

# **Incidental English Vocabulary**

## **Studying in L2 Learning**

**—A Study of Learning and Teaching English Vocabulary in a  
Chinese College**

Linglin Wu  
Kristianstad University College  
The School of Teacher Education  
English IV, Spring 2009  
D-essay in English Didactics  
Tutor: Lena Ahlin

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Aim .....	2
1.2 Material .....	2
1.3 Method.....	3
1.3.1 Questionnaire.....	3
1.3.2 Interview .....	4
2. Theoretical background .....	5
2.1 The definition of vocabulary .....	5
2.2 The importance of English vocabulary learning .....	7
2.3 Recent research on English vocabulary learning.....	8
2.4 Incidental and intentional vocabulary learning .....	10
2.4.1 The definition of incidental and intentional vocabulary learning .....	10
2.4.2 The relationship between incidental and intentional vocabulary learning	11
2.5 The relationship between incidental vocabulary learning and comprehensible input and output.....	12
2.6 The relationship between incidental vocabulary learning and autonomy learning	14
2.7 The relationship between incidental vocabulary learning and interaction in the classroom .....	15
2.8 Activities in incidental English vocabulary learning .....	18
2.9 The role of teachers in English vocabulary learning in classroom.....	19
3. Analysis and discussion .....	20
3.1 Questionnaire.....	21
3.1.1 The students' attitudes to learning English.....	21
3.1.2 Incidental English vocabulary learning outside the classroom.....	24
3.1.3 Intentional and incidental English vocabulary learning situation in the classroom.....	29
3.2 Interviews.....	32
3.2.1 The whole attitude to present situation of English vocabulary teaching	33

3.2.2 The opinion of mastering a word.....	34
3.2.3 The method of presenting words.....	35
3.2.4 The activities in class and teachers' roles.....	35
3.2.5 The interaction in class.....	38
4. Summary.....	39
5. Pedagogical implications.....	41
6 Conclusions.....	43
List of references.....	44
Appendix A: Questionnaire .....	
Appendix B: Summaries of interviews.....	

## **1. Introduction**

As the communication of politics, economy and culture between countries increases rapidly, English, as an international language, plays an increasingly important role in our daily life. Many non-English major students at colleges in China are still required to learn English as the compulsory course. The importance of English is recognized by more and more Chinese people.

In English language learning, vocabulary plays a very important, but also difficult role for Chinese learners. Many learners are always troubled by learning vocabulary. One of the reasons is that Chinese and English are from different language families which mean sets of words have some similarity in shapes, meaning, or others (Schmitt 2000: 2). Chinese characters are composed of individual strokes, but English words are composed of roman letters (Nation 1990: 36). Another reason is that English vocabulary is changeable. A great number of words die away and new words are created, or some words are given other meanings at different time or in different contexts, which is called the register of vocabulary (Schmitt 2000: 31). All these problems bring a great deal of confusion to Chinese learners (Aitchison 2003: 174). As a result, how to learn unfamiliar English words has been a tough job for most Chinese learners.

However, many students still have traditional methods to learn English vocabulary, such as learning new words through teachers' explicit instruction, reciting from word lists, and so on. Furthermore, many English teachers in colleges still adopt traditional strategies to teach vocabulary, such as repeating vocabulary, explaining the meaning of vocabulary in native language, letting students recite new words, and making students do plenty of vocabulary exercises. These methods of learning and teaching English vocabulary can be categorized into intentional learning, in other words, explicit learning. These methods focus attention directly on the word itself to be learned without the contexts (Schmitt 2000: 120).

On the other hand, many linguists such as Read find that many native speakers acquire 70% of their native language incidentally as they meet with new words in the speech and writing of others (2000: 43). Incidental vocabulary learning means learners acquire vocabulary unconsciously when they are using language for communicative purposes (Schmitt 2000: 120). In view of this situation, linguists recommend second language learners to learn target vocabulary incidentally too, such as learning by extensive reading, watching English movies, doing role play, pair work and group work, retelling and so on.

Through dozens of years researching and practicing, many linguists such as Schmitt (2000: 121) also find that, for second language learners, both intentional and incidental vocabulary learning are necessary and should be complementary. Both teachers and students should adopt these two kinds of methods in teaching and learning English vocabulary reasonably and in a balanced way.

In China, considerable research about intentional English vocabulary learning has been done. However, there is not so much research about incidental learning, especially on English vocabulary learning adopted by both students out of class and teachers in classroom.

### **1.1 Aim**

This study aims to investigate whether incidental methods are used in learning English vocabulary by non-English major students at colleges in China, and in teaching English vocabulary by their oral English teachers. If these methods are adopted, the study is also to find out what kinds of incidental strategies are used. Then based on the results of the investigation, this study puts forward some pedagogical implications for teachers.

### **1.2 Material**

The participants of this study are 33 sophomore students in a college in China who major in

international trade. They are about from 22 to 24 years old and all have learned English as a compulsory course for about 7 years, so most of them have English proficiency to some extent. The number of the girls is 29, and the remaining 4 are boys.

Their oral English teacher is a young lady who graduated from a formal normal university and has taught oral English for 3 years. Though she is young, she has a strong passion in education. She likes to use various kinds of activities in her class. Therefore her classes are popular with her students and the effect of her teaching is impressive.

To get more information, 3 other oral English teachers teaching the same grade are also invited to the survey. They are all females and have taught oral English for more than 2 years at least. Additionally, they all graduated from universities and received formal teaching instruction.

### **1.3 Method**

To carry out this survey, questionnaires and interviews are applied as the research methods. The questionnaires are convenient to collect the information for this study because the researcher is not in China. The interviews via telephone can provide the open information to confirm and compare the data of the questionnaire.

