polyani's writing exposed the subjective dimension inherent in human interpretation and undermined logical positivism's notion of objective data and rational sequences (Schaeffer, 1998).

New discoveries in the natural and human sciences have led to continued upheavals and an increasing awareness of the complexity of the universe. Heisenberg (cited in Grenz, 1996, p.53) formulated an Uncertainty Principle which pointed to the indeterminacy of all phenomena. Grenz (1996, p.53) notes that some scholars now speak of another scientific revolution based on a new "physics of complexity". Ellis (1970) argues that graduates can no longer expect their learned theories to be relevant for the rest of their working lives and contends that uncertainty within fields of knowledge will become common place: "We shall have to learn to adjust to uncertainty, and reason from bases that are themselves uncertain" (Ellis, 1970, p.16). Miller (cited in Carrell, 1998, p.94) observes that, according to the postmodern world view, the inherent principle of uncertainty is at the heart of the universe.

2.2. Postmodernism and education

According to Smyth (1987), the philosophical approach to the theory and practice of teaching has changed dramatically. He has observed among educators and researchers a growing disenchantment with positive science and an increased opposition to the view that there are definite answers to complex social situations. As a result, there has been a shift in thinking from grand theories to localised interpretations, with the emergence of a new openly ideological view of teaching aimed at empowering students to take charge of their lives. This view offers a dialectical perspective which regards learners as actors and active participants in the construction of meaning.

Constructivist theory has built upon the notion of the negotiation and construction of meaning by viewing the teaching act as an engagement with students (Williams and Burdon, 1997). Teachers are encouraged to provide learners with a greater degree of autonomy to give them an opportunity to "construct new meanings and build upon what they already know" (Harbon, 1997, p.36). According to Williams and Burden (1997, p.51), a constructivist view of teaching "holds that, basically, there is never any one right

way to teach". Therefore, teachers cannot be described as good or bad, competent or incompetent, because each one is unique. In his book *Breaking Rules*, Fanselow exhorts teachers to "be free to generate alternatives unrelated to ... preconceived notions of good and bad teaching..." (Fanselow, 1987, p.2). Whereas a skills-based approach focuses on effective performance and attempts to identify good teachers (Williams and Burdon, 1997), the constructivist notion of teaching asserts that no two teachers and teaching situations are the same.

One of the responses to postmodern thinking has been to develop a multiple realities view of the classroom. According to this view, teachers encounter the teaching context from their own, unique perspective and therefore must seek their own, unique solutions (Fanselow, 1987). Since multiple perspectives are believed to flow from diverse learning-teaching situations, educators have adopted a "let a thousand different flowers grow philosophy". Grenz (1996, p.43) has observed that in a postmodernist context "competing and seemingly conflicting constructions [are allowed] to exist side by side" and this appears to have occurred within the wider teaching profession, with Lyons (1990) arguing that many of the dilemmas of teaching are not solvable and must simply be managed. A multiple realities perspective rests on a pluralistic view of knowledge that envisages a "post-pedagogical classroom" (Grenz, 1996, p.44), where pedagogy becomes localised and indistinguishable from the practitioner. The "multiplicity of views and worlds" which Grenz (1996) describes (see Section 2.1) appears to characterise the second language teaching profession with its diverse range of L2 learning theories and frameworks of practice.

2.3 Diverse second language learning theories

With respect to L2 learning, Ellis (1992) observes that the term "acquisition" is often used to refer to picking up a second language through exposure, whereas the term "learning" is used to describe the conscious learning of a second language. Ellis, however, uses these terms interchangeably and so does the following discussion on theories of second language learning.

Long (1993) has observed somewhere between 40 and 60 theories of second language acquisition (SLA) and notes that they are as diverse as they are numerous. He accepts that

the proliferation of diverse, heterogeneous theories is probably well motivated, since SLA is a broad and expanding field. However, he contends that multiple theories are a problem:

> At least three kinds of evidence show... that many current SLA theories are oppositional, not complementary, i.e. are so different in their underlying assumptions or in the claims they make that they could not logically both / all be correct (Long, 1993, p.226).

Ellis (1992) agrees with Long that SLA research literature has spawned a plethora of theories. At the same time, Beretta's examination of multiple SLA theories has identified the co-existence and benefit of complementary theories (Beretta, 1991) that operate in different domains but possess a degree of theoretical compatibility. Beretta argues that these theories need to be endorsed to ensure theoretical coherence in SLA. Similarly, Long (1993) argues for the culling of some oppositional SLA theories and the establishing of a dominant paradigm on the basis that SLA research be awarded "normal science" status. He maintains the history of science has shown that successful sciences settle down after a period of theoretical turmoil once a dominant theory has emerged to guide productive research.

However, attempts to develop a dominant paradigm are resisted by SLA researchers such as Block (1996, p.70) who labels Long's desire for SLA research to be credited as normal science as "science envy". Block suggests that the idea of uniting a field under one paradigm and prescribing strategies for assessing theories sounds like a "new world order". He argues that language acquisition is extremely sensitive to changes of context and therefore language theories ought to be evaluated with respect to the contexts from which they were developed.

A brief examination of behaviourist theory and cognitivist theory, two general L2 learning theories which have informed L2 pedagogy (Nunan, 1991), shows that they contain fundamental differences. The behaviourist perspective states that language development is the acquisition of a set of habits and views errors as first language habits interfering with the acquisition of second language habits (Lightbown and Spada, 1998). The audiolingual

stimulus-response-reinforcement teaching model was developed on the basis of this view and as a result L2 classrooms were characterised by constant language repetition and reinforcement by the teacher. Cognitivist theories, on the other hand, state that language is not a form of behaviour but an intricate rule-based system (Harmer, 1991). According to this innatist view of learning, learners internalise language rules which allows them to creatively use language, so that with a finite number of grammatical rules they can create an infinite number of sentences. Cognitive code learning minimised the role of rote learning, mimicry, and memorisation and focused on language learning as "an active, intelligent, rule-seeking, problem-solving process in which learners are encouraged to reflect upon and discuss the way the target language operates" (Nunan, p.233, 1991). Chomsky, a leading proponent of cognitive code learning (Nunan, 1991), demonstrated that learners produced creative and unique sentences. This led to an exploration of the functional and communicative potential of language and the inception of the communicative language teaching approach (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

2.4 Multiple approaches and methods

Various paradigms have at various times influenced the direction of teaching approaches and methods within the L2 profession. For example, scientifically based conceptions of teaching have influenced audiolingualism and task-based language teaching (Richards, 1993). The audiolingual memorisation-mimicry method was derived from research on learning associated with behavioural psychology, while task-based learning, which minimises the role of formal instruction, gained support from research which suggested that language learning takes care of itself when learners focus on meaning (Harmer, 1991). The scientific, research-based view has, however, has attracted some opposition. Stevick (cited in Pennington, 1990, p.133), for instance, describes language teaching and learning as "the mystery-behind-mystery".

Grittner (1973, p.224) refers to the "modern humanistic bandwagon" as a current paradigm which promotes greater student autonomy. The humanistic tradition has given rise to distinctive methodologies such as community language learning, suggestopaedia, and the Silent Way (Nunan, 1991). Proponents of humanistic practices argue that success in L2 learning depends not so much on the teacher's methodology, but on the extent to which they cater to the learner's affective domain. In other words, the manner in which

the learner is engaged in the classroom is the primary concern. Therefore, community language learning attempts to give students only the language they need, suggestopaedia focuses on relaxing the students, frequently through the use of music and comfortable furniture, and the Silent Way ensures that the teacher provides a very limited amount of input by guiding students through pointing and other discrete means (Harmer, 1991).

Learner-centred conceptions of teaching and learning share the humanistic focus on promoting student autonomy and have become more prominent in recent years. The clearest example of a learner-centred approach is communicative language teaching (Luxton, 1994; Richards and Rodgers, 1986) which appears to have swept almost all other frameworks of practice aside. Because communicative language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication (Richards and Rodgers, 1986), meaning is emphasised over form and interactive activities such as group work and pair work (Nunan, 1988) are promoted to help students to communicate efficiently. However, communicative language teaching is a broadly used term that has been applied to numerous and varied teaching practices. Lange (1990, p.86) notes, for example, that "the literature on language as communication contains competing tenets and structures that seem to have both personal and political import".

A study investigating Australian primary language teachers' beliefs with regard to communicative language teaching has shown that a consistent principled approach to communicative language teaching is lacking (Mangubhai, 1997). For example, a third of the teachers in the study were not sure whether a teacher should be an authority figure; a third expressed reservations about learner-centred teaching; over 40% indicated that grammar correction was very important, and over 75% endorsed the direct teaching of rules. Interestingly, almost 50% regarded groupwork and pairwork, activities commonly associated with communicative language teaching, as a waste of time.

The emergence of different conceptions of teaching and learning has led to the proliferation of approaches and methods. While this is viewed as a strength of the L2 profession, it is also viewed as a source of confusion and bewilderment (Richards and Rogers, 1986). Arguments and counter argument abound with respect to accepted teaching practice. For example, in one article Gadd (1998) argues for less humanistic

teaching while in another Arnold (1998) argues for more humanistic teaching. The relatively common Present-Practice-Produce teaching method is dismissed as out-of-date by proponents of task-based learning (Willis, 1994). Currently, Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) is promoted as view of language teaching and learning which offers new and improved insights (Bolstad, 1997), while the role and importance of grammar instruction in L2 classrooms continues to attract strong and sometimes contentious debate (Alexander, 1992; Hammerly, 1991; Krashen, 1993; Lightbown and Pienemann, 1993; Roberts, 1995; Spada, 1997; Williams, 1995).

Church vividly illustrates the various ways in which the L2 profession has attempted to address the problems of teaching and learning in *The Parable of the Good Learner* (Church, 1997, p.9). In the parable, a poor language learner lies on the road side contemplating his fate. At first, an old *grammarian* passes by and asks him if he is all right. As soon as the student begins to speak he is interrupted by the old man who corrects his grammar and then promptly departs. A few minutes later, an *audiolinguist* arrives and the learner is again asked if he is all right. Once more, the student begins to speak but again is interrupted by his listener who proceeds to construct a role play. Once the audiolinguist departs, a *totally physical respondent* arrives and immediately tries to pull the student to his feet. This overly physical approach naturally startles the boy and he passes out. Once he regains consciousness he is confronted by a *humanist* who expresses a deep concern for his plight. Unfortunately, his anguished account of what happened bores her and she continues on her way. A *silent wayfarer* then passes by and gestures to the boy in an inquiring manner. His vocal response offends the *silent wayfarer* so he makes a quick exit. Soon a *communicative approacher* appears and shows some concern for the student. However, once she realises that the student cannot fill in her information gap she continues on her way. Thankfully, a fellow student eventually finds her friend lying by the roadside and promptly calls for help.

A number of interpretations can be gleaned from Church's parable, including teachers' obsessions with methods at the expense of the learner. However, the profession's fashion-industry history and the comings and goings of approaches and methods is clearly depicted. Lightbown and Pienemann (1993, p.717) note that "Time and time again, language teachers have seen new methods introduced and the old ones rejected out of

hand".

It seems, however, that teacher and contextual differences represent new reference points for teachers and as a consequence the concept of a best method has lost appeal. Prabhu (1990), for instance, suggests that the best method varies from one teacher to another. Ulchiny (1989) contends that an understanding of teaching methodology has to be modified by an understanding of teacher-student exchanges in the classroom, since "the act of making the lesson comprehensible *is* the art and method of ESL teaching" (Ulchiny, 1996, p.193). Coombs (1989, p.132) argues that the methods which good teachers use are "deeply personal, arising from the peculiar belief system of the teacher who employs them". Kumaravadivelu (1994) argues that recent explorations in L2 pedagogy have signalled a shift away from the conventional concept of method toward a "postmethod condition":

> Out of the inherent contradictions between method as conceptualised by theorists and method as actualised by practitioners has emerged a desire to look beyond the notion of method itself (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p.29).

Kumaravadivelu sees a postmethod perspective as empowering teachers with the knowledge and the skill to devise for themselves a principled pragmatism based on current theoretical, empirical and pedagogic insights.

2.5 Summary

Multiple perspectives have evolved from a new way of viewing the world. Past conceptions of reality based on objective categories of knowledge have been re-interpreted as explanatory narratives or myths. An increasing awareness of the complexity of the universe has led to uncertain premises from which tentative intellectual and scientific endeavours are formulated. Multiple perspectives in education are viewed as the inevitable by-product of the complex variables associated with teaching and learning.

The "multiverse" envisaged by postmodern thinkers seems to have contributed to the proliferation of theories and practices in the L2 profession. In the case of L2 learning, theories are not only numerous but are also, in many cases, seemingly oppositional.

Differing conceptions of teaching and learning have produced a smorgasbord of teaching approaches and methods which represent a potential source of confusion.

CHAPTER THREE

TEACHER THINKING AND UNCERTAINTY

The epistemological shift from global theories to localised interpretations and the postmodernist focus on personal constructions of reality have led educationalists to examine features of teacher thinking more closely. In order to understand the way teachers think in a multiple perspectives environment, it is important to investigate their assumptions and the manner in which they interpret divergent viewpoints. Therefore, the nature of teacher thinking, the influence of L2 theory on their thinking and teacher uncertainty are themes which are explored in the following chapter.

3.1 The nature of teacher thinking

The realisation that teachers themselves have been often overlooked by researchers has resulted in attempts to investigate language teaching from the inside. Recent research on L2 teaching has therefore focused more on teachers' beliefs and accounts of what they do in the classroom (Johnson, 1996; Kontra, 1997; Pennington, 1996; Richards,1994; Smith, 1996; Ulichiny, 1996). For example, Richards (1994) advances the teacher-as-thinker metaphor to project teaching as a thinking activity rather than the mastery of principles or theories. Gaies (1991) argues that classroom methods need to be reassessed in terms of how the individual teacher makes sense of them, since teaching methods on their own do not cause learning to take place.

Richards (1994:31) defines teachers' belief systems as "the information, attitudes, values, theories and assumptions about teaching and learning which teachers build up over time". He identifies six significant influences on teachers' beliefs: the teacher's own experience as a language learner; experience of what works best; established practice; personality factors; educationally based or research-based principles; principles derived from an approach or method.

According to Richards (1994), teacher beliefs evolve from factors such as shared experiences and school practices. Similarly, Miller (1996, p.96) notes the importance of

school culture in shaping teacher thinking: "Teachers need reference groups from which to derive norms and values for their practice". In a study that investigated the beliefs of English teachers in Hong Kong schools, Richards, Tung, and Ng (1992) discovered that a sample of 249 teachers held uniform beliefs on issues such as the teacher's role in the classroom, the role of textbooks, and the relevance of theory to practice. Lauriala (1998) suggests that the degree to which teachers adopt innovational practices depends on institutional factors such as school climate, reinforcement between colleagues, and collaboration between teachers.

Calderhead and Robson (1991) found that student teachers held particular images, or mental models, of teaching which influenced their interpretation of course work and classroom practice. Some of these images were episodic memories of teaching situations while others were abstracted from a variety of experiences. Connelly and Clandinin (cited in Hillocks, 1999, p.3) refer to image as "something within our experience, embodied in us as persons and expressed and enacted in our practices and actions". Elbaz (cited in Thornbury, 1991, p.196) describes teachers' images as brief and descriptive statements which capture teachers' perceptions of themselves, their teaching and their classrooms. Connelly and Clandinin (cited in Hillocks, 1999, p.3) use the term *metaphor* to refer to important parts of teachers' personal practical knowledge. The *process* and *product* writing metaphors, for instance, have been offered as examples of abstractions which have had a profound effect on the way writing is taught (Thornbury, 1991). In addition, Hillocks (1999) suggests that teachers' categories of knowledge can take the form of simple arguments complete with claims, evidence and qualifications.

Richards (1996) builds on the notions of image and metaphor by arguing that teachers adopt maxims, or rules of best behaviour, to guide their instructional practices. He states that language teachers abide by a number of common maxims which include following the learners' interests, following a plan, following a method, and working for accuracy.

3.2 The influence of L2 theory on practice

Although it has been argued that a gap exists between theorists and practitioners (Stern, 1980; Ramani, 1987) the view that L2 theory influences and informs teaching practice remains strong. Thornbury (1991), for instance, notes that teachers often use theory-

derived metaphors to understand the invisible nature of language learning. He has observed teachers using terms borrowed from Krashen's monitor model, such as *monitor under-* and *over-using*, even though they had never read Krashen's theories. He attributes this to the explanatory power of the "shared folk theory of teachers" (Thornbury, 1991, p.193). Woods (1996) has observed that at different times language specialists have described language as a single entity, a cluster of different genres, and knowledge and / or abilities. He argues that these varying descriptions have influenced the manner in which practitioners have sought to frame curriculums. For instance, in a study examining teachers' assumptions about language, he discovered that one teacher viewed language as knowledge by focusing primarily on structural elements and grammatical accuracy while another viewed language as abilities by seeking to divide course content into language skills such as reading and writing.

After researching the role of L2 theory and individual beliefs on teacher decision making, Smith (1996) found that the practices of nine ESL teachers' were consistent with their theory-derived views. Teachers who held to the product view (language is taught as a product to be mastered) based their tasks on grammar-based activities, while teachers who held to the process view (language is taught as a communicative process) were more concerned with communicative language use. Smith also found, however, that the teachers' use of theory was eclectic, in that the teachers' decisions did not wholly reflect either the process view or the product view, but a combination of the two.

Johnson (1995) argues that the theoretical beliefs that teachers hold about teaching and learning are an important frame of reference. After comparing a teacher's espoused support for communicative language teaching theory with her classroom teaching practice, Johnson found that her theoretical position "acted as a powerful filter through which she made certain instructional decisions" (Johnson, 1995, p.35). After examining the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices during literacy instruction for non-native speakers of English, Johnson (1992) suggests that that teachers persevere with the teaching approaches which were prominent when they began L2 teaching.

Golombek (1998, p.459) notes that L2 teachers' knowledge is experiential and is constructed by teachers themselves as they encounter teaching and learning challenges.

She argues that the way teachers understand their classrooms is "mediated by their experiences as teachers, learners, persons outside the classroom [and] personal and interpersonal factors". Recognising the importance of teachers' personal practical knowledge, Johnson (cited in Golombek, 1998) contends that teacher educators need to provide teachers with opportunities to interpret L2 theory within the context of their own teaching and learning experiences. This, according to Johnson, allows a link to be made between the teachers' personal practical knowledge and the empirically grounded knowledge presented in teacher education programmes.

3.3 Teacher uncertainty

New theories are often welcomed as adding to the multiple perspectives that are currently evident in an expanding L2 field. Yet literature on the potential for new theories and perspectives to create uncertainty among teachers is hard to find. Indeed, it has been observed that there are few publications on uncertainty in teaching (Ichimura, 1993).

Multiple perspectives can represent multiple sources of authority offering alternative explanations. Psychologist Gary Collins (1999) observes that this can complicate the decision making process:

> The problem of deciding is compounded when the decision maker is given conflicting advice by equally respected people. As a result, we struggle for a long time and don't take action (Collins, 1999, p.9).

Cognitive psychologists such as Piaget, Festinger and Berlyne (cited in Nussbaum and Novick, 1982, p.186) hold that "human beings have an innate need to reduce dissonance, incongruity or conflict between two cognitions". While educators may argue that uncertainty is a prerequisite to inquiry, it is not a preferred state of mind. On the basis of a psychological report investigating choices made under uncertainty, Tversky and Shafir (1992) suggest that people often seek information that reduces uncertainty, even when that information is unlikely to affect subsequent decisions. Maddux and Lewis (1995) have observed that a sense of control over one's behaviour, one's environment, and one's thoughts is essential for good psychological adjustment. They add that people are better able to meet life's challenges when they view the world as predictable and controllable.

Information theory stipulates that uncertainty is determined by the number of alternatives that could occur in a given situation and the relative likelihood of their occurrence (Berger and Bradac, 1982). As the number of alternatives increases, uncertainty increases, particularly if the alternatives are believed to produce similar outcomes. This principle could be transferred to teachers who are seeking specific learning outcomes for their students, yet are faced with selecting from among a potpourri of pedagogic options to achieve those outcomes. Rowe (1994) has noted that an overload of information can lead to bewilderment and undue conservatism on the part of the decision maker. In addition, Stevenson and Over (1995) state that problems with decision making occur when people begin to doubt what they believe and become uncertain of their premises.