#### **1.3.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire contains two sections. (See Appendix A)

Section one is concerned with some personal details with five questions. This is used to illustrate the state of students learning English vocabulary. Questions 1 to 3 show what attitudes students have towards learning English vocabulary; questions 4 and 5 illustrate the degree of endeavor of their learning English and the degree of vocabulary size they have gained.

Section two consists of seventeen statements about students' vocabulary learning strategies. Questions 1 to 10 involve students' habits of learning English vocabulary by themselves and questions 11 to 17 involve students learning English vocabulary in the English classroom.

After preparing the questionnaire, the researcher distributes the questionnaire to students with the purpose of investigating how they learn English vocabulary. Based on the data of questionnaire, the researcher can get the information about students' preferred strategy for English vocabulary learning.

From this section, the study can find how students are learning vocabulary and what their feedback is about teachers' teaching.

### **1.3.2 Interview**

The researcher makes interviews with oral English teachers. The involved questions for interviews are shown below:

- 1) What do you think of the current situation of English vocabulary teaching and acquisition in our college?
- 2) What do you think of mastering a word, the meaning, the form, the pronunciation, the usage or all these aspects?
- 3) Which do you focus on in vocabulary teaching in class, intentional approach or incidental approach?
- 4) How do you usually present new vocabulary used in oral activities?
- 5) What vocabulary learning activities do you prefer in class, presentation, retelling, reading aloud, pair work, group work, role play, discussion or others?
- 6) What are you doing when students do these activities in class?
- 7) Do you often correct students' mistakes in vocabulary, when and under what circumstances?

- 8) Do you often negotiate the meaning of utterances with students?  
9) Which kinds of questions do you tend to ask students, the genuine or display questions?

Question 1) is about teachers' attitudes to the current situation of vocabulary teaching effects; question 2) is about their understanding of a word; questions 3) and 4) involve the methods of teaching vocabulary; questions 5) and 6) show adopted activities in their classes and their roles in these activities; questions 7), 8) and 9) illustrate the interaction between teachers and students.

After designing these questions, the researcher firstly selects interviewees. Four teachers teaching the same grade and using the same textbook are chosen. Secondly, the researcher makes interviews via telephone and makes records through technique equipment. Lastly, the audio data are analyzed.

This section is to find out whether the incidental methods for English vocabulary teaching are popular with teachers.

## **2. Theoretical background**

Drawing on the previous research on incidental learning, this section provides the theories on which this survey is based.

### **2.1 The definition of vocabulary**

Before proceeding to this study, it is necessary to clarify the definition of vocabulary. Generally, vocabulary is a list of words, usually in alphabetical order and with explanations of their meanings. A word, in most linguistic analyses, is described as a set of properties, or features, each word is the combination of its meaning, register, association, collocation,



grammatical behavior, written form (spelling), spoken form (pronunciation) and frequency. To master a word is not only to learn its meaning but also to learn seven other aspects. All these properties are called word knowledge (Schmitt 2000: 5).

In most learners' opinions, to master the meaning of a word is to master the definition of the word in dictionaries. However, when they learn the meaning of a word, they find it quite complex and obscure. Schmitt (2000: 23) says that word meaning consists of the link of the word and its referent, and the latter means the person, thing, action, and situation. The meaning of a word in dictionaries is the basic meaning elements. However, a word can have extra meanings in different texts. This phenomenon involves the register. It is used in people's daily life popularly, and it means the denotation of a word meaning from the basic meaning in different contexts. It is the relationship between the content, sender, receiver, situation and purpose (Carthy 1990: 61). For example, the word *skinny*, its basic meaning in a dictionary means "very thin" when describing a beauty's slim body, however, it also means "so thin as to be unhealthy or unattractive" when describing a starving old man (Schmitt 2000: 31).

On the aspect of association, it means words are related to others in different ways and any word can belong to a certain word family. There are four main categories in association (Aitchison 2003: 86-100). The first one is coordination: words cluster together on the same level of detail. For example: *volleyball*, *basketball*, *football* are stored together, belonging to the group of *sport*. Moreover, opposites also belong to this kind, for example: *sad* and *happy*. The second one, superordination: some words cover other words which are subordinate to the upper ones. For example: when people mention the word *animal*, others can easily associate to *dog*, *cow*, *horse*, *sheep*, *monkey* and so on. The third one, synonymy: words having the same or similar meanings are stored together. For example, *happy and glad*, *surprise and shock* tend to appear together. The last one, collocation: some words are usually stored together to collocate each other. For example, *salt water*, *bright red* are usually matched together based on people's habit of actual use.

However, as for the above collocation, Nation (1990: 38) defines it as the tendency of two or

more words to co-occur in discourse. There are two basic types of collocations: semantic collocations and grammatical collocations (Benson 1985: 61-68). Semantic collocations mean that the type consists of two equal words both with meaning to produce a new meaning, which is the same as Aitchison (2003: 86-100) mentions above, for example: *air balloon*. The other ones refer to the type in which a core word goes with a functional word, for example, in *devote to*, *devote* is the core word, and *to* is the functional word having no meaning.

Concerning the grammatical behaviour, it usually refers to the pattern in which it typically occurs. Two of the most important aspects of lexis are word class and morphology (Schmitt 2000: 59). There are four major groups in word class: noun, verb, adjective and adverb. Morphology involves affixes including prefix such as *im-* and suffix such as *-er*. The morphology is also about how these affixes are attached to the basic forms of words (Laufer 1997: 140-155).

Regarding the form of a word, Nation (1990: 35-36) confirms there are two kinds of a word form. The written form of a word refers to the spelling and the spoken form means the sound or pronunciation. The last aspect is frequency referring to how often any particular word occurs in usage.

According to the above seven aspects of a word, both teachers and learners should hold a broad view of mastering a word and adopt different methods to gain a full command of a word. In this study, vocabulary is considered as individual words, therefore, vocabulary and words are used interchangeably with the same meaning.

## **2.2 The importance of English vocabulary learning**

Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learners (Boyd Zimmerman 1997b: 5-19). However, teaching and learning vocabulary have been neglected in second language acquisition throughout its varying stages. After decades of

neglect, lexis, which is now recognized as central to any language acquisition process, has gradually become a focus today. Vocabulary is no longer a victim of discrimination in second language learning research. Because researchers have found that vocabulary problems frequently interfere with communication and communication often breaks down when learners lack necessary vocabulary. Learners and experienced English teachers also know very well how important vocabulary is (Boyd Zimmerman 1997b: 5-19).

In learning a language, it is very important to learn as many words as possible. All foreign language learners and their teachers have intuitively known for a long time that learning a foreign language involves the learning of a large number of words. Lewis (1993:23) says that learning vocabulary is the core task in SLA, and any language skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, translating, cannot exist without vocabulary. Words are the currency of communication. A robust vocabulary improves all areas of communication. Laufer (1997: 140-155) quotes McCarthy's opinion to confirm that no matter how well the students learn grammar, no matter how successful the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meaning, communication in a L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way. Therefore, a large vocabulary is necessary in every stage of language learning. In a word, the importance of vocabulary to the English learner is second to none.

However, this is not to say that language learning is determined by vocabulary only. But it tells us that the fundamental role of vocabulary in learning English successfully has been established.

### **2.3 Recent research on English vocabulary learning**

Many linguists have done a great deal of research about English vocabulary learning with incidental and intentional methods. Loewen (2005, 361-386) argues that incidental focusing on form is more effective to learn vocabulary rather than learning vocabulary focusing on forms. The former means that learners learn vocabulary because of communicative needs and

the latter shows that learners gain vocabulary only through vocabulary itself in form, sound or translated meaning then learners communicate with it. Parry (1997: 55-68) in his series of longitudinal case studies demonstrates how a combination of incidental and intentional learning of vocabulary in reading could be possible and helps the development of English vocabulary learning. Hulstijn concludes, through some studies, that most vocabulary items are acquired incidentally, that is, as a by-product of the learner being engaged in a listening, reading, speaking or writing activity (2001: 258-286).

Other research has been published on how to make full use of incidental method in English vocabulary learning. Generally speaking, it is found that if teachers get students to notice new words through turning their attention to them by dictionary use or the application of glosses, then incidental vocabulary acquisition during the reading process may be improved better (Hulstijn, Hollander & Greidanus 1996:327-339). However, in 2001, Laufer and Hulstijn (1-26) indicate that if learners want to get better effects of mastering the meanings of words by meaning inference, they must be familiar with 95% of the words in a given passage, thus only the advanced English learners can adopt this method successfully.

Studies about the activities of incidental method also have been researched. Elley (1989: 174-189) thinks that story-telling is a good way for learners to learn English vocabulary as an input exposure which is a significant way of incidental vocabulary learning. Hulstijn puts forward that if the more learners acquire English vocabulary by inferring, the easier they can recall and retain English vocabulary (1993: 139-147). Nation gives the scope of incidental activities in classroom, such as retelling, ranking and so on (2001:135). He also does some studies on learning vocabulary through speaking (2001:125). Boyd Zimmerman (1997a: 121-140) conducts a study on the impact of interactive vocabulary teaching in vocabulary knowledge. Lightbown and Spada do studies about the feedbacks from teacher-student interaction in classroom for English vocabulary learning (1999: 125), and from the research, they confirm that the recasts and repetition are the better ones. Groot (2000: 60-81) expresses that many learners cannot master a large amount of English vocabulary due to lack of exposure to new words with sufficient time. Therefore this will hinder the creation of a

sufficient number of associations and links with other words for solid storage and efficient retrieval.

According to so many linguists' previous studies, it is easy to find that, for vocabulary learning, two main methods are focused on, the incidental and the intentional vocabulary learning.

## **2.4 Incidental and intentional vocabulary learning**

A definition of the two research approaches dealt with in this study is necessary.

### **2.4.1 The definition of incidental and intentional vocabulary learning**

Many linguists have made the definition of incidental vocabulary learning. Nation (2001: 232) defines the incidental vocabulary learning as an important strategy in vocabulary learning. It refers to the learning which occurs without specific intention to focus on vocabulary. One can develop vocabulary knowledge subconsciously while being engaged in any language activities, especially reading.

Meara puts vocabulary learning into different categories. One distinction is usually made between intentional or conscious learning and incidental learning (1994:3726-3728). In his opinion incidental learning is a by-product of learning something else and it is not like the intentional learning which is designed by teachers or students. That means learners master vocabulary when they are involved in some learning activities, such as reading, speaking, doing a task, and interacting with others.

Others define the incidental vocabulary learning as that there is no special attention given to linguistic problems unless they arise spontaneously in the course of instruction. Particularly, it involves the use of unfocused communicative tasks which are designed to elicit general

samples of the language rather than specific forms (Ellis, Basturkman & Loewen 2002: 419-432).

From the views mentioned above, incidental learning of vocabulary can be defined as a kind of learning method from reading, listening, speaking or writing to language use while learners' main attention focuses on the information of passages or texts. This method includes learning from extensive reading, taking part in conversations, listening to stories, watching English movies, listening to radio or other exposure of input and output both out of and in classrooms (Nation 2001: 232).