Shavelson and Stern (1981) argue that teachers endeavour to behave rationally when faced with uncertain, complex environments. After conducting a case study investigating experienced teachers' professional uncertainty and professional growth, Lange and Burroughs-Lange (1994) found that changes in the teachers' thinking were motivated by a desire to move from a state of professional uncertainty towards feeling more comfortable about their knowledge and practice. Lange and Burroughs-Lange also noted that, rather than experiencing a smooth transition, the teachers appeared to fluctuate between feelings of comfort and uncertainty and sought to understand challenging encounters by referring to previously developed knowledge. Similarly, Beyth-Marom and Dekel (1985) contend that a sense of uncertainty is not necessarily constant and argue that feelings of uncertainty may be substantially increased or reduced as a result of additional information.

Floden and Buchmann (1993) simply state that the practice of teaching is characterised by uncertainty. They argue that while a certain degree of uncertainty adds interest and challenge to the teacher's task, it can also produce stress. They also note that feelings of confusion, a loss of confidence, and a sense of anarchy can complicate teacher preparation and suggest that teacher educators should prepare their students for uncertainties without suggesting that there are no bases for authority and instructional choices. Floden and Clark (cited in Ichimura, 1993, p.13) believe that teachers may despair if teaching uncertainties are not reduced to manageable levels.

Floden and Buchmann (1993, p.378) also caution against the cynical "anything goes as

long as you can come up with a reason" position: "Uncertainty militates against dogmatism, but it is no excuse for anarchy". They believe that the residual uncertainties of teaching, such as uncertain assessments of student learning, uncertain teaching effects and uncertainties about instructional content, need to be addressed by encouraging teachers to talk to one another about their doubts and fears. It seems likely that divisions and disputes among teacher educators would add to the residual uncertainties associated with classroom teaching.

Freeman (1992) argues that language teachers abide by common discourses -socially constructed facts - which are nourished by the language teaching community. He notes that when two or more discourses co-exist, they can provide overlapping explanations of classroom events which can remain unresolved:.

> Sometimes collisions remain unsettled and open-ended, as the teacher searches for a sense of direction and purpose among the conflicting views of what she is doing which the discourses express. (Freeman, 1992, p.11).

Freeman states that the teacher resolves the collision by choosing one explanation over another and suggests that an alternative set of conceptions cannot be equally regarded. Collisions faced by teachers represent a dilemma, described by Lampert (cited in Freeman, 1993, p.488) as "an argument between opposing tendencies within oneself in which neither side can come out the winner". Freeman (1992) states that collisions reveal multiple perspectives to teachers which can complicate classroom matters. Grundy (1999), for example, is perplexed by researchers who now claim that language is learnable, but not teachable. He states that he finds this difficult to comprehend because it clearly contradicts what he has been taught and likens himself to a "Teacherosaurus Rex" who is too stupid to keep up with evolution (Grundy, 1999, p.55). He adds that after teaching for thirteen years, speaking at dozens of conferences and training sessions, and reading innumerable books about language teaching and training, he still doesn't know what to do, or why he is doing it. He understands the uncertainty that many teachers feel, particularly when teacher trainers cannot agree on such basic notions as the instruction sequence in language education.

Uncertainty appears to accompany teaching approaches which place a strong interpretive focus on contextual factors. Prabhu (1990) cautions language teachers against using the "It all depends on the teaching context" statement as a means of resolving methodological debates, arguing that the interrelationship between contextual factors and instructional methods can often be complex. He states that even when some contextual factors are identifiable, the appropriate pedagogic response may be far from clear:

> If we look for variation merely on the assumption that the teaching context matters for teaching methodology, we are sure to find indefinite variation on many dimensions, thus making it impossible to justify any instructional method for any single group of learners (Prabhu, 1990, p.164).

The challenges of language teaching are compounded by the innumerable demands placed on teachers. Practitioners such as Basanta (1996) lament the expectations currently laid upon teachers, ranging from the need to be linguistically and culturally competent, to the need to promote learner autonomy. She believes that teachers are subsequently suspicious of and feel threatened by the latest L2 "prophet" (Basanta, 1996, p.263). Carroll (1971) has observed that language teachers develop a kind of professional panic as a result of the pressure of new fads and theories. Lange (1990) refers to an exhausted foreign language field that is unwilling to consider new developments because of existing issues that remain unresolved.

In addition, Lewis (1993) contends that the current learner-centred approach has made the L2 teacher's task more difficult since it demands specialist needs analysis skills, a knowledge of psychological and cognitive variables and distinct personal qualities. Meyer (1995) notes that not only do the goals and objectives of students have to be taken into account, but also their proficiency levels, educational backgrounds and learning styles. Halliday (1994, p.175) refers to the observations of one of her students with regard to the demands of learner-centred methodologies, "...the teacher is also a robot - someone who must go through all sorts of almost inhuman contortions to satisfy the regime of learner-centredness". Further, Brown (1995) notes dichotomies associated with assessing learner needs, including the tension that exists between responding to objective needs - the linguistic needs of the learner, and subjective needs - the students' expressed wants and

desires.

3.4   Uncertainty in teacher education

Calls for a commonly accepted theoretical framework in L2 teaching and learning have been made by teacher educators in an effort to reduce the uncertainties and increased classroom pressures generated by multiple perspectives. Yet these calls are resisted by some language specialists who equate accepted frameworks with prescriptivism. Block's objection to Long's call for a dominant paradigm in SLA research is evidence of this (see Section 2.1.2). Freeman (1989), however, argues that language teacher education has become increasingly fragmented because of the absence of a coherent theoretical framework and, as a result, language teachers often lack a theoretical basis for what they do. Richards (1987) states that to prepare effective language teachers educators need to have a theory of what constitutes effective language teaching, which he suggests is lacking. The absence of clear models or frameworks appears to have provided fertile ground for diverse practices. Larson-Freeman (1987) argues that language teaching methodology has moved from a position of unity to one of diversity in 25 years:

> Indeed, the existing approaches to language teaching differ in fundamental ways: There is little or no accord on syllabus type, on materials used, on the order of skill presentation, on the value of explicit error correction, or even such a basic issue as the role of the students' native language (Larson-Freeman, 1987, p.2).

Brown (1990) argues that the literature on language teacher training is so abundant and confusing that there is a serious danger that teacher trainers will adopt vague theories based on primitive beliefs. Richards (cited in Murphy, 1994, p.7) suggests that teacher training programmes simply give trainees enough to get by: "...we are quite good at... teaching low-level kinds of tricks to teachers.... What we have not been very good at ... is going beyond that, and really looking at the higher dimensions of teaching". Williams and Bruden (1997) argue that the L2 teaching and learning profession is in a great need of a systematic educational underpinning.

The apparent lack of accord among educators appears to have opened the way up for bandwagons. Clarke (1982) uses the metaphor *bandwagon* to describe the revolutionary fervour that has at times accompanied past and present trends within language teaching. He suggests that some of the ideas new teaching approaches have brought to the profession attract devotees who can see no other way. O'Neill (1982), for instance, describes the reaction of his colleague when he discovered O'Neill used textbooks in his classroom:

> It was as if one doctor trained in the latest medical techniques had discovered that a colleague had been bleeding one of his patients with leeches (O'Neill, 1982, p.105).

Graden (1996, p.394) argues that teacher educators need to devise strategies to minimise theoretical conflict by identifying preferred instructional practices and calls for an exploration of conflicting belief systems. After investigating six language teachers' espoused beliefs about reading, she found that "the teachers were often caught in a dual conflict between beliefs about preferred reading instruction practices and beliefs about students' willingness to participate in those practices". The teachers also lacked instruction in theoretical grounding and effective teaching practices, even though they attended in-service programmes. Graden contends that once teachers begin to reflect more on their practice and become better grounded in the theory underpinning instructional practices, they will be better able to align conflicting beliefs.

3.5 Summary

L2 research has increasingly concentrated on teachers' assumptions, background beliefs, and personal theories which have been shown to strongly influence teaching practice. Teaching methods are believed to be uniquely interpreted and appropriated by individual teachers who hold particular images or maxims of teaching. Research has shown that theories of teaching often influence teaching practice.

One of the clear consequences of multiple perspectives is teacher uncertainty. People have been shown to become less certain and more conservative as decision makers when faced with an increasing number of alternatives. Teacher uncertainty is compounded by

divergent views and the high demands of the current learner-centred approach which requires teachers to possess expertise in specialised fields. The fragmentation of L2 teaching has been attributed to the proliferation of L2 theories and the absence of a coherent theoretical framework. Teachers may either be overwhelmed by the pedagogic options available to them or they may devote themselves to particular teaching approaches.

CHAPTER FOUR

ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES

The postmodern context in which language theory and practice is situated was discussed in Chapter Two and factors affecting teacher thinking and uncertainty were outlined in Chapter Three. Chapter Four concentrates on accommodation strategies employed by teachers and the teaching profession.

4.1 The accommodation of alternative viewpoints

An environment where new theories and practices are regularly introduced requires teachers to be prepared to accommodate alternative views of teaching and learning. Given that language teachers inhabit a fast-changing world, the manner in which they cope with change becomes important. Woods (1991) argues that L2 specialists have to be aware of how changes of methodology conflict with teachers' existing beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning

Williams and Burdon (1997) state that teachers' beliefs tend to be implicit and deep-rooted, formed in the early stages in life, and resistant to change. Weinstein (1990) has also found that pre-service beliefs about teaching often remain intact despite subsequent field experiences. Teachers' inability to adjust beliefs to the realities of the classroom experience have been cited as a reason for this (Calderhead and Robson, 1991). Doolittle, Dodds and Placek (1993, p.363) argue that "initial beliefs act as filters for internalising new experiences" and call for an inquiry-orientated approach to teaching to help teachers explore their underlying belief systems. It would seem, then, that the persistence of pre-service beliefs represent an obstacle to teachers' accommodation of alternative views of teaching and learning.

At the same time, teachers have been found to adjust their teaching approach despite the stubbornness of initial beliefs. It has been suggested that teachers encounter levels of change when adopting instructional innovations. Pennington (1995) conducted a study in Hong Kong that investigated the manner in which teachers adopted an innovative

instructional practice over a six month period. She found that the eight ethnic Chinese teachers, all with six or more years of teaching English, went through three levels of change. At the first level, the teachers initially responded to an instructional innovation by focusing on practical matters such as mastering new teaching techniques. Once they gained skills in managing the new technique, they shifted to a second level of change which was characterised by an awareness of and attention to affective factors, such as the students' behaviour. They then moved to a third level of change which involved a deeper level of conceptual reflection. Reflection at this level involved the teachers tying together the most concrete and the most abstract levels of their responses to an innovation. Pennington suggested that at the second and third level of change teachers may refer back to the techniques and materials and view them at a deeper level of awareness:

> By reflecting on their experience at each stage, they were able to gradually integrate theory and practice into a personal philosophy of teaching ..."
> (Pennington, 1995, p.727).

Although the teachers in Pennington's study were found to effectively accommodate an instructional innovation, it is not clear whether teachers are prepared to accommodate practices which appear to be incompatible with their own. Rea-Ramirez and Clement (1998, p.12) make a distinction between "strong dissonance" which they refer to as the sense of an explicit, strong incompatibility between a conception and another entity and "weak dissonance" which they describe as "a mild sensed discrepancy". They state that it is the milder forms of unease which encourages individuals to seek change: "[The] thoughtful consideration of a "discrepant event, analogy, counter example or alternative model may lead to curiosity and growth rather than discouragement". This suggests that stronger forms of dissonance may lead to uncertainty and a loss of confidence.

Nussbaum and Novick (1982) note that for new conceptions to be accommodated, dissatisfaction with existing conceptions must first take place. Laurialia (1998) believes that problematic situations may help teachers to transform their perspectives and accommodate new ways of thinking and teaching. McKenzie (1998) also notes research which states that alternative hypotheses are more likely to be taken into account if they are made more salient to decision makers either during or immediately preceding the task of

interest. After examining the effect of an experimental educational course on pre service teachers, Fellows (1993) found that the student teachers' pedagogic thinking developed as a result of the conflicts that arose when their ideas about teaching failed to explain situational learning problems.

It is clear, however, that the process of accommodating new concepts and techniques can cause confusion. After investigating the manner in which a teacher adjusted to a new teaching approach, Buswinka (1993, p.33) found that the introduction of the innovation into the teacher's classroom "exacerbated dilemmas endemic in teaching and involved [the teacher] in critical comparisons between the innovative practice and well thought-out practices already established". Although Johnson and Johnson (1979) argue that controversies among members in a group can result in high quality problem-solving and decision-making, they concede that conceptual conflicts do not always operate in a beneficial way and note the potential for negative outcomes.

Lange and Burroughs-Lange (1994) state that individual teachers implement different strategies for resolving problems and uncertainties associated with teaching. They have noted that teachers adopt at least two common approaches when faced with educational dilemmas: the holding approach and the active approach. The teachers who adopt the holding approach tend to exhibit "head in the sand" attitudes: they are inclined to either suspend their judgments, hope that new pedagogic responses are not necessary or adjust their expectations of their students if their assumptions fail to account for their students' behaviour. On the other hand, teachers who adopt the active approach are more inclined to perceive problems in "enlightened" ways: they explore a number of possible routes to understand the nature of the challenge, are aware of and appropriately utilise resources to reach a solution, and engage in reflective processes such as re-evaluating their teaching philosophy. Lange and Burroughs-Lange have observed that experienced teachers reduce the stress of generating novel responses to educational challenges by accommodating teaching strategies close to their current practice and implementing change in small steps.

After investigating teachers' responses to an innovative in-service education programme, Lauriala (1998) found that the degree to which teachers adopted the innovation depended on personal factors such as initial beliefs, previous knowledge, and self-confidence.

Wheeler and Andrews (1992) discovered that teachers with different teaching styles required differing strategies for adapting to instructional innovations. They also found that students adopted either "sequential" or "random" styles of learning. Students who adopted a sequential style were very independent, did not like sharing ideas with other students, and preferred to synthesis learning from a recognised authority such as a professor, while students whose learning style was random tended to believe that recognised authorities stifled ideas and creativity and preferred to experience learning as a series of meaningful relationships with others. It is conceivable that some teachers adopt similar styles of learning when establishing their teaching approach.

Kitchener and King (cited in Northfield,1993) suggest that there are a number of stages which teachers pass through with regard to assumptions about knowledge, effective teaching and belief justification. They argue that at the first stage, teachers hold to the view that there is only one best way to teach and that other ways are inferior. In subsequent stages, they refer more to contextual factors and individual teaching styles, adopt a more open view towards alternative approaches, and rely less on generalisations.

Gaies (1991), however, argues that a teacher may choose to persevere with her current practice rather than change her approach, particularly if she realises a proposed innovation does not complement her teaching style. Gaies also suggests that an instructional innovation is more likely to be adopted if reinvented or modified by teachers and course designers. White (1987) argues, in terms of effecting innovation within an English language teaching context, that participants need to feel they have contributed towards the formulation of the innovation. People who are not informed of the innovation are less likely to assist in its implementation.

Results of studies examining the differences between novices and experts suggest that more experienced teachers are better equipped to select from among various pedagogic options and are more able to adopt an integrated teaching approach. In a study investigating novice and expert differences, Livingston and Borko (1989) found novices had difficulty linking events and situations in the classroom to their theoretical knowledge and possessed fragmented and undifferentiated knowledge structures which limited their ability to reflect and analyse. On the other hand, expert teachers were found to have

larger, better-integrated stores of facts and experiences to draw upon as they engaged in planning, interactive teaching, and reflection. The expert teachers' cognitive schemata (Alexander, Schallert and Hare, 1991) were typically more elaborate, more complex, and more interconnected which allowed them to approach their lessons with a greater degree of flexibility and cohesion than the novice teacher. Tabak, Bar-Tal and Cohen-Mansfield (1996, p.535) notes research which has found that experts "organise information better than novices; they distribute information better into categories and are better able to generalise, which helps them in properly matching their activities to different situations".

More experienced teachers may possess the knowledge structures and abilities to effectively accommodate innovational practices, but they first must have the incentive and motivation to do so. Ghaith and Yaghi (1997) examined the relationships among teachers' experience and their attitudes toward implementing instructional innovation. They introduced a cooperative learning method to sixteen middle school and nine high school teachers at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. The results of their study showed the less experienced teachers viewed the cooperative learning method as more congruent with their current teaching practices while the more experienced teachers perceived the innovation as more difficult to implement than the less experienced peers. Ghaith and Yaghi (1997, p.456) concluded that "accumulated teaching experience corrodes teachers enthusiasm for adapting new instructional innovations...".

4.2   An eclectic framework

It has been noted that teachers implement various strategies for resolving problems and dilemmas associated with teaching. Martin (1988) has observed that many language teachers opt for an eclectic viewpoint as an antidote to the confusion caused by divergent views of teaching and learning. According to Richards (1996, p.121), eclecticism "holds that conceptions of teaching are equally valid and to be regarded as alternatives". This provides a conceptual framework which accommodates divergent views and eases the pressure for teachers facing uncertain choices, since it removes the need to find the "best" teaching approach. Also, given the number of variables confronting teachers, it has been suggested that to rely on one single theory for L2 teaching and learning is ludicrous (Grittner, 1990).

An eclectic position not only accommodates alternative views of L2 teaching and learning, but also synthesises views which appear to be oppositional (Richards, 1996). The existence of alternatives has led to suggestions that a framework of practice could be found by synthesising diverse and disparate theories of teaching and learning. Carroll (1971, p.17), for instance, argued that the apparent dichotomy between audiolingual and cognitive-code theories could have been resolved by developing what he termed a "synthesised theory". More recently, teachers have been advised to marry top-down communicative activities with bottom-up grammar exercises (Meyer, 1995), in order to steer a middle course between Krashen's (1993) claim that grammar instruction is peripheral and counter claims which state that the effects of grammar instruction are long lasting (Lightbown and Pienemann, 1993). Murphy (1994) calls for recognised principles of L2 teacher education to be synthesised and believes that L2 teacher education needs to be "viewed through a single, though multifaceted, frame of reference" (Murphy, 1994, p.23).

Brown (1994) has observed that language specialists have adopted a cautiously eclectic approach to language teaching methods and believes this makes sense since no single method can account for all needs of all learners at all times. However, he warns of the shortcomings of the eclectic position:

> ...there is no magic about eclecticism. It is easy to be eclectic and dip haphazardly into every attractive aspect of every conceivable method or approach, and then jumble everything together (Brown, 1994, p.291).

Further, Martin (1988) argues that the eclectic strategies which are adopted by teachers are largely intuitive and based on unclear thinking. He observes teachers who employ logically inconsistent practices while trying to be eclectic, such as using communicative activities while retaining a dominant role in the classroom (see Section 2.4). He also sees the increased popularity of eclecticism as a reaction to methodological prescriptivism and warns that this may lead to methodological anarchy. Brown (1994, p.291) calls for an "enlightened eclecticism" that intelligently selects approaches on the basis of an integrated theory of SLA, yet Long (1993) has observed that many current SLA theories are far from complimentary (see Section 2.3).

Richards (1998) notes that a number of L2 teacher education programmes adopt an eclectic approach in order to accommodate divergent conceptions of teaching and learning. He believes, however, that this is not a realistic option because the various conceptions of teaching represent fundamentally different views on the essential skills of teaching and therefore cannot be simply regarded as alternatives. In addition, Richards (1996) argues that eclecticism is based upon the myth of correct choice which assumes that teachers can accurately evaluate differing approaches from a neutral vantage point. This is not tenable, given that teachers own assumptions and beliefs about language teaching and learning are not created in a vacuum.

4.3 Summary

Teachers' accommodation of divergent views may depend on the extent to which they are seen to be incompatible, as well as the individual strategies they implement for resolving problems and uncertainties. Even though expert teachers are known to possess a more highly developed and elaborate schemata than novices, they have been shown to be more resistant to instructional innovations than their less experienced peers.

Although an eclectic outlook is promoted as a means of accommodating divergent views and establishing an integrated framework of practice, the guidelines for adopting eclectic strategies are not clear.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter sets out the rationale for the methodology used as the framework for the research. The setting, participant selection, participant background, research instruments and data analysis are also discussed.

5.1 Approach to research

In this study, six second language teachers' thoughts about themselves, their beliefs, and their teaching are investigated. A qualitative research approach was chosen to provide a careful, intensive, and holistic view of their perceptions and beliefs. McDonough and McDonough (1997, p.69) state that qualitative research provides interest, originality, sensitivity, and context-specificity. Stake (1997, p.402) notes that qualitative studies "let us peer deeply into the heart of an issue". Since qualitative research yields rich and detailed information, an interpretive approach has been adopted for analysing data.

This study resembles a case study in that it investigates single entities, i.e. six teachers. Yin (1989) has observed that, in a classic case study, the primary unit of analysis has been an individual. However, the common purpose of the case study is to describe the case in its context and to study aspects of environment that pertain to that case (Johnson, 1992). For this investigation, the teachers' perceptions of themselves and their teaching represent the primary focus, while their current working environment is recognised as an important influence on their thinking.

Nunan (1992) notes that studies which use small numbers are not designed to provide generalisations across a broader population. Davis (1995), however, suggests that a qualitative study is potentially transferable to a wide range of social situations, particularly if empirical evidence identifies contextual similarities between the study's described situation and a situation under investigation. With regard to the generalisability of a study regarding a small number of subjects, Bogdan and Taylor (1975) observe the following:

All settings and subjects are similar while retaining their uniqueness. This

means that qualitative researchers can study certain general social processes in any single setting or through any single subject. They hope to observe and understand those general processes as they occur under specific circumstances. In a sense, then, all settings and subjects are representative of all others (Bodgan and Taylor, 1975, p.12).

5.2 Setting

The L2 teachers involved in the study were employed by an educational institution that provides English and tertiary programmes for predominately Asian students. The participants worked in a department which offered an eight month English programme for Japanese school leavers. At the time of the study, this department employed sixteen people, fourteen of whom taught regularly in the programme. The department members were largely New Zealanders, with several expatriates from Commonwealth countries. The average age was approximately 27-29 years, 20 years younger than the average for ESL teachers in New Zealand (Haddock, 1998). The one year curriculum was designed to prepare students for second year English-based diploma programmes and was arranged according to thematic and skills-based categories. It consisted of individual sessions (3-6 weeks) that initially focused on broad skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, and then divided into specialised options in subsequent sessions. One of the distinguishing features of the programme was its "bottom up" syllabus design; teachers collaboratively designed and implemented courses which were regularly adapted and modified. Textbooks were not followed. The teachers were allocated 3-4 hours each day to plan for their lessons.

The first year students belonged to two classes at any one time. They were assigned a *regular* teacher who was responsible for their ongoing development during the year, and an *options* teacher who taught specialised three week courses. They spent three hours with one teacher in the morning and three hours with the other in the afternoon.

5.3 Participant selection

An initial questionnaire was designed to identify six teaching staff members who expressed some awareness of, and an interest in, the presence of multiple perspectives in the L2 profession (see Appendix A). The questionnaire, a forerunner to Part 3 of the

questionnaire used in the study, consisted of questions which investigated attitudes to divergent views and various teaching approaches and included an appendix which contained a diverse range of methodological positions and views.

All of the fourteen teaching staff members were asked to fill in the questionnaire. Six teachers were then asked to participate on the basis of their awareness of multiple perspectives in L2 teaching and learning. Their teaching experience was also taken into account, so that the selected participants represented varying lengths of teaching experience. The six teachers were provided with an information sheet (see Appendix B) and were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix C).

The student participants were members of the teachers' classes who voluntarily filled in the student questionnaire and returned the unnamed forms inside a sealed envelope. The envelopes contained an information sheet (see Appendix D) and a consent form (see Appendix E) which the students were asked to read and sign before they filled in the questionnaire. Three questionnaires were then chosen randomly from six returned piles. This procedure was arrived at after conferring with and receiving approval from Massey University's Human Ethics Committee.

Two ethical procedures were used in the study to protect the anonymity of the teacher participants. Firstly, the identities of individuals in the study were protected by using fictitious names. Secondly, the pronouns *she* and *her* were used exclusively to avoid distinguishing the male participant.

5.4 Teacher participants

The six teacher participants taught one class for the greater part of the foundation year. Four of the teachers were teacher partners, in that one participant shared an academic English class with another participant. This class was established to fast track students into a second year degree programme. The other two participants taught a general English syllabus which focused on the four language skills and introduced subject areas for the second year diploma. There were five females and one male in the study, with ages ranging from 27 to 34. Every participant had been employed by the institute for at least two years and the longest serving participant had been employed for six years. For two of

the participants their current employment represented their first full-time position as English as a second language teachers. Brief details of each of the teachers, which are given below, show that the participants represented a range of training experiences.

Dawn

Dawn, a British expatriate, had worked at the institute for four and a half years. Her previous ESL experience included work at a private language institute and a polytechnic in New Zealand. Having completed the RSA Cert, she was currently enrolled in the Trinity TESOL diploma and had recently sat oral and written exams. At the time of the study she shared one of the academic English classes with Jo. She had taught ESL for about six years.

Lyn

Lyn had worked at the institute for two years. Previously she had worked at a language school in Japan for a period of a year and at another language school for a subsequent period of two years. As a result, she learned to communicate in Japanese to a limited degree. She also taught English at a language school in New Zealand. Having attained the RSA certificate, she was currently undertaking the Trinity TESOL diploma course. At the time of the study she was responsible for one of the general English classes which she had been teaching for six months. Along with Dawn, she had been teaching ESL for about six years.

Jenny

Jenny had worked at the institute for three years and had previously worked two years as a primary school teacher. Prior to working at the college, her ESL teaching experience included part-time work at a university language centre and a temporary position at an English agency in Malaysia. Although she had not undertaken a L2 teacher training course, she had a College of Education diploma and had almost completed a masters thesis in education which focused on an aspect of L2 teaching and learning. At the time of the study, Jenny shared an academic English class with Tina. Her current job represented her first full-time L2 position.

Phyllis

Phyllis had attained a postgraduate diploma from the College of Education and worked as a Japanese teacher at a New Zealand secondary school for a term. She also worked as an English instructor at a Japanese university for a year and learned to speak Japanese at a relatively competent level. She commenced work at the institute two years ago and was currently undertaking a New Zealand postgraduate course in L2 teaching and learning. She taught a general English class similar to Lyn.

Jo

Jo, another British expatriate, was the longest serving staff member, having worked at the institute for five years. Prior to working at the institute, she worked at a Japanese language school for two years and at various Japanese junior high schools for several years and had managed to become relatively fluent in Japanese. She attained a masters in TESP (Teaching English for Special Purposes) from a British university. At the time of the study, she shared an academic English class with Dawn. Of the six participants, Jo was the most experienced L2 teacher, with at least eight years teaching experience.

Tina

Tina had worked at worked at the institute for two years, her first full time L2 teaching position. She had previously taught English sporadically in the Mediterranean region for a period of two years. Having completed a TEFLA certificate course in London, she was currently undertaking the Trinity TESOL diploma course at the institute and had recently sat written and oral exams. She shared an academic English class with Jenny. Tina was identified as a less experienced L2 teacher.

5.5 Data collection techniques

Questionnaires and interviews represent two of the commonest ways of collecting data about second language teacher thinking (Brumfit and Mitchell, 1989; McDonough and McDonough, 1997) and are used as the study's primary data collection techniques. McDonough and McDonough (1997) state that questionnaire research allows for a good deal of precision and clarity because the knowledge sought after is controlled by the questions. They also note that interview research is used because it is sensitive to individual differences and provides interviewees with room for expression. The combined

use of questionnaires and interviews is thus complementary, allowing the researcher to maintain a degree of control without inhibiting individual and personal expression.

The current study employed three types of instrumentation: a four-part questionnaire that included closed and open-ended questions, two focused interviews, and a Likert-type scale for the participants' students. Observation of teachers' classes had been considered but the recognised tendency of teachers to deviate from their normal teaching practice while being observed dissuaded the researcher from pursuing this option.

According to Davis (1995), the triangulation of sources and methods are necessary to achieve research credibility. Johnson (1992, p.90) defines triangulation as "the attempt to arrive at the same meanings by at least three different independent approaches". This is aimed at in the present study with the use of the four-part questionnaire, the two interviews, and the student questionnaire. The study also represents a "three-shot" interpretive investigation, in that the teachers' perspectives are investigated at three distinct points in time by means of the teacher questionnaire and the two interviews.

5.5.1 Teacher questionnaire

The primary purpose of the teachers' questionnaire was to take into account all relevant factors influencing the teachers' current attitudes and views of L2 teaching and learning. It was divided into four parts: Part 1 investigated the teachers' backgrounds; Part 2 elicited teachers' responses to diverse statements on L2 teaching and learning; Part 3 examined the teachers' attitudes towards various theories and practices; and Part 4 consisted of sentence starters which invited the teachers to succinctly express their core beliefs. The four parts allowed for an internal cross-checking of data. Commonly expressed views on teaching and learning which were used in Part 2 and 3 were drawn from several sources, such as descriptions of popular ideas about language learning (Lightbown and Spada, 1993), attitude surveys (Savignon, 1983), in-service training texts and personal views expressed by the researcher's past and present colleagues.

The questionnaire was handed to the participants at the time of the first interview. A non teaching week was chosen to increase the prospect of obtaining unhurried responses. The teachers were asked to take the questionnaire away with them to allow them time to reflect

on the answers they were giving

Part 1

Part 1 was used to establish background information, notably the participants' age, nationality, training and teaching experience (see Appendix F). Teacher training was regarded as an important variable to consider because experienced teachers have been found to view training and in-service courses as important sources for their teaching (Richards, Tung, and Ng, 1992). The manner in which the participants of the study perceive multiple perspectives may depend on the teaching models they encountered in their training programmes. For example, if a training course presents one dominant methodology, with minimal references to other methods, trainees may be less inclined to explore alternative teaching practices when they begin teaching (Freeman and Richards, 1993).

Further, length of teaching experience may be a determinant of a teacher's willingness to change. For instance, an experienced teacher may settle on an approach she has implemented satisfactorily in class, and then interpret other teaching models through the lens of that one approach. She may become less tolerant of new perspectives and more resistant to change, whereas a novice may be more receptive to new approaches and be more inclined to experiment. Ghaith and Yaghi's study (1997), which investigated the relationship between experience and instructional innovation, found this to be the case.

Part 2

Part 2 presented the participants with a scale consisting of varying statements on second language teaching and learning which, in addition to the sources referred to (see Section 5.5.1), were drawn from a number of teaching approaches and methodologies (see Appendix F). For example, the statements *Language learning is a set of habits* and *Practice drills are an important classroom tool* were borrowed from the audiolingual approach (Lightbown and Spada, 1993; Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Statements which derived from the communicative language teaching approach included *L2 learning is learning to express meaning in another language, Teachers should always place more focus on fluency than accuracy,* and *Authentic materials and tasks should be used extensively in the classroom* (Lightbown and Spada, 1993; Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

Also included were views based on task-based learning, e.g. *Students learn best by performing communicative tasks* (Harmer, 1991) and humanistic principles, e.g. *It is important to be guided by the students interests when teaching* (Nunan, 1991). A few statements were also based on constructivist theories of teaching. These included *There is no one right way to teach* and *Learners construct their own understanding independent of what they are taught* (Williams and Bruden, 1997). As a result of borrowing views from various approaches, the scale consisted of diverse and divergent statements which focused on the language learning process, the importance of instruction, matters pertaining to fluency and accuracy and the role of the teacher. Pairs of potentially conflicting views were placed indiscriminately throughout the scale. An inclination to think in antithetical terms could possibly be shown if participants often agreed with one view and then disagreed with its designated opposite.

A rating scale, which followed the Likert technique of scale construction, was devised to gauge the degree to which respondents agreed or disagreed with each statement. Karavas-Douglas (1996) notes that the Likert-type scale is widely used because it is easily constructed and uses relatively few statistical assumptions. McDonough and McDonough (1997) refer to the Likert scale as an "opinionaire" which provides shades of opinion with potential numerical value. They note, however, that the midpoint on the scale can often be difficult to interpret. For the study, the numerical rating scale used a score out of five, a number range which "yields a good distribution of responses and enables researchers to easily pick out differences in opinion" (Hague, 1993, p.57). A score of one indicated strong agreement while a five indicated strong disagreement.

An additional purpose of the scale was to provide participants with examples of various views of L2 teaching and learning before they were interviewed, so the following interview questions, which probed their attitudes towards divergent views and various teaching methods, did not take them completely by surprise.

Further, the scale helped to measure the study's internal reliability; consistency could be shown if the views the participants indicated on the scale compared with their statements of belief expressed in the interviews.

Part 3

Part 3 of the questionnaire examined more closely the participants' attitudes towards multiple perspectives (see Appendix F). First, they were asked to what extent they experienced uncertainty as a result of divergent views of L2 teaching and learning and to what extent differing teaching approaches complicated their decision making. Second, they were asked to indicate types of influences on their teaching, such as language learning experiences, L2 literature and interaction with colleagues. Third, they were invited to indicate the ways in which their teaching approach had changed. Richards, Tung and Ng (1992) have shown how less experienced teachers are more likely to focus on the everyday tasks of teaching such as lesson preparation. Richards (1994) also notes studies which show experienced teachers, compared to novices, tend to move through a lesson in a more flexible and cohesive manner.

Part 4

Part 4 consisted of sentence starters designed to elicit the participants' views on fundamental aspects of teaching and learning (see Appendix F). This provided the teachers with an opportunity to clarify earlier responses and express views that had yet to be elicited. The sentence starters sought core teaching beliefs summarised in succinct fashion and provided a means of cross-referencing comments elicited from other parts of the study.

5.5.2 First interview

The primary purpose of the interview was to examine the degree to which the teacher participants encountered periods of doubts or uncertainty as a result of divergent views (see Appendix G). Secondly, the interviewer sought to identify the strategies used by the teachers to interpret and accommodate alternative pedagogies.

The participants were shown the list of statements on the Likert-type scale in the teacher questionnaire before the interview commenced and were asked to circle a number of statements which they either strongly agreed or disagreed with. They were then given antithetical statements and were asked how they would respond if these statements were presented to them in a professional setting as accepted truths.

Apart from investigating the level of teacher uncertainty, the interview also investigated what the participants felt were the most helpful aspects of their teacher training courses. In addition, the interview sought to determine their attitudes towards an eclectic outlook, since an eclectic viewpoint is closely linked to the choice offered by multiple perspectives and has wide appeal among L2 practitioners (Brown, 1994).

The questions were designed for a focused interview (Yin, 1987). Although the questions were open-ended and allowed for a conversational manner, the interview followed a certain set of questions which took around forty minutes for each participant. Each interview was tape-recorded and sections of the recording considered most pertinent to the research questions, such as the participants' attitudes towards divergent views and their strategies for resolving them, were transcribed. Notes were taken throughout each interview.

5.5.3 Second interview

Initially, a second interview was not included as a part of the research design. However, once the data from the first interview was gathered and analysed, it was felt that the questions pertaining to areas of teacher uncertainty caused by divergent views had elicited an insufficient amount of data. So, further questions were designed asking participants to describe personal moments of doubt or uncertainty in more detail (see Appendix H). The inclusion of a subsequent interview is in keeping with the claim made by Davis (1995) that qualitative studies are data-driven and are therefore subject to re-examination and modification. Focused questions were also prepared which related to several themes which had emerged in the six teacher interviews. The second interview was conducted approximately a month after the first and was similarly focused in its format. Since the questions represented a narrowing of focus, the six interviews were transcribed in full.

5.5.4 Student questionnaire

The student questionnaire was specifically designed to examine the reliability of the teachers' assertions (see Appendix I). It was not an investigation of the students themselves; rather it was intended to be an indicator of what they observed in the classroom. Student observation provides a potentially strong indicator as to whether or not teachers' theories-in-action (Schon, 1983) reflect their espoused theories. Teachers'

expressed beliefs may not always match their teaching practice. For instance, a teacher may express strong support for communicative activities and regard herself as an advocate for fluency, but may rarely facilitate communication in practice. Karavas-Douglas (1996) notes research which suggests that although many teachers espouse a commitment to communicative language teaching, they are inclined to adopt more structural practices in the classroom.

Further, Agris and Schon (cited in Williams and Burton, 1997, p.56) argue that teachers' beliefs have to be inferred from teachers' actions since beliefs are difficult to measure. Ur (1992) also makes a distinction between an espoused theory and theory-in-use:

> An espoused theory is a rationale which we claim to believe in and are able to describe, whereas theory-in-use comprises the actual beliefs which we hold and which betray themselves in our behaviour in practice (Ur, 1990, p.58).

In addition, interviewees may be inclined to make a "safe" response to an interview question, or endorse what is regarded as an accepted practice, even though they do not apply the practice in class. Identifying this kind of inclination may be made more possible by investigating the students' point of view.

Clearly, students are unable to interpret their teacher's thoughts, but they can observe patterns in classroom activities. For example, the students may encounter an organised approach that is stimulating and easy to follow, or a potpourri of seemingly disorganised activities that leaves them perplexed at the end of the lesson. If, in the questionnaire, the students indicate a strong awareness of the purpose and direction of class events, it may show that the teacher has effectively integrated various pedagogic options into her teaching approach.

Nonetheless, students have been found, at times, to misinterpret teachers' expectations and intentions (Johnson, 1995). It is believed that students' perceptions of their teachers and classroom events can sometimes act as a filter between what is taught and what is learnt. In addition, a cultural disposition to provide the "correct" information has to be considered.

The student questionnaire examined several areas: the extent to which the teacher participants implemented similar practices, the extent to which their teaching approach was learner-centred, and the apparent coherency and organisation of their lessons.

5.5.5 Pilot study

The teacher questionnaire and the interview were piloted to determine the relevance and clarity of individual questions. A teaching staff member who was not involved in the study was asked to assist with the pilot study. In general, his responses to questions provided positive feedback in that he found few statements or questions to be ambiguous and he enjoyed discussing the problems associated with divergent views. In Part 1 of the questionnaire he suggested increasing the amount of space for Question 5 (second language teaching experience) since he believed L2 teachers have typically worked in a number of institutions. He also suggested adding the phrase "details of position" because he believed teachers can take on numerous portfolios in one institution. His advice was accepted on both accounts and Question 5 was modified.

In his appraisal of the scale in Part 2, he added the comment "It depends" to a number of statements, as he felt it was difficult to express agreement without a more clearly defined context. He enjoyed responding to the views on the scale because he recognised divergent statements which had puzzled him personally. He expressed annoyance at the variety of methods and approaches in the L2 profession and noted extreme views promoted by fads.

A second staff member was asked to fill in Part 2 and she also expressed some frustration at wanting to say "Yes, but...". She also reworded a number of views expressed on the scale and these were accepted as making the statements less ambiguous.

Although specifying contexts in some instances may have satisfied the "Yes, but..." impulse, the primary purpose of the scale was to present a range of succinctly expressed statements that reflected commonly held views. Teachers are renowned for their "It depends" comments, so a teacher participant may still be inclined to express reserve, even with added contextual information. Further, the participants would be given opportunities to qualify the views they indicated on the scale in Parts 3 and 4 of the questionnaire. Therefore additional contextual details were not added to statements on the scale.

Several students who were regarded as possessing an average level of English (in relation to the first year student body) were asked to pilot the student questionnaire. Specifically, they were asked whether they understood the meaning of specific expressions and individual words that were central to the meaning of the question. Where they appeared less than certain, a Japanese translation was added, although this was kept to a minimum, as the pilot students were able to satisfactorily understand most questions in English. The Japanese translations were double checked by two other staff members who were native speakers of Japanese.

5.6 Data analysis

The data was examined using common interpretive strategies, whereby patterns of meaningful themes, issues or variables were sought (Johnson, 1992). The process of examination involved a continual process of reiteratively searching for patterns and determining how these patterns interrelated.

The first interview data were examined for interrelationships between the participants' teacher training experiences, their degree of uncertainty, the manner in which they sought to resolve conflict and their use of eclectic strategies. Upon sorting through the data of the first interview, it was found that that interview had not elicited sufficient information on the participants' experiences of uncertainty, since the questions pertaining to this area had not been focused enough. Therefore, the second interview was designed which included questions addressing the participants more directly with regard to moments of uncertainty they had experienced. Data gathered from the first interview also prompted additional questions on the manner in which the participants considered the evidence for a contrary teaching practice and their sense of changing trends in L2 teaching. The second interview, in almost each case, produced higher-yielding data detailing participants' experiences of uncertainty caused by conflicting views. In addition, issues that came to the fore in the first interview were made clearer during the course of the second interview.

Once the teachers' questionnaires were returned, the four parts were examined for interconnecting patterns. For example, the participants' opinions expressed in Part 3 were compared with their training and teaching experience indicated in Part 1, the views agreed / disagreed with in Part 2 and the core statements of belief expressed in Part 4. Once

patterns were found among the various parts, the six questionnaires were then examined and re-examined for interconnecting themes. The views of teaching and learning which emerged were found to be in keeping with the views that were expressed in the interviews.