On the other hand, intentional learning of vocabulary is a traditional and common method in teaching vocabulary. Ellis calls it the planned method involving the use of tasks designed to elicit forms which have been selected ahead by teachers (2001:1-46), whereas, Schmitt (2000: 120) demonstrates that it can be called explicit learning of vocabulary and it focuses attention directly on the information to be learned. Although it will provide the greatest chance of acquisition, it is time consuming and it is too laborious for learners to learn language. In addition, intentional teaching of vocabulary in classroom is often the teacher-centered class.

Generally speaking, intentional learning of vocabulary is the method of learning vocabulary by using tools to bring the learner's attention into direct contact with the form and meaning of words, such as dictionaries, vocabulary lists, and direct vocabulary explanation.

#### **2.4.2 The relationship between incidental and intentional vocabulary learning**

Though the incidental and intentional vocabulary learning have their own advantages in vocabulary learning, they also have limitations.

The incidental method is usually adopted by learners who have an advanced level of English while intentional method is used for the beginners (Laufer & Hulstijn 2001: 1-26).

Although incidental learning is believed to be useful for second language learners, the incidental learning may be hindered due to time cost in classroom, and it is slow and gradual for learning (Schmitt 2000: 120). For students with academic goals, this kind of learning will not provide adequate or enough time and skills (Coady 1997: 273-290). Therefore to compensate for these limitations, the intentional vocabulary learning is needed.

Intentional learning is quick and usually preferred by learners, but it also causes some problems. Learners often encounter vocabulary in an isolated form and remain incapable of using it correctly in context. Moreover, Nation (2001: 232) claims that, most vocabulary learning occurs incidentally, but a deliberate, intentional learning is required too. Schmitt supports this point, and he holds that for second language learners, both explicit and incidental learning are necessary and should be seen as complementary and kept in balance (2000: 121).

Actually, every class involves these two kinds of methods at the same time. There is no class with only one method adopted by teachers to teach vocabulary. With the regular steps in teaching vocabulary, teachers firstly introduce some new words, and then explain them in native language; secondly, they let students do some exercises with these new words. These two steps are usually categorized as the intentional method. Thirdly, teachers usually let students do some activities with partners or group members with the use of new words. This step belongs to the incidental method and has the function of consolidating new words. According to the factual class observation, it is easy to find that teachers often use these two methods consciously or unconsciously.

## **2.5 The relationship between incidental vocabulary learning and comprehensible input and output**

For most second language learners, the lack of exposure to language is a key reason for

unsuccessful language learning. The best way may be letting the learners stay at the situation filled with the target language. However, most of them have not this condition. Therefore teachers or learners could make the opportunities to simulate the natural setting, such as book-flood. It can provide the sufficient exposure of English with additional reading which can lead students to a real increase in English vocabulary, even though students focus on the meaning and enjoyment of texts (Schmitt 2000: 150).

Krashen (1989: 440-464) emphasizes that comprehensible and meaningful input should replace grammatically correct production to teach learners to master vocabulary. In Krashen's (1989: 440-464) opinion, comprehensible input is the key aspect to acquire the second language. In other words, without comprehension of vocabulary items, acquisition will not arise. He recommends that interesting and relevant vocabulary input should be provided to language learners in order to help them achieve the mastery of language. Krashen's (1989: 440-464) pedagogical suggestion includes free voluntary reading of one's own interest as this enhances incidental learning of vocabulary.

After doing several classroom studies about language learning, Swain (2005: 471-474) proposes the comprehensible output to master the second language. She (1985: 235-256) argues though comprehensible input is necessary, it is not sufficient for English learning. The comprehensible output hypothesis argues that in understanding input, learners can ignore the syntactic system and go straight for meaning. However, when students are speaking, they must modify their utterances in order to be understood. During this process, they can learn the vocabulary including the meaning, grammar and so on incidentally. Therefore, she recommends that if learners want to master a second language, they should be given more opportunities to engage in verbal production such as communication with others, or oral activities. In the process of true use of language, learners can acquire language more fluently and accurately.

In a word, learners can master the second language and learn vocabulary incidentally when they practice target language, and they also need exposure to the comprehensible target



language to strengthen the learned English vocabulary.

## **2.6 The relationship between incidental vocabulary learning and autonomy learning**

Little (1995:175-181) defines an autonomic learner as the one who learns with a positive attitude, a capacity for reflection, and a readiness in self-management and in interaction with others, in other words, autonomic learners decide what to learn, when and how to learn it by taking responsibility for their learning. It is similar to the self-directed learning which is “[a]n active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment” (Wolters, Pintrich & Karabenick 2003: 4). Generally, there are six characters of the autonomy learning (Hedge 2000: 76): 1) learners know what they need; 2) can learn both inside and outside the classroom by themselves; 3) know how to deal with the resources independently; 4) have an active and critical thinking in learning. That means this kind of learners will not accept all in textbooks, and they will consider which method is better for their study; 5) can adjust learning strategies to improve effect; 6) arrange the learning time reasonably.

Nation states (2001: 394): “No matter what the teacher does or what the course book presents, ultimately it is the learner who does the learning. The more learners are aware of how learning is best carried out, the better learning is likely to be.” It is easy to find that if the learner has the higher autonomy in language learning, he or she can get more effective outcome in learning. This has some points in common with incidental vocabulary learning. For learners themselves, they could receive the explicit introduction of vocabulary learning in classroom, but they should still spend more time in learning vocabulary outside of the classroom incidentally, such as reading more texts with target language, taking notes when meeting with new words. All these activities need the high autonomy of learners. Therefore, incidental vocabulary learning arises with the premise of high autonomy.