In terms of establishing patterns in the scale, the views of each participant were added to one scale so that their views on individual statements could be examined simultaneously and valued numerically. The incidence of strong agreement / disagreement and mid-point views were also noted, from which the strength of participants' views were established.

Part 1 of the questionnaire was only partially completed by one participant who was reluctant to provide detailed information with regard to her qualifications and teaching experience. This limited the extent to which the influence of training and teaching experience could be attributed to the views this participant expressed in other parts of the questionnaire and interview. She nonetheless provided a general description of her previous training and professional experience.

The student questionnaires were similarly examined for common themes. The students' perceptions of whether teachers implemented communicative (shared) teaching practices (Questions 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 22 & 23), learner-centred practices (Questions 10, 11 12) and an integrated teaching approach (Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) were carefully scrutinised. Once the perceptions of one teacher's students had been examined, they were compared with the perceptions of the other teachers' students.

Comparisons were particularly important in the case of the four participants who shared a class with another participant. Differences of student perception with regard to Jenny and Tina's teaching and Dawn and Jo's teaching were carefully noted.

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS

This chapter reports on the analysis of the data obtained from the teacher questionnaire, the teacher interviews and the student questionnaire. Relevant themes which emerged from these three sources of data are grouped together and discussed in turn. The principle aim was to determine whether the teachers experienced doubt or uncertainty as a result of divergent views which emerge from multiple perspectives. A second aim was to determine the manner in which the teachers interpreted and accommodated these views. The extent to which they shared personal views and teaching practices are also discussed.

6.1 Teacher questionnaire

Themes which emerged from the analysis of the teacher questionnaire data are as follows:
- Shared views,
- Contextual factors in interpretation,
- Identification of divergent approaches and methods,
- Teaching experience as an interpretive framework.

6.1.1 Shared views

It was reasonable to assume, given the presence of multiple perspectives in L2 teaching and learning and the participants' varied backgrounds, that the teachers' views could differ significantly. However, while some differences emerged, the six respondents' views on language teaching and learning revealed a degree of homogeneity.

The results of the teacher questionnaire for instance, indicated that the teachers shared a support for communicative language teaching (CLT). In Part 3, Dawn, Jo, and Tina expressed a belief that communicative teaching practices were more effective than non-communicative practices. Dawn and Jo believed that CLT and task-based methods were more effective than grammar-based methods, while Tina referred to the superiority of

authentic materials and tasks over textbook tasks. In the initial questionnaire, Tina suggested that CLT was effective because it was enjoyable, relaxed, practical and creative. Similarly, Phyllis believed that the teaching approaches which encouraged student input and interaction were the most effective in terms of facilitating student learning.

Although the teachers expressed support for communicative language teaching, only Dawn clearly stated that she based her teaching practice on the CLT approach. Lyn and Jo said that they adapted various practices to complement their own teaching style and Jenny stated that she incorporated eclectic strategies into her methodology. Tina and Phyllis also claimed that they based their teaching practice on a range of teaching approaches since they believed no one approach sufficiently accounted for teaching and learning factors.

The relative homogeneity of teachers' views was illustrated most clearly in Part 2 of the teacher questionnaire (see Appendix F). In the tables that follow the numbers cited refer to the responses of the participants on the five point scale, where 1 indicates *Strongly agree* and 5 indicates *Strongly disagree*.

Table 1.

Teachers' views on the nature of L2 learning

	Teacher participants					
Views on L2 learning	Dawn	Lyn	Jenny	Phyl	Jo	Tina
L2 learning is:						
A1. learning to express meaning in L2	1	3	1	1	1	2
A16. the mastering of grammar	2	3	3	2	2	3
A8. the development of a set of habits	3	2	5	2	5	2
A5.the mastering of language skills	2	3	2	1	1	3
A12. acquiring knowledge of L2	2	2	2	1	1	2
A20. a similar process to L1 learning	4	5	5	1	5	4

Table 1 suggests that there was no clear differences in relation to views of language learning. Only the behavioural statement *L2 learning is the development of a set of habits* produced mixed agreement. Phyllis was the only participant to agree with the notion that

L2 learning was a similar process to L1 learning (A20). The teachers' views on language learning were compared with their views on effective teaching (see Table 2).

Table 2

Teachers' views on effective teaching

Views on effective teaching	Teacher participants					
	Dawn	Lyn	Jenny	Phyl	Jo	Tina
B12 Some teaching methods are more effective than others.	1	2	1	1	1	1
B10. Effective teaching cannot be distinguished from ineffective teaching.	5	4	3	3	5	4
B15. It is important to follow a recognised teaching method.	4	3	3	4	5	4
B18. Good teachers regularly use a variety of approaches and methods.	2	2	1	1	1	1
B7 There is no right one way to teach	1	1	1	1	5	1

According to Table 2, only Jo disagreed with the view that one right way to teach did not exist (B7), with teachers attaching minimal importance to following a "recognised" method (B15). At the same time, every participant agreed that some teaching methods were more effective than others (B12), suggesting that they believed some ways of teaching were "more right" than others.

The six participants agreed with the notion that good teachers use a variety of approaches and methods (B18), which suggests that they endorsed an eclectic viewpoint with respect to language teaching options.

The results of the scale indicated that the teachers also held similar views with respect to the role of the teacher (see Table 3).

Table 3

Teachers' views on the role of the teacher

	Teacher participants					
Views on the role of the teacher	Dawn	Lyn	Jenny	Phyl	Jo	Tina
B3. The teacher should give the learner control of the learning situation.	3	3	2	2	2	1
B6. The teacher should play a predominant role in the classroom.	3	3	5	2	2	4
B9. The primary role of the teacher is to facilitate the student's learning.	1	2	1	1	1	1
B13. The primary role of the teacher is to transfer knowledge to the student.	4	3	5	3	2	5

As Table 3 shows, the participants viewed the teacher as a facilitator (B9) and indicated a preference for giving the learner control of the learning situation (B6). On the other hand, they were divided as to whether teachers should play a predominant role in the classroom (B6). Dawn and Lyn's neutral positions (B3, B6) suggests they were unsure as to what extent they should be actively involved in the students' learning.

Table 4

Teachers' views on the role of instruction

	Teacher participants					
Views on the role of instruction	Dawn	Lyn	Jenny	Phyl	Jo	Tina
A9. L2 learners need to be taught in order to be proficient	3	3	5	2	5	2
A13. Students can achieve proficiency solely through exposure to the L2	4	4	2	2	5	2
A18. Learners' errors need to be corrected straight away	4	3	3	2	2	2
A11.Students learn what they are taught.	4	4	3	3	5	3
A19. Learners construct their own understanding despite what they are taught	2	2	1	1	1	2

Table 4 suggest that the teachers' views differed the most with respect to instruction. Phyllis and Tina believed that students required instruction to become proficient (A9) whereas Jenny and Jo clearly disagreed. Phyllis and Tina also thought that proficiency in L2 could be achieved through exposure alone (A13) while Dawn, Lyn and Jo believed that exposure on its own was insufficient. However, in addition to disagreeing with the statement *Students learn what they are taught,* the participants all clearly agreed with the view that students developed their own understanding independently (A19). The teachers views on instruction were compared with their views on language accuracy and fluency (see Table 5).

Table 5.

Teachers' views on accuracy and fluency

| | Teacher participants | | | | | |
Views on accuracy and fluency	Dawn	Lyn	Jen	Phyl	Jo	Tina
B2. Accuracy should be the focus with beginners.	3	4	5	3	2	5
B17. Fluency should be the focus with beginners.	3	4	2	3	4	2
B20. Explaining grammar rules is an essential part of classroom practice.	2	3	3	3	2	4
B4. Explaining grammar rules is ineffectual.	5	3	3	4	5	2

Here, Dawn, Lyn, Jenny and Phyllis shared an inclination to adopt middle positions. Only Jo and Tina were prepared to express firm views in this area and their positions were located at opposite ends of the scale. The teachers' views differed with regard to teaching beginners, with Jenny and Tina firmly believing that fluency should be focused on with beginners, while Jo and Lyn believed that accuracy should be the focus.

6.1.2 Contextual factors in interpretation

Although the teachers were not asked to identify antithetical statements, it was envisaged that randomly inserted pairs of divergent views would elicit contrasting responses. Statements which were added to the scale to represent divergent positions included the

following: *L2 learning is learning to express meaning in L2* (A1) and *L2 learning is the mastering of grammar* (A16); *Learners need to be taught in order to be proficient* (A9) and *Students can achieve proficiency solely through exposure to L2* (A13); *Accuracy should be the focus with beginners* (B2) and *Fluency should be the focus with beginners* (B17). However, the participants tended to either express the same degree of agreement / disagreement for both positions or circle a 3 for one statement. Of the six participants, Jenny, Tina and Jo indicated contrasting views the most often, agreeing with one statement and disagreeing with its designated opposite on four occasions.

It seemed that the teachers were inclined to link their interpretive strategies to contextual factors. For instance, Phyllis exhibited a strong tendency to agree with the greater proportion of statements on the scale, which suggests that she accepted views on the basis of contextual variation. She also wrote "It depends" alongside a number of statements and every participant made reference to the importance of contextual features during the interviews. Tina also agreed with the greater proportion of statements, although she was more prepared to express disagreement than Phyllis. At the same time, the teachers differed in terms of the strength of their views. This was analysed by using the full amount of scale data to calculate the number of times they circled 1, 3 and 5 (see Table 6). A participant who circled 1 or 5 on numerous occasions was seen as favouring strong views.

Table 6

Incidence of moderate and strong views among teachers

Strength of views	Teacher participants					
	Dawn	Lyn	Jenny	Phyl	Jo	Tina
1	5	1	11	12	12	13
2	10	12	6	8	9	13
3	11	16	13	7	3	4
4	10	10	2	3	3	8
5	4	1	6	0	12	2

Dawn and Lyn are clearly shown to adopt middle-of-the-road positions, with Dawn

circling 3 on 11 occasions and Lyn on 16 occasions. Jenny also expressed a degree of reserve by circling 3 thirteen times. In contrast, Jo circled 1 on 12 occasions and 5 on 12 occasions, revealing a willingness to adopt clear and strong views, despite the absence of a defined context.

6.1.3 Identification of divergent approaches and methods

While the teachers identified relatively few antithetical views on the scale, they clearly indicated a view in Part 3 of the teacher questionnaire that divergent approaches and methods existed within the L2 profession. Figure 1 outlines the examples that they referred to.

Figure 1. Divergent approaches and methods

Communicative language teaching	←→	Audiolingualism
Communicative language teaching	←→	The Silent Way method
Task-based teaching methods	←→	Grammar-based methods
Humanistic teaching methods	←→	Grammar-based methods
Learner-centred pedagogy	←→	Teacher-centred pedagogy

Audiolingualism and communicative language teaching were two teaching approaches referred to as incompatible. For instance, Jenny noted that audiolingual teaching methods such as rote learning were at odds with assumptions underlying communicative teaching theory. Similarly, in Part 3, Phyllis stated that the habit formation practices of the audiolingual approach conflicted with more recent interactive teaching methods. In the initial questionnaire, she noted the inherent differences between behaviourist and nativist views of language acquisition.

In addition, Jo believed CLT and the Silent Way method were incompatible, while Lyn believed that a conflict existed between the statements *Students learn best by performing communicative tasks* and *A second language can be learnt without interaction* (see Appendix F, Part 2). Jo also pointed to differences between grammar-based and humanistic methods and the conflicting premises of task-based and grammar-based teaching practices.

Dawn and Tina noted conflicts between teacher-centred and learner-centred practices. According to Dawn, the notion that L2 acquisition occurs largely through exposure to meaningful interactions in the second language contradicted the more teacher-centred view that direct instruction in the classroom was important for student learning. Tina believed that the teacher-centred practice of immediately correcting oral errors conflicted with the notion that oral errors ought to be ignored for the sake of learner confidence.

Apart from Tina, each participant indicated in the initial questionnaire that they had, at times, experienced a degree of doubt or uncertainty as a result of divergent views. For Lyn, the potential for contrasting positions to cause confusion was clear:

> [They] can cause you to have doubt and therefore possibly lead you to not try
> or follow through with something that works well for you in class.

6.1.4 Teaching experience as an interpretive framework

The participants were asked to indicate the extent to which various factors influenced their current teaching practice. Their responses to Questions 7 to 12 in Part 3 indicated that teaching experience and learner characteristics were regarded as important variables. Table 7 shows the teachers' assessment of factors influencing their beliefs. Number 1 indicates *No extent*, 3 indicates *Some extent*, and 5 indicates *A very large extent*.

Table 7

Factors that have influenced teachers' views

Background factors	Teacher participants					
	Dawn	Lyn	Jenny	Phyl	Jo	Tina
Practical constraints	2	3	3	3	2	2
Own L2 learning	4	2	2	4	3	2
Learner characteristics	4	3	4	4	4	5
Teaching experience	5	4	3	4	5	4
L2 literature	5	2	3	3	3	2
Colleagues	3	3	3	4	4	4

Apart from Jenny, each participant regarded teaching experience and learner characteristics as having a high degree of influence on their views, with Dawn and Jo identifying teaching experience as having a very strong influence on their practice. Phyllis also stated in Part 4 that the "evidence of [her] eyes [in the classroom]" had been one of the strongest influences on views of teaching. Lyn similarly stated in Part 4 that "seeing how things work in class with different students" had been a strong influence on her views of teaching. It is interesting to note that Phyllis and Tina, two of the least experienced teachers, also identified colleagues as strong influences in Part 3. Tina indicated that L2 literature influenced her only to a slight extent; a point she re-emphasised in the interviews.

Practical constraints, e.g. time restrictions and curriculum requirements, registered a low score in terms of influence on the teachers. In terms of preparation time, the teachers were allocated three hours to prepare for their lesson each day (see Section 5.3). In terms of curriculum requirements, the teachers were granted a high degree of autonomy with regard to course design and implementation (see Section 5.3).

Only Dawn and Phyllis indicated that their own language learning experiences influenced their teaching approach to a large extent. During the first interview Dawn discussed how learning a foreign language during her teacher certificate programme had been an illuminating experience. Phyllis described how referring back to her own language learning experience in Japan helped her understand her students' language problems.

Results from Parts 3 and 4 of the teacher questionnaire showed how teaching experience had helped the teachers accommodate alternative views of teaching and learning. For example, Lyn had adopted a more positive view of grammar instruction since she had observed that her students were able to comprehend grammatical terms. Phyllis now doubted the view that students learn what they are taught because her students often reported learning items of language and skills that had not been directly referred to. Jo had recently discovered from classroom observation the importance of allowing students to root their language expression within their own life experiences. Along with Lyn, she had become more aware of the importance of granting learners a greater degree of autonomy in the classroom. Tina had found that students learn best from communicative tasks and

benefited from the teacher's close attention.

6.2 Summary

The results of the teacher questionnaire indicated that teachers adopted similar views with respect to L2 learning, effective teaching and the role of the teacher, while differences of opinion emerged with respect to the role of instruction. The teachers identified relatively few statements on the scale as antithetical which suggests that they viewed the teaching context as an important interpretive factor. They nonetheless identified teaching approaches and methods which they believed represented incompatible positions.

Teaching experience emerged as an important factor which helped to mediate the effects of divergent views. An alternative view was less likely to create doubts in the teachers' minds if it was seen to compliment their current teaching approach. Further, the teachers' observations of student behaviour in the classroom either strengthened or weakened their support for particular teaching practices.

6.3 Teacher interviews

The teacher interviews explored more fully the teachers' attitudes towards divergent views and also helped to generate profiles of the individual teachers. Although the interview concentrated on *divergent* or *discrepant* views, *alternative* views were also referred to.

Themes which emerged from the analysis of the teacher interview data are as follows:
- Tolerance of divergent views,
- Levels of uncertainty,
- Divergent views,
- Strategies for coping with divergent views,
- Search for pedagogic variety,
- Search for principles of teaching and learning.

6.3.1 Tolerance of divergent views

In the first interview, the teachers were asked to discuss what they believed were the

effects of divergent views and teaching approaches on individual teachers (see Appendix G). They were also asked in the second interview (see Appendix H) to discuss their experiences of discrepant views on teaching and learning. Their tolerance of divergent views was gauged as a result of their responses to these questions (see Figure 2).

Figure 2   **Tolerance of divergent views**

Years of full time L2 teaching experience
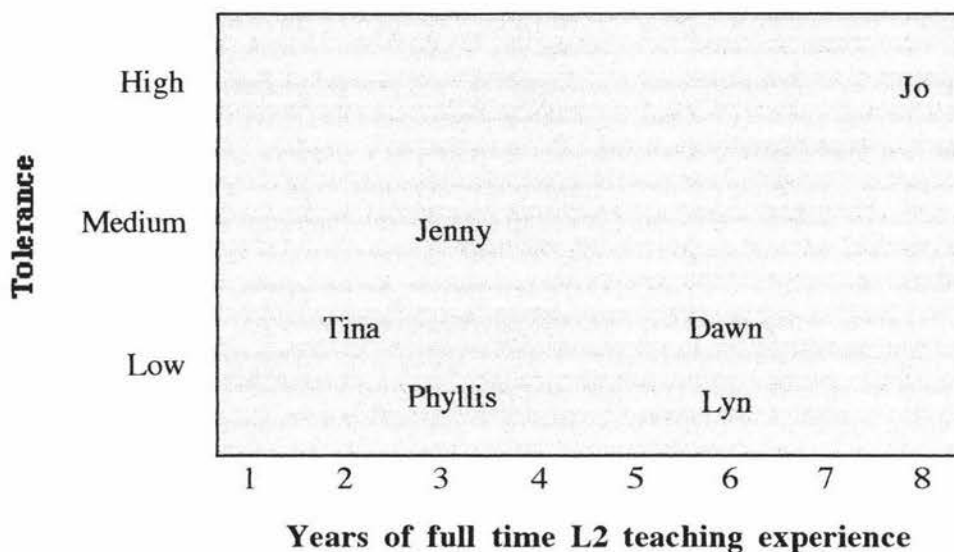
According to Figure 2, Jo clearly expressed the most positive attitude towards divergent views of language teaching, whereas Dawn and Lyn, the next most experienced teachers, expressed far less tolerance. This suggests that there was no clear relationship between openness to divergent views and years of teaching experience.

For Jo, the belief that a teacher needed to remain open to new ideas and pedagogies represented one of the L2 profession's most important discoveries. She referred to the uncertainty created by conflicting views as a source of stimulation:

I think conflict is a good thing. I'm a great believer in conflict. The more conflicting approaches there are, the more it should reassert to the teachers the need to have an eclectic approach...

In addition, Jo argued that "there were no good or bad theories" and that teachers ought to focus on the manner in which they interpret and apply theory - rather than focus on the theory itself. She demonstrated a maverick attitude towards current methodologies and

sought an individualised teaching approach that integrated approaches and methods.

Jo also stated that differences of opinion, such as the discrepant views on error correction (see Appendix F, Question 3), illustrated that there was no right approach to teaching. She said that if a view which contrasted to her own was "sound" she would reflect on it and added that an idea would not work for her if it failed to "fit in" with her current practice. Although she was initially highly critical of the Silent Way method, which she described as "ludicrous", she was prepared to accommodate features of its methodology, such as its emphasis on extensive listening.

Unlike Jo, Dawn's tolerance for divergent views of teaching and learning had not increased with experience. She did believe that a range of views heightened teachers' awareness of the alternatives and suggested that teachers interpreted these alternatives on the basis of their individual teaching styles and experiences. However, she candidly remarked that she was less likely to bother with views that differed to her own now she had gained a sufficient amount of confidence as a teacher. She demonstrated limited tolerance for discrepant views, stating that they were more helpful for less experienced teachers who were still investigating their pedagogic options. Dawn also stated that with minimal experimentation she was able to determine a teaching method's appropriacy.

Along with Dawn, Lyn had not become more tolerant of divergent views as an experienced teacher. She stated categorically that contrasting viewpoints had created a great deal of confusion which was compounded by the failure of L2 professionals to reach consensus on matters of teaching and learning:

> There is huge potential for confusion. Everyone's got opposing ideas. Books
> written by experts have conflicting ideas ... You could read several texts and
> not come out with a clear picture of what to do.

Lyn described herself as a "safe" teacher who adopted a cautious approach towards language teaching options. Her initial reaction to an alternative practice was to think "Hang on". If she encountered a new technique that was not practically demonstrated, she would "stick to [her] guns". At the same time, she referred to an occasion in the previous

year when she initially dismissed a technique which a colleague introduced to her. While she did not initially agree with the rationale of the technique, she was nonetheless prepared to accommodate it if it "worked" for her in class.

Jenny believed that the potential for multiple perspectives to cause confusion was clearly evident. While she suggested that this confusion could be resolved by "looking at the students" and determining which teaching practice suited them, she conceded that she had been confused by the alternatives which had been generated by theorists: "If theorists can't decide, it's not going to be easy for practitioners". Nonetheless, Jenny tried to keep an open mind and observed that language teaching pedagogy had evolved and continues to evolve and teachers therefore needed to stay in touch with current research. While she appeared to share Lyn's caution, she seemed more prepared to investigate divergent views as long as they were validated by research.

Tina, the participant with the least teaching experience, argued that the tensions created by discrepant views could be diffused by using common sense. For Tina, referring to her students' desires and needs represented a common sense approach to reducing ambiguities associated with multiple perspectives. She did not, however, appear wholly comfortable with questions regarding views that contradicted her own and stated that she was more interested in the practice of teaching than "looking at theories". Accepting or rejecting a view or a teaching practice in accordance to its relevance to her students' needs appeared to be relatively straight forward. She expressed a strong learner-centred perspective by stating that "the customer is always right". When asked to describe her needs analysis, however, Tina offered a number of stock questions she asked her students which appeared to focus more on students' wishes and desires:

> What kind of English do you want to learn? How do you like to learn? What
> do you feel is your weakest point? What would you like to do after this
> course? How can this course improve?

Tina added that she did not have the time to fully consider divergent views: "I'm pressed for time. It's full on. I'm writing the syllabus as I teach it".

Phyllis believed divergent views caused problems for teachers and this was evidenced by the teachers' meetings which she attended where matters of pedagogy were discussed but could not be agreed on. She had become annoyed when opposing views were expressed in these meetings and was highly critical of the disagreements among her more experienced colleagues. This appears to have created doubts in her mind with regard to various aspects of teaching practice. The extent to which Phyllis considered a contrary view depended on the importance she attached to it and she commented that she should take more time to reflect more on what she was doing in the classroom.

6.3.2 Levels of uncertainty

The extent to which the teachers experienced levels of uncertainty as a result of divergent views is depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3   Uncertainty created by divergent views

Years of full time teaching experience
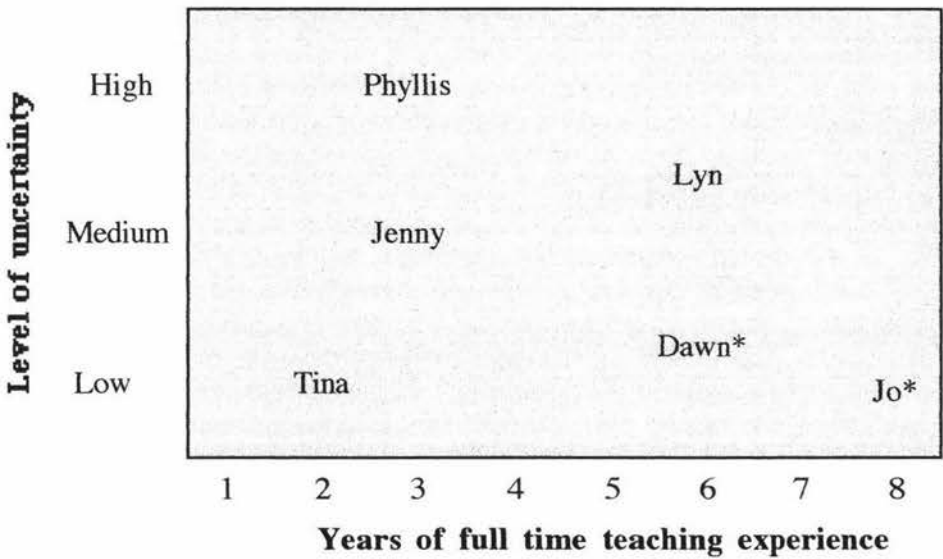
*A higher degree of uncertainty experienced in the past

The findings of the interviews indicated that Phyllis, Lyn, and Jenny experienced the most uncertainty as a result of what they perceived as divergent views of teaching and learning. Phyllis and Lyn talked unreservedly in both interviews about competing claims and counter-claims which had made them less certain about aspects of their teaching practice. After providing relatively guarded responses in the first interview, Jenny talked more freely in the second interview about how the presence of alternative approaches was making pedagogic selection more difficult. Both Dawn and Jo stated that incompatible

views were unlikely to affect their teaching confidence and they referred to past events when discussing the uncertainties they had encountered. Jo also wanted to clarify the point that she had experienced periods of doubt and uncertainty, but had not been confused by divergent views. In both interviews, Tina maintained that she welcomed multiple perspectives and only referred to one area of teaching as a source of uncertainty.

Phyllis and Lyn demonstrated limited tolerance for divergent views and higher levels of uncertainty. Conversely, Jo demonstrated a high degree of tolerance towards divergent views and a lower level of uncertainty. Lyn and Jo were similarly experienced teachers whose experience of and attitude towards multiple perspectives differed markedly.

6.3.3. Divergent views

In the first interview the teachers talked about the problems caused by divergent views while in the second interview they were asked to specifically talk about the areas in which they personally experienced periods of doubt or uncertainty. Ambiguities were found to be conveyed primarily through colleagues, teacher educators and L2 literature. As far as the teachers were concerned, the following views represented points of conceptual conflict:

Teaching vocabulary

Lyn stated how she found it difficult to reconcile two different positions on teaching vocabulary. For some time she had believed that vocabulary ought to be taught in context, rather than in a rote fashion. Recently, however, a recent seminar led by Paul Nation from Victoria University made her aware of the revival of vocabulary lists which subsequently caused her to doubt the practice of teaching in context. She expressed annoyance at alternative sources of authority which she believed offered alternative explanations:

> You think you've got it and can teach it but then something tells you a completely new and different way. This can lead to conflicting methods.

The uncertainty that she now experienced with regard to teaching vocabulary in context had made her less certain on how to test vocabulary and how to assist learners using new words.

Phyllis, who had attended the same seminar, shared Lyn's uncertainty. Nation's endorsement of vocabulary lists had made her uncertain of vocabulary instruction as well. She was unsure whether Nation's vocabulary lists would succeed with her students:

> Some people say you should teach in context,... Paul Nation was saying just give them lists of words... I'm not sure with the general type of classroom we have. Maybe I should see how [the students] react to [word lists] if I did do it like that.

Reading comprehension

Phyllis discussed how divergent views on pedagogy created confusion in the teacher planning meetings she attended. She cited a recent debate at a meeting which centred on whether students ought to respond with short or long answers to reading texts. One group disputed the validity of asking students to respond in short answers by arguing that students needed to produce long answers to demonstrate proper comprehension. While Phyllis allied herself with the opposing group which defended the validity of short answers - on the basis of her language learning experience - she found the clear differences of opinion bewildering.

Grammar instruction

In the first interview, Dawn described how divergent positions on grammar had made her less certain of her teaching practice in the past. She had personally favoured presenting items of grammar to her students but increasingly noticed that grammar was "not in". She had noted a movement against explicit grammar instruction in the literature she had read and in the comments of other teachers. She referred to a distinct mood she had experienced at teachers' meetings:

> I like teaching grammar and it's not ... I suspect it's coming back a little bit, but it was not quite the "in thing" to do. At a meeting people say "we don't want to focus on grammar".

Her observation of this mood had caused her to question her own attitudes towards grammar instruction, to the point where she accommodated her colleagues' position and

ceased to present grammar directly for a period of 12 months. However, she resumed teaching grammar again because her initial convictions had remained intact: "I just made the decision that I felt it should be done and so I did it".

Similarly, Lyn had been questioning her views on teaching grammar. She discussed in the second interview how she had taught grammar directly from the white board in the past but was now experimenting with discrete, inductive practices using various texts and songs. She believed that both approaches had their merits but conceded that she could not choose between them: "It is hard to know if there's one successful approach".

When asked to discuss whether she had experienced periods of doubt as a result of divergent views of language teaching pedagogy, Jo referred back to her earlier years as an L2 teacher when she had a notion of "good" and "bad" theories. These theories promoted mental images such as "speaking is good" and "grammar is bad", as well as antithetical maxims which included "ignore accuracy" and "be accurate". Jo now sought to dispense with "black-and-white" views and tried to focus on her own teaching style and her relationship with her students.

Pronunciation

Both Dawn and Jo had previously experienced doubts with regard to the differing views towards pronunciation. Dawn had noted some opposition towards the notion of teaching phonemic symbols, stating that "a lot of people don't see the advantage in teaching phonology". Although this caused some confusion, she subsequently chose to teach phonology because of its perceived benefit to her students.

Jo had previously thought that "speaking activities [were] good" and "pronunciation activities [were] bad". She now attempted to accommodate pronunciation exercises because of her decision to remain open-minded to alternative points of view. She also referred to the communicative methodology's focus on speaking and the Silent Method's focus on silence as antithetical positions which had puzzled her in the past.

Choice of an appropriate teaching approach

In the second interview, Jenny described how she had been experiencing a dilemma choosing the most appropriate approach for improving her students' accuracy. In her mind, the choice was between her current communicative approach and the less familiar behaviourist "listen-and-repeat" approach. Her dilemma stemmed from the realisation that her students had become fluent, but "not very accurate", and she attributed this imbalance to her communicative teaching practices. She was now exploring the option of accommodating more behaviourist methods, such as listen-and-repeat drills and musical chants, which she associated with accuracy-based work.

Phyllis expressed bewilderment at her more experienced colleagues' disagreements with regard to syllabus design. Together with a team of colleagues, she was responsible for creating individual courses for varying classes at different points of the year. Meetings were arranged for planning purposes, yet preparing syllabuses was proving to be difficult, due to the disagreements among teachers regarding appropriate methodology. Phyllis felt that setting long term goals for her students was difficult when her colleagues' views on syllabus design conflicted. When asked if she thought the planning teams went "around in circles", she replied "If we're lucky".

One area in which Tina expressed uncertainty related to teaching academic English. She referred to the English proficiency standards of universities which required language teachers to focus on specific skills and areas of language awareness. Tina worried that if she didn't identify and adopt the "correct" teaching approach now, her students would be under-prepared for their tertiary studies.

6.3.4 Strategies for coping with divergent views

Results from the first and second interviews pointed to teachers employing three distinct strategies for interpreting differing conceptions of learning and teaching.

Student characteristics as a frame of reference

Tina's statement "It goes back to the students" encapsulated her strategy for interpreting divergent views on language teaching pedagogy. For example, she negotiated the accuracy versus fluency argument by identifying her students' wishes with regard to

grammar instruction - they had expressed a desire not to be taught grammar, so she refrained from teaching grammar explicitly. Ironically, conflict for Tina emerged from within her classroom, in that her students expressed dissatisfaction with elements of the course she was teaching. Indeed, her class had reached a crisis point, so she sought to resolve the tension by having an open class discussion. She then tried to accommodate her students' wishes by asking them to assist her in preparing a revised syllabus.

Jo similarly adopted a strong learner-centred focus with regard to pedagogic selection:

> My approach is dominated very much by the type of students I have in the classroom at any one time and the learning outcomes I want from the course...

At the same time, she suggested that there was no such thing as a "student", arguing that her 18 year old Japanese learners were "galaxies separated" from Arabian businessmen. She also noted that it was an ability to motivate students that distinguished outstanding teachers, not a particular methodology.

When asked to comment on the differences between communicative language teaching and grammar-based teaching, Lyn stated that she studied divergent teaching practices "from the point of view of the class". In other words, she assessed an approach on the extent to which it enhanced her students' performance. Julie also referred to student characteristics as a means of resolving divergent viewpoints: "We need to look at the students - what approach best suits them at the time".

The logic of a view

In the first interview, Phyllis and Tina talked about applying common sense when confronted with contrasting views on teaching practice because they felt that the truth of some views were self-evident. For example, when asked to comment on the divergent views on error correction (see Appendix G, Question 3), Tina argued that it made sense not to correct beginners regularly because it would obviously erode their confidence. Similarly, Phyllis believed that the statement *The most important factor in language acquisition success is motivation* was obviously true. Tina also said that a contrary view

on teaching practice would need to contain "a really convincing argument" to warrant proper scrutiny. Similarly, Jo stated that she would only investigate a point of view which contradicted her own if it possessed a "strong rationale". In Lyn's case, the logic of an discrepant view had to be practically demonstrated, otherwise she would ignore it altogether: "I have to see it in reality - how it works, before I believe it".

The source of a view

The source of a view of teaching provided the primary frame of reference for some of the teachers. Dawn would only investigate a view which contrasted with her own if she respected its source. She provided a negative example of this by discussing an occasion when she dismissed the ideas of a colleague who was presenting material at a professional development seminar. She inferred that she did not respect her colleague's point of view. As a positive example, she referred to the teacher educator John Fanselow, whose "generating alternatives" perspective provided her with a fresh incentive to adopt innovative classroom practices such as re-ordering instructional sequences.

Jenny stated that she would only examine views of teaching and learning which were validated by research. She was clearly not interested in personal theories of teaching: "If it's coming off the top of their heads, then it will just run off the top of my back". In the first interview, she discussed how the *reading in context* teaching method had been strongly advanced at the expense of the *phonics* teaching method during her College of Education course. She believed her instructors had over emphasised *reading in context* and this was confirmed for her when she discovered research which stated that the reading in context and phonics-based practices were complimentary. Although confident about research findings in mainstream education, she expressed reservations about the L2 teaching field because of its lack of cohesion. Nonetheless, she felt it was important for teachers to keep-up-to-date with L2 theory and research, "even though it's all over the place".

Apart from determining whether an alternative practice made sense, Phyllis believed it was important to identify "the point of view it's coming from". She believed this was only possible if a teacher had a thorough understanding of the different teaching approaches, which she said she herself lacked.

Jo referred to Fanselow as one of the few teacher educators who provided innovative perspectives on L2 teaching and referred to British Council publications as an authority on current L2 theory and practice. She also stated that she tried to mimic the teachers she had in school who were relaxed, focused and personable. She would listen to her colleagues if they offered alternative views on teaching practice, although they "[tended] to be on the same wavelength".

6.3.5 Search for pedagogic variety

In the first interview, the teachers expressed support for an eclectic viewpoint as a means of interpreting multiple perspectives (see Sections 6.1.1, 6.2.1 and Table 2). Therefore, to investigate this further in the second interview they were asked to describe the manner in which they incorporated eclectic strategies into their teaching approach. Apart from Jo, the teachers referred to eclecticism as a means of generating pedagogic variety, rather than as a framework for teaching practice.

In her response to Question 4 in the second interview, Dawn defined her eclecticism by stating "we do all sorts". She said she might discover something new, like dictogloss or a technique practising English rhythm, and then "do it to death". She supported the use of eclectic strategies on the basis that it provided variety. She expressed her disappointment that her RSA certificate course had placed a strong emphasis on the Present-Practise-Produce (PPP) method at the expense of other methods: "I finished the RSA Cert course thinking PPP was the only way to go". She noted that alternatives to PPP were treated with derision and regretted that, when she was a less experienced teacher, she was not made aware of the wider range of options.

Lyn, who also associated eclecticism with pedagogic variety, said that she tried to be eclectic despite describing herself as a "believer in the communicative approach". For example, she she varied her approach to listening activities by using songs as well as text book exercises. In addition, she explored different options for testing vocabulary. As with Dawn, she expressed disappointment with the narrow focus of her teacher certificate course.

Tina, because of the high demands placed on her by her students, tried to be eclectic by

doing "lot's of different things". She tried to be "very consciously eclectic" so as to "keep [the students'] interests up". She stated that she would vary classroom practices by alternating individual work with pair work and group work activities.

Phyllis approved of an eclectic point of view and stated that she liked to vary her accuracy-based tasks by helping her students to learn grammar inductively through written assignments. She noted in the first interview that some methods worked better than others in certain contexts and cited students in communist Asian countries who successfully learned English through the grammar translation method.

Jenny was prepared to combine fluency work and cognitive tasks with behaviourist techniques, such as "listen and repeat" activities and "Jazz chants". She said that her postgraduate research had made her more aware of the various teaching approaches which had helped her to incorporate eclectic strategies into her teaching approach.

Jo focused on structured activities when teaching low level learners and fluency activities when teaching higher level learners. She believed her eclectic approach was intuitive and possessed a rationale that was difficult to articulate and argued that teachers needed to be acquainted with all the key methodologies to be truly eclectic. She said in the first interview that she strongly believed eclecticism was often used as a by-word for avoidance, an excuse for a teacher's ignorance of the various teaching approaches. She suggested that although teachers described themselves as eclectic, they were likely to be following the communicative language teaching approach. Her Masters study had offered her her first opportunity to fully explore and evaluate the range of pedagogic options.

6.3.6 Search for teaching and learning principles

At the end of the second interview, the participants were asked whether they believed changing theories or trends undermined fundamental principles of L2 teaching and learning. They were provided with a hypothetical example:

Students generally benefit from grammar instruction (principle), but in language classrooms fluency has been increasingly emphasised at the expense of accuracy (trend). As a result, students' accuracy has suffered.

Jo believed evidence showed that the above example had actually occurred, and re-stated her belief that an eclectic viewpoint provided the solution: " Having an eclectic approach you know what all the approaches are. You do everything simultaneously and balance them all up". She believed that teaching practice needed to be established from "a broader understanding of the tenets of language teaching" and stated that the teacher should not be "making it up" in the classroom.

Although Lyn accepted that language teaching was a developing profession, she believed the rate of change was detrimental, particularly for inexperienced teachers:

> Change is a good thing..., but I think there are some principles out there which have been proved over the years to work. There are so many new age ways of teaching that it can be pretty confusing... for newer teachers, that stuff can interfere with their establishing a groundwork.

In the first interview, Lyn made references to "tried and true" practices when outlining her views of teaching and learning. She acknowledged the importance of context-specific teaching, yet she believed that "underneath the basics are the same", indicating that certain pedagogic principles were universal. She cited communicative language teaching as a proven approach which produced effective outcomes but also argued that a strong learner-centred perspective had, to some extent, hindered students' progress because proven teaching practices had been neglected. Lyn also expressed concern with regard to Fanselow's "generating alternatives" perspective:

> There's a lot of "take the opposite" and I think that can be really confusing for people when you've heard that one way is the tried, true, workable method and then you hear suddenly that that's been thrown out.

Asked whether the L2 profession ought to establish a commonly accepted theoretical framework, Phyllis said the provision of a list of principles would provide the individual teacher with an awareness of current L2 positions. Teachers could then consult a reference point, "instead of [relying on] which journal you pick up or which page you turn to".

6.4 Summary

The overall results of the interviews showed that the teachers had either experienced or were experiencing a degree of uncertainty as a result of divergent views of teaching and learning. For Jo and Dawn, the uncertainty had diminished with teaching experience, whereas for Lyn, Jenny and Phyllis, discrepant points of view represented a source of frustration and tension.

Only Jo appeared to comfortable in a multiple perspectives environment. Conversely, Dawn chose to ignore views which differed to her own, Lyn was clearly frustrated by multiple perspectives and Jenny only considered views which were verified by L2 theory or research. Phyllis was bewildered by the oppositional views expressed by her colleagues and was experiencing difficulties matching teaching practices with contexts. Tina appeared to have side-stepped apparent ambiguities by focusing on what she perceived as student needs.

Group discussions created the most awareness of divergent views, along with opinions offered by teacher educators and points of view expressed in L2 literature.

Although the teachers professed to be eclectic, they provided only a few examples of teaching practices not normally associated with communicative language teaching. They also believed that the L2 profession was underpinned by commonly agreed upon principles, despite the presence of multiple perspectives.

6.5 Student questionnaire

On the whole, the results of the students questionnaire appeared to support the views expressed by the participants with regard to teaching practice. Clear and persistent discrepancies between the teachers' expressed views and their observed teaching practices were not readily apparent.

The results of the teacher questionnaire indicated that the participants' teaching practices were relatively similar (see Section 6.1.1). This was reinforced by the students' observations which suggested that, apart from Jo, the teachers implemented practices

commonly associated with communicative activities. They also said that they referred to their students when confronted with divergent views (see Section 6.2.3) and their students indicated that their teachers were indeed aware of their needs. Also, four of the teachers appeared to integrate the various pedagogic options into a coherent teaching approach, which suggested that they had established their own framework of practice.