## 2.7 The relationship between incidental vocabulary learning and interaction in the classroom

For a long time, the theories of interaction perspectives on second language learning have been popular. Piaget (1999: 159) confirms that learners have acquired second language through physical interaction with environment. That means the developing cognitive understanding is built on the interaction between learners and the things that can be seen. Another linguist, Vygotsky (1978: 123), insists on the interaction between persons. He concludes that language develops mainly from social interaction and a supportive interactive environment can promote learners to a higher level of knowledge and performance. In his theory, the interaction includes all conversations between learners and others in any situation. However, for most second language learners, they have not so many opportunities to communicate with others in target language and their most time to learn second language is in classroom. Therefore, focusing on the interaction in classroom is important and necessary. For the purpose of English vocabulary learning, students learn it to communicate, such as listening to others, talking with others, negotiating meanings in context. Through interaction, students can enlarge the vocabulary size when they listen or read in some activities (Rivers 1984: 3-16). Therefore interaction is vital to learn English vocabulary incidentally.

There are two kinds of classroom interactions: the teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction. These interactions consist of four main types (Lightbown & Spada 1999:116-128). The first one is the feedback on errors. When students make errors in communication with others, they can receive the feedback from the interlocutors to correct them relating to the six characteristics of word knowledge. This feedback can consist of six categories:

- 1) Explicit correction refers to the explicit provision of the correct form that means interlocutors will tell the speaker the mistake and correct it directly.

For example: A: I *readed* a book yesterday.

B: The past tense of *read* is *read*, you should say *read*.

2) Recast, an implicit correction, refers to the reformulation of speakers' utterances with getting rid of the mistakes.

For example: A: What you like best?

B: What do you like best?

A: Yes, what do you like best?

3) Clarification requests happen when the speakers' utterances are not understood or when the speakers make errors, and then the hearers make a repetition or a reformulation.

For example: A: I have been to London for *fifteen* times (obscure pronunciation).

B: Pardon? Fifty?

A: *Fifteen* (clear pronunciation)

4) Metalinguistic feedback provides either grammatical terminology referring to the nature of the error or a word definition in lexical error.

For example: A: I *visit* my friend yesterday.

B: what is the ending we put on verbs in past tense?

A: -ed.

5) Elicitation involves three techniques to correct errors. Firstly, the hearer elicits completion of his own utterance. Secondly, the hearer uses questions to elicit correct form. Thirdly, the hearer can ask the speaker to reformulate by himself.

For example: A: I have been to London for *fifteen* times (obscure pronunciation).

B: Excuse me, you have been to London for how many times?

A: *Fifteen* (clear pronunciation)

6) Repetition refers to the hearer's repetition of the speaker's error again and again to highlight the error.

For example: A: He has been to London for *fifteen* times (obscure pronunciation).

B: *Fifteen? Fifty? Fifteen* (clear pronunciation). He has been to London for *fifteen* times.

The second one is the negotiation. It happens when the interlocutors cannot understand each other. During this process, students can get the modified input to learn vocabulary incidentally (Nation 2001: 123). Ellis (1990: 107) quotes Long's saying that negotiation can be identified into two kinds: the negotiation aimed at avoiding conversational trouble and negotiation aimed at repairing discourse when trouble occurs. Both these two kinds of negotiations can generate interactional modifications. The interactional modifications derived from the second kind of negotiation are spontaneous and incidental.

For example: A: The company needs *fund* to operate.

B: What do you mean by *fund*?

A: It means *money*.

B: Ok,.....

Here, A mentions the word *fund*, and B does not know it. By means of negotiating with the partner, B acquires the meaning of *fund* incidentally.

The third one of interaction in classroom is question which is divided into two groups the genuine and display questions (Lightbown & Spada 1999:116). The genuine questions refer to the questions without answers in advance for teachers. Students usually can answer them with open mind. For example, a teacher asks students *what your favorite sport and why?* as a lead in for a new unit about sports. The display questions mean the questions with the answers known in advance by teachers. This kind of questions is usually used to consolidate the learned knowledge and involves the content of the learned information such as the time, place,

characters and so on.

The last one is the metalinguistic comments involving the language itself. The present study will not research about it.

All these kinds of interactions are the communications in classroom which consist of comprehensible inputs and outputs. These inputs and outputs are exposure of language for learners. Incidental vocabulary learning is achieved by a great deal of language exposure, therefore the more the interaction is produced, the better effect the incidental learning has.

## **2.8 Activities in incidental English vocabulary learning**

Activities concerning incidental English vocabulary learning can be divided into two situations: outside of classroom and inside classroom. The former is edited by learners themselves and the latter is organized by teachers.

Outside of classroom, learners can decide the additional vocabulary learning involving four learning skills by themselves. For listening, they can listen to English radio and watch English films; for speaking, they can chat with native speakers if it is possible; for reading, they can read English materials extensively and guess the meanings of new words from contexts; for writing and translating, they can keep dairies for their daily experiences or they can write the review after watching films. All these activities are meaning-focused and related to their autonomic learning.

Inside classroom, teachers can design activities for students. Nation (2001: 134) recommends some kinds of activities. Firstly, the retelling can have various forms and the most common form is to let students read a text then retell it with their own words. During this process, the text provides some new words understood in contexts and retelling can give the opportunities to retrieve learned words productively. The second one is role play. It involves a scenario for

students to read extensively and produce comprehensible output when students discuss which roles they will act and play the chosen roles. The third one is the ranking tasks, which mean the pair work or group work in discussion or other activities. Newton (1995: 159-177) finds that shared tasks can make more efficient outcome than split tasks in that shared tasks result in more negotiation of word meaning. The shared tasks mean tasks provide students the equal access to the same information through negotiation and the split tasks refer to tasks in which students are offered different information. All these activities are student-centered and task-based, which involve learners' communication and interaction.

From the other perspectives on activities, Prabhu creates the theory of gap of information (Hedge 2000: 58). He divides all activities into three types: information-gap activity, reasoning-gap activity and opinion-gap activity. The first one is only to transfer given information among people. The second one can derive new information from given information through process of practice. The third one is an open activity, expressing a personal feeling, attitude in response to a given situation. The last one has the closest relationship with incidental learning English vocabulary, such as the story completion, discussion of an issue which can involve using factual information.

## **2.9 The role of teachers in English vocabulary learning in classroom**

Outside of classroom, it is up to learners themselves to learn vocabulary incidentally and the function of teachers may fade. However, inside classroom, especially in second language learning classroom, teachers still act an important role in teaching English vocabulary.

Different contexts and activities cause teachers to act different roles in classroom. There are eight main roles in Richards and Charles's research (1996: 105). Firstly, the teacher acts as a planner. He watches the planning and structure of learning activities as fundamental in teaching and learning successfully. Secondly, the teacher acts as a manager. He organizes and manages the activities and students' behavior to maximize the teaching effect. Thirdly, the

teacher acts as a quality controller. He maintains the quality of language use in classroom. He encourages the correct language and discourages the incorrect use by means of feedback. Fourthly, the teacher acts as a group organizer. He divides and organizes student into group tasks cooperatively. Fifthly, the teacher acts as a facilitator. He helps students discover and build their own ways of learning English vocabulary independently. Sixthly, the teacher acts as a motivator. He encourages students' confidence and interest in learning. Seventhly, the teacher acts as an empowerer. He tries to control students as little as he can, and lets students decide what they want to learn really by themselves, which means the student-centered teaching. Eighthly, the teacher acts as a team member. He attends the activities as a group member and interacts with students like a member of a large team.

From the above roles, it seems that many teachers act as the role of planner and organizer, which means teachers need to improve their view of status and change the strategies in teaching. In classroom, if the teacher keeps a great distance from students, then the activities or interaction between teachers and students run into the typical classroom sequence: ask question, answer question and give feedback. This style will make the teaching process boring and simple. However, if the teacher is regarded as an equal partner in learning process, students can participate jointly in activities and learn vocabulary more incidentally (Hedge 2000: 29).

All these roles can exist at the same time and contribute to raising the effect of teaching English. Therefore, teachers should make full use of the different roles tactfully and reasonably to improve the English vocabulary teaching incidentally.

### **3. Analysis and discussion**

To find out the answers to the questions concerning the research, this section analyzes the data according to the two methods of the research: questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire provides the data from students' views and the interview is about teachers' opinions. This

study analyses the data from the following aspects: the incidental English vocabulary learning from the angle of students and the incidental English vocabulary teaching from the angle of teachers.

### 3.1 Questionnaire

The data from questionnaires are analyzed from three aspects. The first is about the students' attitudes to English learning; the second is about learning autonomy by students; the last is about the leaning situation in classroom.

#### 3.1.1 The students' attitudes to learning English

This part can be divided into two portions: the first one is students' main attitudes to English learning and English vocabulary learning; the other portion is students' endeavor on learning English and their satisfaction with English vocabulary size. All these can be illustrated with three below tables.

**Table 1 Attitudes to English learning (questions 1 to 3 in section 1)**

Item Number	To what extent students like learning English			The importance of English learning			The difficulty of English vocabulary learning		
	like	neutral	no	important	neutral	no	difficult	neutral	easy
Number	15	12	6	27	6	0	17	16	0
Percentage	45.45%	36.36%	18.18%	81.82%	18.18%	0.00%	51.52%	48.48%	0.00%

Table 1 is composed of three questions. Each question shows a topic. The first question is how well the students like learning English. Based on the number and percentage, it is easy to find that only 18.18% students do not like English learning, 36.36% students hold the neutral attitudes to learning English while 45.45% students have a strong desire to learn English.



In the second item, which describes the importance of learning English in students' opinions, the data show that 81.82% students think that learning English is very important, which is confirmed by Lewis (1993: 23). Additionally, no one regards learning English useless.

The third item is about the degree of difficulty to learn English vocabulary in students' experience. Only one thinks it is easy to master the English vocabulary and 51.52% students consider it too difficult to master them successfully and 48.48% of them hold the neutral points to it.

According to all these items, some characteristics of learning English for students nowadays have been explored. Firstly, most students have the positive attitudes to learn English. It is a prerequisite to learn English successfully whether the attitude is related to the external or the internal motivation. They like to learn English and deem that it is crucial to learn it. Secondly, there still exist some problems for students to master the English vocabulary. Therefore teachers should pay more attention to students' English vocabulary learning and thus this is a tough way to help students to master English vocabulary.

The below Table 2 and Table 3 show students' efforts and results about English vocabulary learning.

**Table 2 Degree of endeavor of learning English (question 4 in section 1)**

Item Number	High	Neutral	No
Number	4	6	23
Percentage	12.12%	18.18%	69.70%

The data from Table 2 are expressed by the hours of students spend in learning English out of class. If they learn English for more than 1 hour, that means they work hard in English

learning; if they spend only 1 hour on it, that implies they just keep a neutral degree of endeavor; if they spend less than 1 hour in learning English, they have a low degree of endeavor. In this table, it is easy to find a phenomenon that in this class, only 12.12% students work hard in English learning, while 69.70% students do not devote themselves to English learning. This phenomenon is related to the data from Table 1. Although most students think that it is very important to learn English and they are willing to learn English, English vocabulary frustrates Chinese students whose mother tongue is different from English in language families, mentioned by Aitchison (2003: 174). The characteristics of English vocabulary make some L2 learners confused. Therefore, some of these students begin to give up learning English vocabulary.