In the tables that follow, the numbers cited refer to the five point scale in the student questionnaire, where 1 indicates *Never*, 2 indicates *Rarely*, 3 indicates *Sometimes*, 4 indicates *Often*, and 5 indicates *Always*. The 18 student participants are identified as *a, b,* and *c* etc, and are listed horizontally beneath the names of their teachers.

6.5.1 Shared teaching practices

The students' observations indicated that the teachers' approaches incorporated activities normally associated with communicative language teaching:

Table 8

Communicative activities

Questions to students		Student participants (a, b, c, etc.)				
1. Do you do pair	*Dawn*	*Lyn*	*Jenny*	*Phyllis*	*Jo*	*Tina*
work in class?	a. 4	d. 5	g. 5	j. 3	m. 3	p. 3
	b. 4	e. 4	h. 3	k. 4	n. 2	q. 4
	c. 3	f. 5	i. 3	l. 4	o. 2	r. 4
2. Do you do group	a. 4	d. 5	g. 5	j. 3	m. 3	p. 3
work in class?	b. 4	e. 4	h. 3	k. 4	n. 3	q. 3
	c. 3	f. 4	i. 3	l. 4	o. 3	r. 4
15. Do you do a lot of	a. 3	d. 4	g. 3	j. 3	m. 5	p. 2
English conversation?	b. 4	e. 3	h. 5	k. 3	n. 4	q. 3
	c. 4	f. 5	i. 3	l. 4	o. 4	r. 4

Table 8 shows that, apart from Jo's students, the students felt that their teachers clearly favoured group work and pair work. Jo's students, on the other hand, indicated that these types of activities did not predominate, suggesting that Jo did indeed adopt more of an

eclectic approach towards task selection (see Section 6.3.1).

According to most students, English conversation was also prominent in their classrooms. Some students observed, however, that conversation practice did not always take place. The focus on academic English in Dawn, Jenny and Tina's classes may account for this.

6.5.2 Learner needs as an interpretive framework

In the teacher questionnaire and teacher interviews, the teachers indicated that they referred to their learners' needs as a means of interpreting divergent views of teaching and learning. Therefore, the students' responses to questions investigating their teachers' awareness of their language needs and desires were carefully noted:

Table 9

Learner-centred practices

Questions to students	Student participants (a, b, c, etc.)					
10. Are students	*Dawn*	*Lyn*	*Jenny*	*Phyllis*	*Jo*	*Tina*
assisted one-by-one?	a. 3	d. 5	g. 4	j. 4	m. 4	p. 2
	b. 5	e. 5	h. 5	k. 5	n. 3	q. 4
	c. 5	f. 5	i. 5	l. 4	o. 4	r. 3
11. Does your teacher	a. 2	d. 5	g. 4	j. 3	m. 3	p. 1
know your language	b. 5	e. 5	h. 4	k. 4	n. 4	q. 2
needs?	c. 5	f. 5	i. 5	l. 4	o. 4	r. 3
12. Does your teacher	a. 2	d. 4	g. 4	j. 3	m. 3	p. 1
know your wishes?	b. 3	e. 4	h. 4	k. 2	n. 3	q. 2
	c. 5	f. 5	i. 4	l. 3	o. 3	r. 2

Tina's students provided the clearest example of a discrepancy between teacher assertion and student perception. Ironically for Tina, a strong proponent of learner-centred teaching (see Sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3), her students indicated that she was not always aware of their individual needs and desires. Her students' feelings of not having their needs met appears to be linked to her description of her students' dissatisfaction (see Section 6.2.3). On the other hand, Tina's more experienced teaching partner, Jenny, was perceived to be nearly always responsive to her students' needs. Dawn, Lyn, Phyllis and Jo were also

perceived as often attending to their students' needs and wishes, indicating that their students did indeed represent an important reference point when interpreting divergent views (see Section 6.2.3). Some students did differ in their opinions, however. For example, Dawn's student *a* thought that Dawn was not aware of her language needs and wishes.

6.5.3 Integrated teaching practices

The students were asked about the organisation and coherency of classroom activities to determine the extent to which participants effectively integrated diverse views and pedagogic options into their teaching approach:

Table 10

Integrated practices

Questions to students	Student participants (a, b, c, etc.)					
4.b. Are you	*Dawn*	*Lyn*	*Jenny*	*Phyllis*	*Jo*	*Tina*
confused in class?	a. 3	d. 1	g. 2	j. 3	m. 4	p. 5
	b. 3	e. 3	h. 2	k. 4	n. 2	q. 3
	c. 2	f. 2	i. 2	l. 2	o. 2	r. 2
5. Do you understand	a. 3	d. 5	g. 5	j. 1	m. 4	p. 5
what is happening?	b. 5	e. 5	h. 5	k. 3	n. 5	q. 4
	c. 4	f. 4	i. 4	l. 4	o. 4	r. 4
6. Are lessons well-	a. 3	d. 5	g. 5	j. 3	m. 4	p. 1
planned and organised?	b. 5	e. 5	h. 5	k. 4	n. 3	q. 3
	c. 5	f. 4	i. 5	l. 4	o. 4	r. 4

The students' responses indicated that Dawn, Lyn, Jenny and Jo had, to some degree, incorporated a set of pedagogic practices into a coherent teaching approach. Lyn and Jenny's students, in particular, indicated that their teachers almost always presented lessons in a clear and consistent fashion. Lyn described herself as a safe teacher who was wary of discrepant views of teaching (see Section 6.3.1) and favoured "tried and true" practices (see Section 6.3.6) which suggests that she persevered with a certain teaching approach. Jenny stated that she based her teaching practice on views validated by research or theory (see Section 6.2.3) which suggests that she also was unlikely to experiment

widely.

However, according to students *j* and *k* in Phyllis's class, Phyllis's lessons were sometimes confusing and hard to follow. Phyllis said that she was seeking a framework for her teaching practice based on principles of L2 teaching and learning (see Section 6.2.5) and noted the potential for conflicting positions to confuse teachers (see Section 6.1.3). She also indicated that divergent points of view were affecting her ability to plan lessons (see Section 6.2.2).

Students *p* and *q* in Tina's class were also confused at times by what was happening and indicated that organisation was sometimes lacking. Although learner needs provided an important reference point for Tina, it seemed that she too was still establishing a framework for her classroom practice.

6.6 Summary

The results of the student questionnaire suggest the teachers' practices were not dissimilar to their espoused points of view. Although students themselves often perceive events through their own unique lens, here they appeared to have provided observations which agreed with the greater proportion of their teachers' assertions. The relatively high incidence of agreement between the teachers and their students suggested that a high percentage of the teachers' overall statements were likely to be true indications of their position.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The following chapter now discusses the qualitative results outlined in Chapter Six. It will discuss issues and themes which emerged in relation to the three research questions.

7.1 QUESTION ONE: To what extent do the participants experience doubt or uncertainty as a result of divergent views of second language teaching and learning?

7.1.1 Teacher doubt and frustration

The teachers were clearly shown to experience various degrees of doubt and uncertainty as a result of divergent points of view. For some of the teachers in the study, the incongruence of certain views had remained a source of annoyance and doubt, while for two participants, ambiguous viewpoints represented the source of past frustrations.

Lyn, Jenny and Phyllis expressed bewilderment and annoyance at what they perceived as the lack of accord among teachers and educators (see Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.5). Indeed, Lyn's belief that "everyone's got opposing ideas" (see Section 6.2.1) and Phyllis's wish for a set of principles to guide her, rather than the random selection of journals or page numbers (see Section 6.2.5), suggests that they perceived elements of disarray within language teaching. Jenny's statement "If theorists can't decide, it's not going to be easy for practitioners" supports Grundy's (1999) contention that disunity among educators affects teacher confidence. Further, the teachers' annoyance appeared to reflect an innate need to avoid conceptual or cognitive conflict (Nussbaum and Novick, 1982).

Nation's advocacy of word lists confused Lyn and Phyllis because they viewed their current teaching-in-context approach as up-to-date. Change for teachers invariably denotes a forwards movement, so the promotion of teaching word lists, which was associated with rote learning in the Lyn's mind, would appear to represent a backwards movement. Lyn's annoyance at what she perceived as the rejection and replacement of "tried and true" methods (see Section 6.3.6) reflected Buswinka's (1993) observation that teachers

involved themselves in critical comparisons between an innovative practice and well thought-out practices already established.

Jo was pleased she had rejected simplistic notions, such as "speaking is good" and "grammar is bad" because she had previously been frustrated by conflicting views of teaching. Yet these notions resembled mental images which have been identified as a feature of teacher thinking (Richards, 1996; Thornbury, 1991). Jo felt she had successfully negotiated divergent views by transferring her focus to her own thinking patterns and this appears to have resolved the conflict for her, although it is conceivable that she will encounter divergent views in teacher-as-thinker literature. (Johnson, 1996; Kontra, 1997; Pennington, 1996; Richards, 1994; Smith, 1996; Ulichiny, 1996). Also, her decision to dispense with the notion of good and bad theories appears to resemble a strategy for reducing feelings of uncertainty associated with apparent dichotomies (Lange and Burroughs-Lange, 1994).

Richards (1996, p.291) has identified the personal maxim "Work for accurate student output" as a common working principle among teachers. Yet Dawn, Jenny and Jo had all, at some point, experienced some frustration and doubt integrating this maxim into their teaching practice. The divergence of opinion which the teachers expressed with regard to grammar instruction (see Table 5) no doubt reflects the divisions in the L2 profession created by the accuracy and fluency debate (Alexander, 1992; Hammerly, 1991; Krashen, 1993; Lightbown and Pienemann, 1993; Roberts, 1995; Spada, 1997; Williams, 1995).

Dawn and Lyn indicated views which suggested a degree of uncertainty as to the role of the teacher. While they agreed that the role of the teacher was to facilitate the students' learning (see Table 3), they were unsure as to what extent the teacher should control classroom proceedings. Their uncertainties appeared to underscore the apparent tension that exists between promoting student autonomy and managing the classroom.

Classroom experience was a source of bewilderment for Jenny because her preferred teaching approach, which was based on communicative language teaching, was failing to improve her students' accuracy. A conflict appeared to exist between her views of language teaching and what she observed in the classroom. She referred to behavioural

techniques as alternatives to her current practice, which was surprising given that the behaviourist perspective is no longer prominent in contemporary L2 learning theories (Ellis, 1992). It may be that some behavioural notions have remained embedded in teacher folklore.

7.1.2 Antithetical tension

What is most interesting is that the teachers' uncertainties appeared to stem from *either / or* reasoning categories. Although few antithetical views were identified on the teacher scale, the teachers' statements in the interviews hardly reflected *both / and* assumptions with respect to relevant pedagogic areas such as vocabulary extension and grammar instruction (see Section 6.2.3). For example, Lyn and Phyllis seemed to think that they had to choose between teaching in context and word lists when teaching vocabulary. Dawn thought she had to either teach grammar regularly or not at all, while Jenny felt that she had to adopt either behavioural or communicative practices to improve her students' accuracy. Lyn also appeared to view direct and indirect approaches to grammar teaching as separate options. It seems that they were inclined to adopt *both / and* positions when responding to views on the scale (see Section 6.1) and *either / or* positions when wrestling with ambiguities affecting their immediate classroom practice. The identification of relatively few antithetical positions on the scale (see Section 6.1.2) perhaps pointed to a natural tendency to seek common ground and a Hegelian inclination to synthesise competing truth claims (Schaeffer, 1998).

With Lyn, there also appeared to be a link between her uncertainty and her cautious assessment of views of teaching and learning. She was one of the teachers who experienced a higher level of uncertainty, and not only did she describe herself as cautious, but she often chose the middle ranking on the scale (see Table 6). On the other hand, although Jo welcomed conflict (see Section 6.3.1), her views of teaching and learning were decidedly strong and clear (see Table 6) and her confidence with regard to interpreting multiple perspectives set her apart from the other participants. It seemed that Lyn's cautious, interpretive approach was compounding the uncertainty that she experienced, while Jo's firm views had helped her develop a coherent conceptual framework from which she could confidently explore pedagogic options.

7.1.3 Contextual uncertainty

The participants, at various points, adopted an interpretivist view of their teaching based on "It depends" statements (Freeman, 1994). Apart from a natural tendency to seek common ground, the identification of few antithetical statements on the scale (see Section 6.1.2) appeared to be due to an absence of defined contexts.

Phyllis's determination to assess techniques on the basis of contextual classroom conditions supported the view that the teaching context is a powerful influence on beliefs (Duffy and Anderson, 1984). The views she indicated on the scale inferred that she believed most teaching practices were potentially valid given the right set of circumstances. However, her context-focused approach was providing guidance on one hand, and creating uncertainty on the other. Prabhu (1990) cautions practitioners against relying on the "It all depends on the teaching context" statement as an interpretive strategy, arguing that the interrelationship between contextual factors and instructional methods can often be complex. Indeed, Phyllis appeared uncertain when considering applying an alternative teaching practice to her own classroom (see Section 6.2.3).

Determining what constituted the local context was also proving to be a problem for Phyllis's colleagues. It seemed that the teachers were unable to agree on what type of activities matched the immediate teaching and learning environment (see Section 6.2.3). Prabhu (1990) may be correct in asserting that the teaching context consists of indefinite variations.

7.2 QUESTION TWO: What are their strategies for interpreting divergent views of second language teaching and learning?

Results which pointed to perceived student needs as an interpretive tool were not surprising, given the participants' espoused support for learner-centred teaching. At the same time, the participants outlined the importance of determining the source and rationale of discrepant views.

7.2.1 Reference to student needs

It was clear that the teachers' students featured prominently as a frame of reference. The teachers' professed determination to analyse contrary views "from the point-of-view of

the students" (see Section 6.2.3) highlighted the importance of student characteristics as an interpretive framework.

Indeed, Tina's needs analysis rationale formed the bedrock of her teaching theory and constituted a distinct lens through which she interpreted methods and techniques. Paradoxically, conflict for her emerged from within, in that her students expressed dissatisfaction with elements of her teaching practice. This dissatisfaction was confirmed by the results of the students' questionnaire (see Section 6.3.2). Brown (1995) notes the dichotomy that exists between objective needs - the linguistic needs of the learner, and subjective needs - the students expressed wants and desires. It seems that Tina focused primarily on satisfying the students' subjective needs, such as agreeing to refrain from teaching grammar. Yet, Jenny, who shared Tina's class, cited a lack of improvement in students' accuracy as an ongoing concern.

Tina's expressed determination to focus on students rather than theories of teaching (see Section 6.2.1) appears to give support to the view that a gap exists between theorists and practitioners (Ramani, 1987; Stern, 1983). It could be argued, however, that she was tacitly viewing classroom realities from a theoretical point of view established from a learner-centred perspective. Stern (cited in Ramani, 1987) states that no teacher, no matter how strenuously she argues, can teach a language without some sort of theory of language teaching.

Jo portrayed her approach as a particularly flexible one, emphasising the transient nature of teaching contexts. Her belief that her Japanese students were "galaxies separated" from Arab students (see Section 6.2.3) pointed to an understanding of L2 learning which focused on learner differences, rather than a common route of language development.

7.2.2 Reference to respected sources

Dawn, Lyn and Jenny referred to outside sources of authority when interpreting divergent views, which suggests that they adopted "sequential" styles of learning (see Section 4.1). For Dawn and Jo, an important frame of reference was a teacher educator, while colleagues provided guidance for Phyllis and Tina.

Although Fanselow's "explore alternatives" approach (Fanselow, 1987) was reflected in the participants' espoused support for eclecticism (see Section 6.3.5), it appears to have been interpreted differently by each participant. His innovative ideas had provided fresh insights for Dawn and Jo, yet it had eroded Lyn's confidence in aspects of her teaching approach (see Section 6.2.5). Teacher educators have been identified as change agents in language teaching settings (Bailey, 1992) and it seems that with the support of experienced teaching staff such as Jo and Dawn, Fanselow's approach had the potential to effect change in the participants' working environment.

The participants' references to convincing arguments and evidence suggested they did not agree with Stevick (cited in Pennington, 1990, p.133) who described teaching as "the mystery-behind-mystery". They argued that they would consider a divergent point of view on the basis of its rationality. Tudor (1998) observes that most language professionals believe that they approach their tasks in a rational manner and while the participants may not have viewed their teaching practice as scientific (Richards, 1993), they believed it was based on rational processes. This reinforces Shavelson and Stern's (1981) view (see Section 3.3) that teachers endeavour to behave reasonably in uncertain, complex environments.

The presentation of a new teaching practice alone was unlikely to change the teachers' views of teaching. Phyllis's reference to the "evidence of my eyes" (student behaviour in the classroom) illustrates the kind of evidence that interested them. It seemed that the teachers would wait to see whether a new pedagogic option worked in the classroom before they sought to integrate it into their practice. This is consistent with McKeon's (1998) observation that teachers will not change their teaching practice on the basis of information alone.

Phyllis also referred to her own language learning experience when faced with disputes regarding reading comprehension (see Section 6.2.2). This is in keeping with Lange and Burrough-Lange's (1994) finding that teachers interpret challenging encounters by referring to previously developed knowledge.

7.2.3 Congruence with current practice

Congruency with present teaching style emerged as a clear means of interpreting multiple perspectives. Participants were unlikely to concern themselves with points of view or pedagogic practices which they did not regard as compatible with their teaching approach.

Bailey (1992) and Gaies (1991) note that for innovations to occur, the innovation must match the teacher's style and philosophy. Jo agreed with this view by saying she judged an idea in terms of whether it fitted into what she was doing in the classroom. Also, Dawn argued that teachers had to choose from among pedagogic options on the basis of their preferred teaching style. Tina had developed a strong personal style based on her habit of filtering teaching practices through her needs analysis questionnaires. Jenny's attitude towards pedagogic options depended on their perceived suitability, as well as their research-approved status. The teachers' references to personal styles of teaching (see Section 6.1.1) suggests that they attached importance to the subjective dimension inherent in teacher thinking (Carr, 1998; Schaeffer, 1998).

7.2.4 Eclecticism in principle

An eclectic outlook on language teaching possessed a strong appeal for the teachers because it was seen as a means of coping with multiple perspectives. Jo, in particular found an eclectic viewpoint attractive because she believed, along with Grittner (1990), that it offered an alternative to selecting from among conflicting teaching practices. An eclectic point of view appeared to solve the problem of methodological ambiguity because it viewed all conceptions of teaching as equally valid (Richards, 1996).

However, it seems that an eclectic outlook provided a means of coping with alternatives more in principle than in practice. In principle, the teachers accepted diverse viewpoints on the basis that they were potentially valid in given contexts. However, according to their students, activities normally associated with communicative language teaching, such as pair work and group work (Nunan, 1988), predominated in their classrooms (see Section 6.3.1). Only Jo's students indicated that they did not regularly work with pairs or in groups.

In addition, the teachers' eclectic outlook seemed to be more intuitive than carefully

reasoned. Martin (1988) states one of the weakness of an intuitive eclecticism is that it lacks a set of guiding principles for the purposes of selecting and combining tasks for specific teaching contexts. Apart from Jo, the teachers seemed to reinforce this view in that they only offered brief accounts of the eclectic strategies they used. For Dawn, Lyn, Tina and Jenny, eclecticism primarily represented pedagogic variety in the classroom. Only "listen-and-repeat" and dictogloss activities were offered as specific examples of practices not commonly associated with communicative language teaching (see Section 6.2.4).

Jo argued that teachers needed to be acquainted with key methodologies before they could adopt an integrated eclectic approach. Yet, the teachers' training backgrounds suggested they had had only limited exposure to alternative methodologies. Of the six participants, only Jo had completed a postgraduate course in the L2 field (see Section 5.4) which, she said, had given her her first opportunity to fully explore the different views of L2 teaching and learning. Dawn, Lyn and Tina had completed certificate courses which, due to their four week duration, were unlikely to provide detailed coverage of alternative methodologies. Dawn and Lyn had mentioned that only one methodology was focused on and promoted during their four week courses (see Section 6.2.4).

At the same time, Dawn, Lyn, Phyllis and Tina had commenced diploma programmes that were likely to increase their exposure to alternative approaches. Yet to what extent Lyn and Phyllis would appropriate these practices in an eclectic manner is questionable, given their stated desire to only consider practices which had been shown to work (see Sections 6.1.4 and 6.2.3). Tina's stated desire to restrict her methodology to her students' wishes also suggests she would be unlikely to engage in broad experimentation.