**Table 3 Satisfaction of vocabulary size (question 5 in section 1)**

Item Number	Satisfactory	Neutral	No
Number	2	4	27
Percentage	6.06%	12.12%	81.82%

Table 3 illustrates the vocabulary size of these students. 81.82% students say clearly that they are not satisfied with their vocabulary size and only 6.06% students think their vocabulary size is large. Apparently, this results from these students' degree of endeavor of learning English. Because many students do not devote to learning English vocabulary, they neglect practise English vocabulary. Obviously, successful English vocabulary learning depends on teachers and students. However, Hulstijn (1993: 139-147, 2001: 258-286) claims, students should make more efforts out of classroom to learn vocabulary incidentally.

From the above three tables, it can conclude that though most students admit the importance of English learning and they are willing to acquire English as is mentioned by Laufer (1997: 140-155), the difficulty of English vocabulary learning blocks their learning enthusiasm and causes them failure in enlarging vocabulary size. Therefore, teacher should try their best to

encourage students' passion on study and help them build the confidence in learning English vocabulary.

### 3.1.2 Incidental English vocabulary learning outside the classroom

Table 4 to 7 involving questions 1 to 10 in section 2 are all about the situation of students' learning English vocabulary out of classroom.

**Table 4 Attitudes towards learning English vocabulary out of class (questions 1 and 2 in section 2)**

Item Number	The frequency of learning English vocabulary out of class			The effect of enlarging English vocabulary size out of class		
	Much and Often	A little	No	Great	Neutral	None
Number	6	19	8	22	9	2
Percentage	18.18%	57.58%	24.24%	66.67%	27.27%	6.06%

Table 4 manifests students' behaviors of learning English vocabulary and their opinions on the incidental learning English vocabulary out of classroom. The data show that only 18.18% students enlarge English vocabulary by themselves though most students think that it is useful to enlarge English vocabulary by themselves out of classroom, as is mentioned by Loewen (2005, 361-386) and Krashen (1982: 20). Nation (2001: 394) also expresses that learners who have higher autonomy in learning can achieve better effects. He thinks that learners can gain more vocabulary through incidental learning. 57.58% students spend a little time in learning English vocabulary out of class. In addition, the difficulty of English vocabulary makes students lose interest and confidence to learn by themselves. As Laufer and Hulstijn (2001: 1-26) tell, only if learners have known most words of passages, are they willing to learn more with autonomy. However, based on the information of Table 3, a conclusion can safely be drawn that most students are discouraged from learning English vocabulary by themselves

due to lack of a large size of vocabulary.

**Table 5 Main methods of learning English vocabulary (question 3 in section 2)**

Item Number	Autonomy out of class	Attend classroom activities	Recite dictionary	Formal instruction in class
Number	6	9	5	13
Percentage	18.18%	27.27%	15.15%	39.40%
In total	45.45%		54.55%	

Information in Table 5 illustrates that 39.40% students acquire English vocabulary through the formal instruction in class, for example, teachers' explicit explanation of new vocabulary, and 15.15% students like to enlarge vocabulary size by reciting dictionaries. Both these two kinds of methods belong to the intentional learning totaling up 54.55%; on the other side, 27.27% students figure that they acquire it incidentally through activities in class, and 18.18% students like to learn English vocabulary out of class, such as from English movies, English novels or English songs. That means 45.45% students usually acquire English vocabulary through incidental methods both in class and out of class. By comparison of 54.55% with 45.45%, these two groups of percentage tell that both incidental and intentional methods have been used in English vocabulary learning, which is mentioned by Coady (1977: 273-290) and Nation (2001:121). They affirm that both incidental and intentional are needed in English learning. However, Nation also says that it is necessary to keep them in balance. According to the percentage, it is obvious that there is no significant difference between 54.55% and 45.45%. The intentional method is more popular than the incidental method. It also could be explained by Table 3 that most students have not the advanced level of English, which is the precondition to adopt incidental method in learning English vocabulary effectively (Laufer & Hulstijn 2001: 1-26).

**Table 6 Methods to deal with meeting with new words out of class (questions 9 and 10 in section 2)**

Item Number	Method to deal with new words				Frequency of taking notes	
	Guess	Look up in dictionary	Ask others	Skip	Often	Rarely or no
Number	11	12	0	10	11	22
Percentage	33.33%	36.36%	0.00%	30.30%	33.33%	66.67%

This table shows the situation how students deal with the new words when they listening, speaking, reading, watching and writing. 30.30% students will neglect them and 36.36% students like to look up in dictionary and 33.33% students like to guess meaning by themselves according to the hints in contexts. However, they do not like to ask others. All these show that a large majority of students tend to learn English with autonomy and want to master new vocabulary. It is a good way for students to learn English vocabulary. Nation affirms that autonomy is an important characteristic for successful learning (2001: 394). However, there exists the problem that 66.67% students do not have the habit of taking notes for new words, and only 33.33% students usually do that. As Nation (2001: 394) states, taking notes is one of the important strategies in incidental learning. Therefore, students should be recommended to form the habit of taking notes to improve the effect of incidental learning English vocabulary.

**Table 7 Frequency of activities in learning English vocabulary out of class (questions 4 to 8 in section 2)**

Item Number	Read English literature		Watch English movie		Listen to English songs		Chat with foreigners		Keep a diary in English	
	Often or some times	Rare or no	Often or some times	Rare or no	Often or some times	Rare or no	Often or some times	Rare or no	Often or some times	Rare or no
Number	5	28	27	6	27	6	4	29	3	30
Percentage	15.15 %	84.85 %	81.82 %	18.18 %	81.82 %	18.18 %	12.12 %	87.88 %	9.09 %	90.91 %

This table is about the concrete strategies of incidental learning English vocabulary by students out of class. These methods are arranged from four aspects: reading, listening, speaking and writing. It is very clear that only 15.15% students often read English literature for example, English novels. Because of their low level of English proficiency, they usually have no ability to understand the meaning of literature. Incidental method happens when learners are focusing on the meaning and then acquiring vocabulary as a by-product (Meara 1994: 3726-3728). Laufer and Hulstijn (2001: 1-26) also affirm that if only students are familiar with 95% of the vocabulary of the literature, they have the interest in go on reading. Therefore fewer students adopt this way.