7.2.5 Strategies for resolving tensions
The manner in which participants attempted to resolve tensions created by divergent views is depicted in Figure 4:

Figure 4   **Interpreting divergent views: tension reduction**
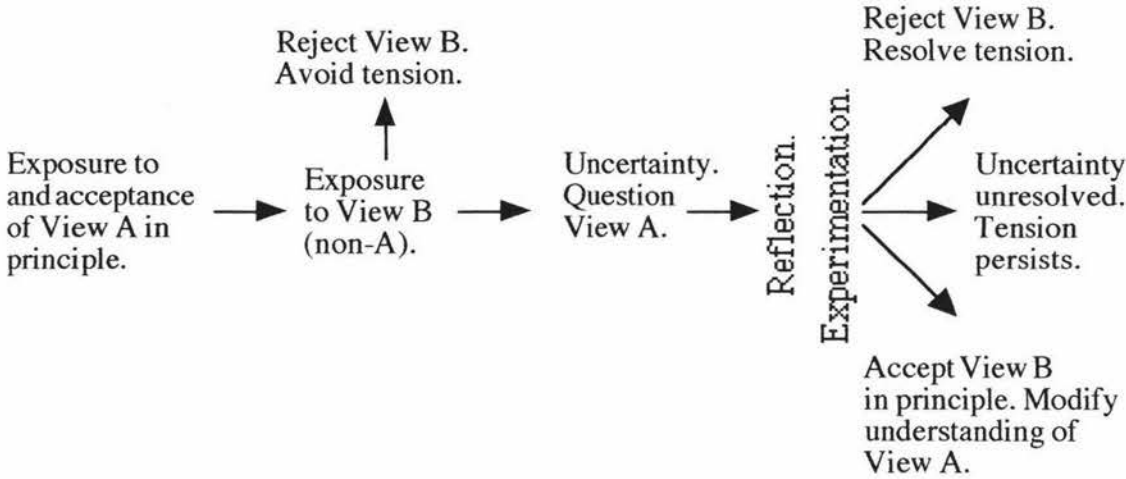
Interpretive strategies appeared to vary among the participants with regard to reducing conceptual conflict created by divergent views. On one hand, there was a dismissive mood adopted, evidenced by Tina's "That's common sense" thinking (see Section 6.2.3) and Dawn's "I wouldn't be bothered" stance towards alternatives (see Section 6.2.1). Here, the teachers seemed to avoid tension by ignoring the challenge of the divergent view. On the other hand, some of the participants showed a willingness to consider a discrepant view, even though it challenged their conceptions of teaching. This was evidenced by Jo's preparedness to consider the Silent Way method, even though it seemed ludicrous to her (see Section 6.2.1) and Lyn's willingness to experiment with an alternative technique even though her initial reaction was to "stick to her guns" (see Section 6.2.1).

After a period of reflection and experimentation, discrepant views were either discarded, accommodated or persisted in the teacher's mind as sources of uncertainty. After temporarily adapting her teaching practice, Dawn chose to reject her colleagues' views on accuracy and returned to teaching grammar to her students (see Section 6.2.2). As a result of her mixed success with communicative language teaching (see Section 6.2.2), Jenny was now seeking to accommodate teaching practices based on a behaviourist perspective. For Lyn and Phyllis, the perceived problem of whether to teach vocabulary in context or in word-lists remained unresolved for the time being (see Section 6.2.2).

7.3 QUESTION 3: What are factors which assist teachers' accommodation of divergent views of second language teaching and learning?

7.3.1 Experiential knowledge

It seems that teaching experience influenced the extent to which the teachers were prepared to accommodate divergent views. The teachers' practical working knowledge had a mediating effect on their attitudes towards the views that they encountered (Golombek, 1998). Also, the degree to which a teacher was prepared to live with uncertainty appeared to influence the extent to which they considered alternative views of teaching and learning.

For Dawn and Jo, the tensions created by divergent views were no longer a concern, with both attributing their more relaxed attitude to accumulated years of teaching experience. However, the manner in which they now considered divergent views differed sharply. On the basis of her teaching experience, Jo had chosen to switch her focal point from "good" and "bad" theories to her teaching philosophy and style. Dawn, on the other hand, had chosen to dismiss views which differed to her own because she had gained a satisfactory level of confidence as a teacher. One had chosen to remain open to alternative or divergent views as a result of teaching experience, whereas the other had chosen to make herself immune from views which threatened to erode new-found confidence. It seems that Jo was more prepared to teach in an environment of uncertainty than Dawn, whose attitude appeared to reflect Ghaith and Yaghi's (1997) finding that experienced teachers can be more resistant to change than their less experienced peers. Also, Jo's decision to re-evaluate her teaching approach pointed to an active approach towards resolving dilemmas (see Section 4.1). Dawn's decision to ignore conflicting views, on the other hand, reflected a holding approach in that she chose to ignore threats to her personal conceptions of teaching.

Johnson (1992) suggests that teachers often persevere with teaching practices which were prominent when they first began teaching (see Section 3.2). This seems to have been the case with Dawn, who was taught the Present Practice Produce method (see Section 6.2.4) and was unable to dispense with grammar-based practices, despite experiencing a working environment which discouraged attention to accuracy. Also, her present

unwillingness to explore divergent views may reflect the narrow approach adopted by her teacher trainers.

Of the six teachers, Jo appeared the most predisposed to accommodation and change. Jo's preparedness to experiment beyond established communicative practices was confirmed by her students (see Section 6.3.1), with her reasoned critique of eclecticism suggesting that she also engaged in a deeper level of conceptual reflection (Pennington, 1995) with regard to multiple perspectives. Also, her success at becoming fluent in Japanese may have aided her confidence as a language teacher (see Section 5.4).

Along with Jo, Jenny appeared to adopt an active approach to probem-solving in that her current classroom dilemma had made her more receptive to an an apparently discrepant view on teaching and learning. Her pedagogic thinking appeared to develop as a result of the conflicts that emerged between her ideas about teaching and a situational learning problem (Fellows, 1993). She was not sure, however, whether she could successfully incorporate behaviourist techniques such as "listen-and-repeat" activities into her communicative-based approach.

Although Tina professed to share Jo's openness to divergent points of view, it seemed that her student needs focus constituted an affective filter which restricted her exploration of multiple perspectives, i.e. her openness to alternatives appeared to be constrained by the desires and wishes of her students. Her students' dissatisfaction (see Section 6.3.3) also suggested that, as a less experienced teacher, she was experiencing some difficulty linking her learner-centred view of teaching to teaching events and situations (Livingston and Borko,1989).

Lyn's cautious, "slow-to-change" personality clearly affected her preparedness to consider divergent views, while Phyllis appeared to lack confidence due to her limited teaching experience, the lack of consensus among her peers, the pedagogic "reversals" that seemed to be advocated by teacher educators and the uncertainties of context factors. As a teacher who was still seeking a framework of practice, she was having difficulty matching teaching activities with situations.

Perspectives on teaching and learning that appeared to be compatible with the teacher's practical working knowledge were more likely to be accommodated (see Section 6.1.4). Lyn had adopted a more positive view of grammar instruction since she had observed her students comprehending grammatical terms. It is likely that she would now be more prepared to accommodate practices that supported the use of technical terms which explained the rules of grammar. Also, Phyllis's observation that students learned items of language irrespective of what she taught them had strengthened her belief in a common route of language development. Tina's discovery that students learn best from communicative and individualised tasks strengthened her support for a communicative, learner-centred teaching approach.

7.3.2 A common discourse

While teachers argued that their teaching practice was context-specific, their views on L2 teaching and learning (see Section 6.1.1) and their students' observations (see Section 6.3.1) indicated that their teaching practices were relatively homogeneous. This suggested that they adhered to a teacher folklore, or a common discourse (Freeman, 1992), despite context factors and the presence of multiple perspectives. For example, not at any point was communicative language teaching criticised, with teachers unreservedly endorsing the principle of communicative language teaching. That is not to say the teachers differed in terms of facilitating communication in the classroom, but the assumption that communication invariably aided learning was unanimous. Thus, when choosing from among various pedagogic options, it is probable that they would opt for practices with a high communicative content.

Similarly, the teachers endorsed the notion of learner-centred teaching (see Section 6.1.4) and criticised any teaching practice which failed to take in account the needs of the students. Again, their means of implementing learner-centred practices may have differed, but the assumption that an approach must be learner-centred was uncontested. Here, it seemed, were principles that were viewed as extending to every teaching context.

Further, Lyn's reference to "tried and true" practices demonstrated a belief in a community of professionals indwelling shared experiences. She appeared to be searching for a commonly accepted framework of practice for teachers, a notion advanced by

Freeman (1989). It is interesting to note that her understanding of tried and true practices contradicts the post-methods perspective (see Section 2.4) which negates the concept of an effective teaching method .

Jenny demonstrated "top down" thinking by interpreting divergent views through the lens of L2 theory, even though L2 professionals are encouraged to examine teaching from their own perspective (Fanselow, 1987). Doubts have been expressed that a unified theory for language teaching can ever be found (Grittner, 1990), yet Jenny turned to L2 theory in an attempt to resolve classroom ambiguities. She demonstrated a sequential style of learning in this respect in that she chose to learn from recognised authorities (Wheeler and Andrews, 1992).

Phyllis and Tina's references to common sense - resolving conflict on the basis of what is apparently obvious to teachers - indicated a notion of shared experiences and perceptions among teachers. Although they regarded language teaching as an act of contextual negotiation, they also believed solutions for some classroom problems were self-evident. Indeed, their references to context and common sense pointed to a tension in their thinking, in that they appeared to focus on ever changing student needs and common sense judgments simultaneously. They consulted commonly accepted teaching rationalities (Tudor, 1998) on one hand and context factors on the other.

Jo, the strongest proponent of a post-methods view, appeared to be searching for fresh perspectives on L2 teaching. Her view that there is no such thing as a good or bad theory appeared to be directly borrowed from Fanselow (Fanselow, 1987, p. 2). It seems that there is a touch of irony here, since Fanselow encourages practitioners to trust their instincts, rather than rely on outside sources of authority. Jo's belief that open-mindedness was one of the L2 profession's most important discoveries (see Section 6.2.1) echoes Bloom's (1987) observation that openness is lauded as the great insight of our times.

7.3.3 Institutional factors

The teachers' views of accepted teaching practice appeared to be influenced by their working environment. Zeichner, Tabachnick and Densmore (1987) note research which

identify distinctive teacher cultures that unify teaching practices in various schools, while Miller (1996) and Lauriala (1998) highlight the influence of reference groups and school climates on teaching practice. It seems that the regular meetings described by the participants had helped to constitute a distinct teacher culture. For example, although Dawn was not a novice, she had refrained from teaching grammar for 12 months because of the opposition to form-focused instruction in teacher meetings. Further, Tina had adopted a strong learner-centred approach which was shared by her more experienced teacher partner, Jenny. Both teachers strongly believed students should be given control of the learning situation and that teachers should not play a predominant role in the classroom (see Table 5). Jo, the most experienced teacher and the one with the most definite views (see Table 6), was a strong proponent of eclecticism, and this may have accounted for the other teachers' espoused support for eclecticism.

The teachers collaboratively developed their own course material and discussed the importance of tailoring their teaching approach to suit their students' needs. It may be inferred that, along with O'Neill's colleague (see Section 3.4), they would be less likely to accommodate a view which endorsed text book-based instruction while working in an "design-it-yourself" environment.

Sniezek (1992) has found that groups are more confident about their judgments and choices than individuals and that member confidence increases with group discussion. The high number of disputes in the teachers' planning meetings indicated that group confidence was low and this may have contributed to Phyllis's lack of confidence and Lyn and Dawn's guarded attitude towards multiple perspectives. However, to what extent a lack of group confidence affects the individual teacher's willingness to accommodate alternative frameworks of practice is unclear.

7.4 Summary

The teachers' attitudes towards divergent views and diverse pedagogic options were modified by contextual factors, opinions expressed by colleagues and educators, and observations of student behaviour. Individual doubts with regard to divergent points of view were accentuated by group disagreements with regard to course design.

The apparent lack of consensus among L2 specialists emerged as an area of concern for some of the teachers. Two participants had lost confidence in their approach towards particular aspects of teaching because of divergent views expressed by teacher educators.

Although the teaching context was considered an important factor in interpretation, it too was a source of uncertainty. The teachers identified relatively few views on the teacher scale as antithetical, yet they referred to problems associated with divergent views during the interview.

Establishing student needs and wants was identified as a common means of interpreting and choosing between divergent views, while the source and rationality of an alternative viewpoint was important in determining its legitimacy.

Although the teachers endorsed an eclectic point of view as a means of interpreting multiple perspectives, there was no strong evidence that they consciously approached their lessons in an eclectic manner. Only Jo showed evidence of having carefully considered the meaning and structure of an eclectic teaching approach. It seems that eclecticism primarily represented pedagogic variety.

Jo emerged as a risk-taker who anticipated and explored divergent views, while Dawn appeared to adopt a defensive stance towards perspectives which challenged her theory of teaching. Lyn's "slow-to-change" attitude, Phyllis's bewilderment at her colleague's disagreements, and Tina's strong learner focus pointed to a limited tolerance for divergent views. Jenny was prepared to experiment with divergent points of view as long as they were verified by L2 theory or research.

The homogeneity of the participants' beliefs perhaps pointed to the persuasive power of teacher culture and folklore. For instance, the images of the communicative teacher and the learner-centred teacher were unreservedly endorsed. Along with student characteristics, a common discourse among teachers and institutional factors represented distinct interpretive frameworks.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Some of the conclusions of the study will now be examined and their implications discussed, along with suggestions for further research into the effects of multiple perspectives and divergent views on teachers.

8.1 Conclusions and implications

It could be argued that there is a valid case for promoting multiple perspectives. Teachers are faced with complex contextual variables which cannot be explained by single, generalised theories encompassing linguistic, sociolinguistic and methodological issues. The shift from globalised to localised interpretations has created a new focus on teacher thinking and has led to an awareness that methods are individually interpreted and appropriated. Thus, the dichotomies that have emerged as a result of multiple voices are either tolerated as inevitable by-products of open-minded inquiry, or interpreted as evidence of the grey world that the teacher inhabits.

At the same time, the uncertainty that accompanies multiple perspectives cannot be overlooked. Nor can the claim that humans have an innate need to reduce conflict between competing cognitions or concepts (Nussbaum and Novick, 1982). Uncertainties created by divergent points of view have been regarded as temporary irritants for teachers or viewed positively as a catalyst for change. Yet each participant in the study expressed concerns about divergent views, with only Jo appearing to be wholly comfortable in a multiple perspectives environment. Lyn's obvious annoyance at the changes and ambiguities in L2 teaching and Dawn's decision to ignore positions which challenged her current views suggests that teaching experience may not be linked to openness towards alternatives. While the bottom-up approach to planning granted the teachers a high degree of autonomy, it also brought divergent views out into the open and created a discernible level of discord.

Further research is needed to determine the length of time that ambiguities remain unresolved in teachers' minds and the extent to which alternative sources of authority

erodes confidence. Psychologist Gary Collins (1999) has stated that people often fail to act when faced with contrary sources of advice. This needs to be examined further in a profession where teachers find themselves staring at a large banquet table offering a vast smorgasbord of pedagogic options.

Further, the use of the term "eclectic" needs to be examined more closely. Brown (1994) has called for teachers to adopt an enlightened eclecticism which intelligently selects methods on the basis of an integrated theory of language acquisition. Long (1993) has noted, however, that theories of language acquisition are far from integrated. Also, the results of the study showed that the teachers' eclecticism was vaguely defined. Apart from Jo, the teachers did not provide evidence of having consciously integrated eclectic strategies into their teaching practice. Therefore, the concepts of enlightened or pragmatic eclecticism need to be further explored in order to determine how teachers can effectively integrate multiple perspectives into their conceptual framework.

In addition, the point at which teachers are introduced to an eclectic outlook ought to be investigated. Clearly, teachers need to be acquainted with various teaching methods and techniques before they can adopt eclectic strategies. Inexperienced teachers are unlikely to possess the breadth of perspective or the practical working knowledge necessary for distinguishing between alternatives and may need to become familiar with the practices of one teaching approach before they begin to experiment with the practices of another. In other words, the process of experimentation requires a starting point. Therefore, introducing alternative or divergent teaching practices to relatively experienced teachers during in-service training courses for the purposes of promoting eclecticism may be shown to more helpful than presenting student teachers with a smorgasbord of options. On the other hand, Johnson (1992) has suggested that teachers' theoretical positions may stem from the methodological approaches that were prominent when they first began teaching. Research which examines the extent to which teachers deviate from these initial approaches may help educators determine the effectiveness of introducing alternative teaching methods during in-service training courses.

Research at an epistemological level also needs to explore more fully the dialectic thinking underlying the eclectic outlook. The abundance of arguments and counter arguments in L2

literature reveal attempts to synthesise truth claims. However, the teachers in the study appeared to think in *either / or* terms when attempting to resolve divergent views of teaching. Further, claims that there is too much grey in the L2 teaching and learning world for statements of any certainty to be made appear to co-exist alongside practitioners' notions of commonly accepted principles in L2 teaching. It is generally accepted that there are areas of L2 learning which remain a mystery and establishing a definition of an effective teacher has been problematic. However, the current focus on localised, context-dependent interpretations in L2 literature sometimes assumes a strong relativist position which challenges the notion of shared experiences and realities - a notion which appeared to be integral to the participants' views of teaching. Quantitative research which investigates teacher certainty and tests the assumption that teachers adopt synthesised views of teaching may show that there is a possible disjunction between theorists' distrust of antithetical premises and practitioners' search for clarity and certainty.

Indeed, the teachers' statements appear to support calls for a commonly accepted framework for L2 teaching and learning. Although practitioners are increasingly told to find the answers to their questions within their own classrooms, the teachers in the study clearly sought guidance from outside sources. References to "tried and true methods," "the tenets of language teaching", and "valid research and theories" showed that the teachers expected and relied upon a common body of knowledge - or a legitimising myth. Jenny's sense of professional competence was closely linked to her determination to adopt theory and research-derived practices.

Further research needs also to be carried out to explore strategies that will help to resolve the uncertainty caused by divergent views. It seems that until now teachers have been left largely to themselves to cope with what appear to be incompatible positions. The teachers in the study employed a mixture of strategies which included referring to perceived student needs, assessing the logic of a view, and determining whether a discrepant view originated from an credible source. Graden (1996) has shown that teachers struggle to reconcile conflicting views because they lack an adequate theoretical grounding and argues that once teachers become better acquainted with theoretical frameworks they will be better able to resolve the conflict. There appears to be a need for in-service training courses to go past simply providing teachers with examples of alternatives and offering

strategies that assist them in resolving the dichotomies that these alternatives can represent.

In addition, teachers' claims to "look at the students" when faced with competing claims also needs to be explored further. To what extent do teachers' adjust their methodology to suit the perceived needs of their students? To what extent do they continue to be guided by teaching methods, irrespective of student characteristics? Although the teachers claimed to adopt student-centred practices, their statements and observed practices reflected a degree of uniformity. It is conceivable therefore, that teachers may choose to persevere with one methodology and make only minor adjustments when teaching situations change, so as to reduce levels of uncertainty. Jo's statement "Our 19 year old Japanese students are galaxies separated from Arabian businessmen" is a moot point. If this is the case, do learner-centred teachers prepare lessons for Japanese learners that are "galaxies separated" from lessons they prepare for Arab students?

8.2 Implications for further research

Since the study is based on small numbers, strong claims with regard to the effects of multiple perspectives cannot be made. For the purposes of establishing external reliability, it would be helpful to replicate the study in teaching contexts that are identified as sharing contextual similarities with the six subjects' working environment. For example, working environments where full time teachers collaboratively design their own material and are afforded a high degree of flexibility and independence.

If similar results were found in such studies, further qualitative research examining teacher uncertainty in dissimilar L2 teaching contexts would help to establish the extent to which the participants' levels of uncertainty are representative of teachers generally. It is probable that teachers who work part-time and teach pre-prepared text-based courses are less likely to have either the time or the incentive to explore the reality of divergent views. However, there appears to be very little research in the area of L2 teacher uncertainty, so the results of such studies may yield surprising data.

In addition, quantitative research which surveyed teachers' awareness of and attitudes to multiple perspectives in L2 teaching and learning may add to the debate with regards to

the need for common frameworks of practice. Interest in pursuing such frameworks may increase if it is found that a large number of teachers experience a high degree of uncertainty as the result of the growing number of divergent theories and practices.

Further, comparative studies which examine the differences between teachers who adopt text-based approaches and teachers who design their own material may help to establish whether teacher uncertainty is related to the absence of pre-prepared materials. It may be that texts provide a clear organising principle for teachers which helps to negate the impact of divergent views.

Longitudinal studies which monitor teachers reactions to multiple perspectives could add to the three-shot perspective offered by the current study. Such research may provide considerable insight into the manner in which teachers process discrepant views over time. In addition to the snapshots of teachers' interpretive frameworks provided by the present study, longitudinal research could offer a series of snapshots which chart the manner in which teachers learn to accommodate alternatives.

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APPENDIX A

INITIAL TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Multiple Perspectives in Second Language teaching and learning

Below are some questions relating to multiple perspectives in second language teaching and learning. Please circle the answer that best represents your position. You may refer to the "Views on language teaching and learning" attachment if you wish.

1. (A) Do you think some second language theories are incompatible?

No   *Not sure*   *Yes. Definitely.*

(B). If you answered 'yes', please give an example of two second language theories that you think are incompatible.

_____

_____

2. (A) Do you think some second language teaching methods / approaches are incompatible?

No   *Not sure*   *Yes. Definitely.*

(B). If you answered 'yes', please give an example of two methods / approaches that you think are incompatible.

_____

_____

3. (A) Do you think it is possible that conflicting second language theories or methods / approaches could confuse your own theory of teaching?

No   *Not sure*   *Yes. Definitely.*

(B) If you answered 'yes,' please state why.

_____

4. Do you apply the principles of *one* teaching approach, e.g. *communicative language teaching, the grammar-translation approach, self-directed learning, the audiolingual approach, task-based learning,* regularly?

Never   Seldom   Sometimes   Often   All the time

5. (A) Do you think some teaching methods / approaches are *generally* more effective than others?

No   Not sure   Yes. Definitely

(B) If you answered 'yes', please give an example of a method / approach you believe to be generally more effective than others and why you consider it to be more effective:

_____

_____

6. (A) Do you think some second language teaching methods / approaches have 'stood the test of time?'

No   Not sure   Yes.Definitely

(B) If you answered 'yes', please give an example of one.

_____

7. Do learner characteristics, e.g. *educational background, aptitude, age, reasons for learning a language,* have more influence on your teaching approach than methods or theories of (second language) teaching?

No   About the same   Yes.Definitely
*   influence*

8.Do practical constraints, e.g. *availability of materials and resources, time constraints, college course curriculums,* have more influence on your teaching approach than methods or theories of (second language) teaching?

No   About the same   Yes.Definitely
*   influence*

9. Do you think it is important to experiment with the latest teaching method in your classroom?

Not important   Quite imp   Important   Very imp   Essential

10. To what extent is your current teaching approach influenced by your own experience as a language learner?

No extent   Slight ext   Some ext   A large extent   A very large extent

11. To what extent is your current teaching approach influenced by second language teaching and learning literature (e.g. articles and specialist texts)?

No extent   Slight ext   Some ext   A large extent   A very large extent

12. To what extent has your theory of teaching changed since you began teaching?

No extent   Slight ext   Some ext   A large extent   A very large extent

13. Do you experience periods of doubt or uncertainty as a result of conflicting second language theories or methods / approaches?

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Often   Always

15. To what extent is your theory of teaching steadily evolving and developing?

No extent   Slight ext   Some ext   A large extent   A very large extent

Views on second language teaching and learning

Language learning

1. a. L2 learning is learning to express meaning in another language.

   b. L 2 learning is the mastering of grammatical structures.

   c. L 2 learning is the acquisition of a set of of habits.

2. a. There is a natural route of language development for all L2 learners.

   b. L2 learners' individual learning strategies determine what they learn and when they learn it.

3. a. L 2 learning is the mastering of language skills.

   b. L2 learning is acquiring knowledge of another language.

4. a. L2 learners need to be taught in order to become proficient.

   b. L2 proficiency can be achieved through exposure to L2 alone.

5. a. L2 students learn what they are taught.

   b. L2 students construct their own understanding independent of what they are taught.

   c. L2 students only learn things that relate to their current stage of language development.

6. a. Second language learning is a similar process to first language learning.

   b. There are few similarities between first language learning and second language learning.

Second language teaching

1. a. The primary role of the teacher is to transfer knowledge to the student.

   b. The primary role of the teacher is to facilitate the student's learning.

2. a. Accuracy should be focused on in the early stages of a learner's development.

   b. Fluency should be focused on in the early stages of a learner's development.

   c. Accuracy should be focused on in the latter stages of a learner's development.

   d. Fluency should remain the focus at every stage of a learner's development.

3. a. Explaining grammatical rules is generally ineffectual.

   b. Explaining grammatical rules is generally effective and necessary.

4. a. There is no right one way to teach.

   b. Some teaching methods and techniques are generally more effective than others.

5. a. Teaching the phonetic script helps L2 students identify their pronunciation weaknesses.

   b. L2 students generally ignore the phonetic script.

6. a. Students' oral mistakes ought to be corrected as soon as they are made to prevent bad language habits.

   b. Students' oral mistakes ought to be ignored to ensure students retain their confidence when speaking.

   c. Students' oral mistakes ought to be welcomed because these mistakes indicate the student is exploring new areas of the language.

7. a. When teaching writing, it is important to focus on the writing process, not on the finished product.

7. b. It is important to focus on the finished product of writing since it is a motivating goal and a source of satisfaction for the L2 student.

APPENDIX B

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES:
A STUDY OF THE VIEWS OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS

TEACHERS' INFORMATION SHEET

The Researcher

My name is Christopher Hugh Beard. At present I am studying part time at Massey University towards the degree of Master of Arts in Second Language Teaching. My contact phone number is (06) 354 7756. My supervisors are Associate Professor Noel Watts (ph(06)350 4982) and Dr Charles Randriamasimananana (ph(06)356 9099 ext7059).

The Study

The aim of the study is to investigate the effects of divergent views of language teaching on you as an individual teacher . Attention will be given to the way you interpret different teaching practices, in particular the way you reconcile statements, approaches or methods that appear to contradict one another.

Your Participation

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a four part questionnaire and participate in one private interview which will be recorded on tape. The tape will be held secure in a place you agree on and, according to your preference, will either be retained by yourself, destroyed or stored in a research archive at the completion of the study. In addition, I will invite three of your students to complete a questionnaire.

A summary of the research findings will be made available to you should you request it. The information that you give will be confidential to the research and any publications resulting from it.

Rights

If you agree to take part in the study, you have the right :

- to refuse to answer any particular questions.
- to withdraw from the study at any time.
- to ask any questions about the study at any time during participation.
- to provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher.
- to be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded.

APPENDIX C

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES:
A STUDY OF THE VIEWS OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS

TEACHERS' CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researchers on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission. (*The information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project*).

I agree / disagree to the interview being audio taped.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet

Signature   _____

Name   _____

Date   _____

APPENDIX D

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES:
A STUDY OF THE VIEWS OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS

STUDENTS' INFORMATION SHEET

The Researcher

My name is Christopher Hugh Beard. At present I am studying part time at Massey University towards the degree of Master of Arts in Second Language Teaching. My contact phone number is (06) 354 7756. My supervisors are Associate Professor Noel Watts (ph(06)350 4983) and Dr Charles Randriamasimananana (ph(06)356 9099 ext7059).

The Study

The aim of the study is to investigate the effect of divergent views of teaching on six individual teachers. Attention will be given to the way teachers interpret different views of teaching that appear to disagree with one another.

Your Participation

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be invited to fill in one questionnaire that relates to your classroom experiences.

Filling in this questionnaire indicates your consent to be involved.

The information that you give will be confidential to the research and any publications resulting from it.

This study is not related to your current course or your course assessment.

Rights

If you agree to take part in the study, you have the right :

- to refuse to answer any particular questions.
- to ask any questions about the study at any time during participation.
- to provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher.
- to be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded.

APPENDIX E

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES:
A STUDY OF THE VIEWS OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS

STUDENTS' CONSENT FORM

I have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researchers on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission. *(The information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project).*

Signature   _____

Name   _____

Date   _____

APPENDIX F

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

PART 1.   BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Age _____

2. Gender _____

3. Country of origin _____

4. Secondary / tertiary institutions and training

A. Secondary _____ From (date) _____ To _____

B. Secondary _____ From (date) _____ To _____

A. Tertiary _____   Course _____

From _____   To _____

B. Tertiary _____   Course _____

From _____   To _____

C. Tertiary _____   Course _____

From _____   To _____

D. Tertiary _____   Course _____

From _____   To _____

5. Second language teaching experience

A. Institution _____   Position _____

Portfolio _____

From _____   To _____

B. Institution _____   Position _____

Portfolio _____

From _____   To _____

C. Institution _____   Position _____

Portfolio _____

From _____   To _____

D. Institution _____   Position _____

Portfolio _____

From _____   To _____

6. Other teaching experience

A. Institution _____   Position _____

Portfolio _____

From _____   To _____

B. Institution _____   Position _____

Portfolio _____

From _____   To _____

7. (a) Have you lived in a foreign culture (where English is not the native language) for more than six months? _____

(b) If you answered 'yes' to (a), please indicate the extent to which you learned the native language.

_____

_____

_____

(c) Are you currently using this language in any way? _____

(d) Are you currently learning any other language? _____

(e) **If you answered 'yes' to (d), please indicate the extent to which you have learned   this language.**

_____

_____

_____

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
PART 2   VIEWS ON LANGUAGE TEACHING AND
LEARNING

Please circle the number.which best indicates the extent to which you agree / disagree with the following statements on second language teaching and learning.

Language learning   Section A

1. L2 learning is learning to express meaning in another language.	*agree strongly*		*disagree strongly*
	1	2	3	4	5
2. There is a natural order for acquiring a second language.	*agree strongly*		*disagree strongly*
	1	2	3	4	5

1. L2 learning is learning to
express meaning in another language.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

2. There is a natural order for acquiring a
second language.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

3. Most of the errors which L2 learners
make are due to interference from their L1

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

4. The order for acquiring a second
language depends on the individual
student's learning strategies

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

5. L2 learning is the mastering
of language skills

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

6. A second language can be effectively
learnt without interaction.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

7. Students learn simple language
structures before complex ones.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

8. Language learning is the development
of a set of of habits.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

9. L2 Learners need to be taught
in order to become proficient.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

10. Students learn best by .
performing communicative tasks

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

11. Students learn what they are taught

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

12. Language learning is acquiring
knowledge of the target language

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

13. It is possible for students to achieve proficiency solely through exposure to a second language.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

14. The most important factor in language success is motivation.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

15. Learners can develop bad language habits from one another

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

16. Language learning is the mastering of grammatical structures.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

17. Students can learn simple and complex structures simultaneously.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

18. Learners' errors need to be corrected as soon as they are made to prevent the formation of bad habits.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

19. Learners construct their own understanding in spite of what they are taught.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

20. Second language learning is a similar process to first language learning.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

Second language teaching   Section B

1. Practice drills are an important classroom tool.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

2. Accuracy should be the focus with beginners.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

3. The teacher should give the learner control of the learning situation.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

4. Explaining grammar rules is ineffectual.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

5. Authentic materials and tasks should be used extensively in the classroom.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

6. The teacher should play a predominant role in the language classroom.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

7. There is no right one way to teach.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

8. It is important to be guided by the students' interests when teaching.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

9. The primary role of the teacher is to facilitate the student's learning.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

10. Effective teaching cannot be distinguished from ineffective teaching.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

11. We teach as we have been taught.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

12. Some teaching methods and techniques are more effective than others.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

13. The primary role of the teacher is to transfer knowledge to the student.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

14. Teachers should always place more focus on fluency than accuracy.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

15. It is important to follow a teaching method in the classroom.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

16. A second language is best learnt through content teaching.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

17. Fluency should be the focus with beginners.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

18. Good teachers regularly use a variety of approaches, methods and techniques.

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

19. Most students need assistance in learning how to learn another language

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

20. The explanation of grammar rules is an essential part of classroom practice

agree strongly   *disagree strongly*

1____2____3____4____5

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
PART 3   TEACHER BELIEFS

Below are some questions relating to teacher beliefs. Please circle the answer that best represents your position.

1. (A) Do you think some ESL methods / approaches are theoretically incompatible?

No   *Not sure*   *Yes. Definitely.*

(B). If you answered "yes', please give an example of one method / approach that you think contradicts another.

_____

_____

_____

2. (A) Do you think it is possible that theoretically opposed methods / approaches could confuse your own theory of teaching?

No   *Not sure*   *Yes. Definitely.*

(B) If you answered 'yes', please state why.

_____

3. Do you apply the principles of *one* teaching approach, e.g. *the communicative language teaching approach*, regularly?

Never   *Seldom*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

4. (A) Do you think some teaching methods / approaches are *generally* more effective than others?

No   *Not sure*   *Yes. Definitely*

(B) If you answered 'yes', please give an example of an approach / method you believe to be generally more effective than others and why you consider it to be more effective:

_____

_____

_____

5. (A) Do you think some second language teaching methods / approaches have 'stood the test of time?'

No   *Not sure*   *Yes.Definitely*

(B) If you answered 'yes', please give one example.

_____

_____

6. To what extent do learner characteristics, e.g. *educational background, aptitude, age, reasons for learning a language*, influence how you teach?

No extent   *Slight extent*   *Some extent.*   *A large extent*   *A very large extent*

7. To what extent do practical constraints, e.g. *availability of materials and resources, time constraints, college course curriculums*, influence how you teach?

No extent   *Slight extent*   *Some extent.*   *A large extent*   *A very large extent*

8. Do you think it is important to experiment with the latest teaching method in your classroom?

Not important   *Quite important*   *Important*   *Very important*   *Essential*

9. Is your current teaching approach influenced by your own experience as a language learner?

No influence   *Little*   *Some influence*   *Strong*   *Very considerable influence*

10. To what extent is your current teaching approach based upon your prior teaching experience in the classroom?

No extent   *Slight extent*   *Some extent.*   *A large extent*   *A very large extent*

11. Is your teaching approach influenced by second language teaching and learning literature (e.g. articles and specialist texts)?

No influence   Little   Some influence   Strong   Very considerable influence

12. To what extent do you borrow and implement ideas from your colleagues?

No extent   Slight extent   Some extent.   A large extent   A very large extent

13. To what extent has your teaching approach changed since you began teaching?

No extent   Slight extent   Some extent.   A large extent   A very large extent

14. Do you think your teaching approach is steadily evolving?

No   Not sure   Yes.

15. To what extent has the time you spend teaching at the front changed?

Less time at the front   About the same   More time at the front
than in the past   than in the past

16. To what extent has your willingness to alter direction during a lesson changed?

Less willing than   About the same   More willing
than in the past   than in the past

17. To what extent has your emphasis on accuracy changed?

Less emphasis   About the same   More emphasis
than in the past   than in the past

18. To what extent has your approach to correcting mistakes changed?

Less correction   About the same   More correction
than in the past   than in the past

19. To what extent has your time spent preparing before a lesson changed?

Less time spent   About the same   More time spent
than in the past   than in the past

20. To what extent have your views on language learning changed?

No extent   Slight extent   Some extent.   A large extent   A very large extent

21. Which of the numbered statements in Part 2 (A) have changed the most for you (in terms of your acceptance / rejection of the statement)? Why?

_____

_____

22. Which of the numbered statements in Part 2 (B) have changed the most for you (in terms of your acceptance / rejection of the statement)? Why?

_____

_____

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

PART 4   VIEWS ON L2 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Please express your views on second language learning / teaching by completing the statements below (in one sentence if possible).

1. Students learn best when..._____

_____

_____

2. The teacher's role is..._____

_____

_____

3. I base my teaching on (no / the ...)_____ approach because..

_____

_____

4. One of the strongest influences on my teaching beliefs has been..._____

_____

_____

5. A teaching belief that has remained unchanged for me is..._____

_____ because.._____

_____

_____

6. A teaching belief that has changed for me is..._____

_____ because.._____

_____

_____

APPENDIX G

FIRST INTERVIEW

L2 TEACHER TRAINING

1. A. What was the most helpful aspect of your second language teaching training programme? *How could your teacher training programme have been more helpful?*

B. How do you feel about instructors recommending certain teaching approaches / methods to their trainees during the training programme? *Is this what happened in your programme? Have you ever been given tips on how to evaluate varying perspectives?*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2 A. What is the most valuable insight you have gained from your teaching experience?

B. Many teachers adopt an eclectic approach when teaching.What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of an eclectic approach? *How do you select different techniques, methods and approaches yourself?*

C. How do you respond to the comment that "all teaching methods / approaches are equally valid?"

RESPONSE TO CHANGE

3. A. How unified, do you think, is the second language teaching field? (*Refer to L2 literature, course texts, views expressed by colleagues*).

B. What potential is there for conflicting positions or approaches to cause problems for teachers? (*Example : it helps to correct ESL students when they make oral errors,* versus *it is best to ignore ESL students when they make oral errors*)

C. How do you deal with views on language learning / teaching that clearly differ to your own? (*Refer to a view they agreed with in Part 2 and strongly disagree with it*).

D. How would you describe the growth of your teaching philosophy? (*A set of beliefs that has steadily evolved? Or a rocky road of certainties, doubts and u-turns?*)

To what extent do you find new perspectives, theories or methods helpful? Can they complicate classroom issues for you?

Is it possible that approaches such as communicative language teaching and the learner-centred approach may eventually be viewed as negatively as the grammar-translation approach is today?

APPENDIX H

SECOND INTERVIEW

1. In what situations do you encounter new and different perspectives on language teaching and learning?

2. You indicated in the preliminary questionnaire that you sometimes experienced periods of confusion or uncertainty because of conflicting theories, views or methods. Can you give me an example (or examples) of this?

3. You indicated that, when confronted with a perspective that differed to your own, you would consider the evidence for it. How do you do this?
- do you read up on the literature on it?
- do you experiment with it in class?

4. You indicated a preference for an eclectic approach, e.g. the use of a variety of approaches, methods and techniques in the classroom. Could you give some examples of the different methods and techniques you have used?

5. Do you believe changing theories or trends undermine fundamental principles of L2 teaching and learning.

Example: Students generally benefit from grammar instruction (principle), but in language classrooms fluency has been increasingly emphasised at the expense of students' accuracy (trend).

APPENDIX I

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Classroom Activities

Please read the following questions about activities in your class and circle the response that best expresses your view.

1. Are there some activities you do <u>all the time</u> in class? *For example : ask your partner for information, interviews, dictation, skimming & scanning, writing a report, book reviews.*

Yes   *Not sure*   *No*

If you answered 'yes' to question 1, please give an example of one activity you do all the time in class. _____

2. Do you do a lot of <u>new and different</u> activities in class?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

3. Do you work together with your partner?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

4. Do you work together in groups?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

5. Do you have to work by yourself in class?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

6. Do you have to find out information for yourself in class?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

7. Does your teacher talk to the class a lot?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

8. Does your teacher move around the class helping students one at a time?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

9. Does your teacher know what <u>you</u> need to learn and practise?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

10. Do you get a chance to do what <u>you</u> want in class?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

11. Does your teacher write a lot of information on the white board?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

12. Are you given a lot of handouts (paper with activities on them) in class?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

13. Do you understand why you are given these handouts ?

Never　　　*Rarely*　　　*Sometimes*　　　*Often*　　　*Always*

14. Does your teacher explain to you why you do certain activities in class?

Never　　　*Rarely*　　　*Sometimes*　　　*Often*　　　*Always*

15. Does your teacher correct your speaking?

Never　　　*Rarely*　　　*Sometimes*　　　*Often*　　　*Always*

16. Do you get a chance to speak freely?

Never　　　*Rarely*　　　*Sometimes*　　　*Often*　　　*Always*

17. Does your teacher correct your writing?

Never　　　*Rarely*　　　*Sometimes*　　　*Often*　　　*Always*

18. Does your teacher explain to you why your mistakes are wrong?

Never　　　*Rarely*　　　*Sometimes*　　　*Often*　　　*Always*

19. Do you get a chance to write freely?

Never　　　*Rarely*　　　*Sometimes*　　　*Often*　　　*Always*

20. Does your teacher carefully explain the rules of English grammar?

Never　　　*Rarely*　　　*Sometimes*　　　*Often*　　　*Always*

21. Do you practise again and again the grammar you are taught?

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

22. Do you do activities that native speakers do in real life? *For example : express opinions, write a report, ask for information, make an appointment .*

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*

23. Do you use materials that native speakers use? *For example : English newspapers, books and magazines?*

Never   *Rarely*   *Sometimes*   *Often*   *Always*