It is worthy of note that 81.82% of the students like to watch English films, which is the same as that of those who like to listen to English songs. These two ways belong to the aspects of listening. That means most students often watch English movies as well as listen to English songs in free time and they like this kind of comprehensible input as the incidental learning English vocabulary. It is an effective way to acquire English vocabulary incidentally. Krashen (1989: 440-464) puts forward that comprehensible and meaningful input is more effective than grammatically correct production. There are also some reasons for this phenomenon.

Firstly, with the development of network and media, more and more information can be obtained. Secondly, movies and songs usually can relax students and make them feel happy. Thirdly, many movies and songs have the caption with mother tongue, which reduces the difficulty of learning.

On the aspect of speaking, it is not so ideal. Only 12.12% students have chances to communicate with native English speakers. That means students lack the exposure of oral comprehensible input and the production of oral comprehensible output. Schmitt (2000: 150) points out that the best way to master English is to let learners get the large amount of exposure of target language. Swain (2005: 471-474) says that not only the comprehensible input but also the comprehensible output is vital to learn English. However, students in this study cannot adopt this strategy. One key reason is that there are so few resources for students to use. Generally speaking, one grade is only equipped with one foreigner teacher and even some teachers are from the non-standard English countries. This problem should be paid attention to by this college.

Lastly, as far as writing technique is concerned, keeping a diary in English is a functional way to make comprehensible output in writing. However, only 9.09% students have the habit of keeping a diary in English. This habit usually requires a high English level and a high autonomy in learning English. Referring to the above Table 3 and 4, the researcher has found that these students have not met these requirements, so this strategy will not be used frequently.

From these above 4 tables, in general, the situation of learning English vocabulary out of class by students is positive. Most students are interested in English learning and pay attention to it. Furthermore, they also adopt some strategies to promote their English vocabulary learning. However, there are still some aspects to be improved. They should spend more time in autonomic learning, build confidence and form reasonable habit of learning English vocabulary.

### 3.1.3 Intentional and incidental English vocabulary learning situation in the classroom

This is the last part of questionnaire about the situation of classroom. There are three tables illustrating different aspects separately: students' attitude to formal instruction of English vocabulary teaching in class; the activities in class and their opinions; the interaction in class and their evaluation.

**Table 8 Attitudes to intentional English vocabulary learning in class (question 11 in section 2)**

Item Number	Like very much	Neutral	No
Number	7	11	15
Percentage	21.21%	33.33%	45.45%

Table 8 shows that 45.45% students do not like the traditional way to learn new words. 33.33% students hold a neutral attitude, and only 21.21% students like intentional method. Intentional method is usually planned by teacher, and the whole class is teacher-centered (Ellis 2001:1-46). This lets students feel bored and passive. Furthermore, this kind of method in English vocabulary teaching is usually without contexts, which reduces students' interest in English vocabulary learning. Therefore, teachers cannot only adopt this method to teach vocabulary and should be creative in teaching vocabulary.



**Table 9 Activities in class (questions 12 to 15 in section 2)**

Item	The frequency of organizing activities		To what extent they like these activities			The frequency of attending these activities		The effect of these activities	
	Often	Rare or none	Like	Neutral	No	Often	Rarely or none	Helpful	Rare or no effect
Number	30	3	16	11	6	25	8	25	8
Percentage	90.91%	9.09%	48.48%	33.33%	18.18%	75.76%	24.24%	75.76%	24.24%

Fortunately, more and more English teachers notice the problems in Table 8, so they have used some other activities in classroom. Table 9 describes this change. The first item describes that most teachers organize activities with the percentage of 90.91% in classroom to improve the effect of teaching. The second item is about the students' attitudes to these activities. According to the data, it can be confirmed that most students like them while 18.18% students dislike them. These activities belong to incidental learning methods which are different from the intentional method. As Nation (2001: 232) says, this method focuses on the meaning of texts and stresses the communication in real situation which is practical and beneficial for students, therefore, they have more interest in these kinds of activities.

The third item explores the situation of students' participation in these activities. Because most students like these activities, they are willing to attend them. However, there are still a minority of students who will not attend them with the percentage of 24.24%. There is one key reason for it. Learners rely on advanced English knowledge to fulfill activities in incidental learning which aim to communicate (Laufer and Hulstijn 2001: 1-26). Some of the students have not reached that level so they are reluctant to attend. Due to the results of items 2 and 3, the data of item 4 are also exhilarating. It is about the effects of these activities in students' views. 75.76% students give a high evaluation about these activities' function in English vocabulary learning. They think they are helpful and effective to improve the learning.

In these activities, students get plenty of comprehensible input and make a large amount of comprehensible output which are both vital to enlarge English vocabulary incidentally (Krashen 1989: 440-464, Swain 2005: 471-474). However, ones who do not attend these activities will not receive these effects so they think that there is little effect for them. Considering this situation, teachers should organize some simple activities to let the whole class attend these activities.

**Table 10 Error feedback and its effect in English vocabulary learning (questions 16 and 17 in section 2)**

Item Number	The frequency		The effect	
	Often	Rarely or none	Helpful	Rare or no effect
Number	14	19	24	9
Percentage	42.42%	57.58%	72.73%	27.27%

Table 10 is about the interaction of error feedback in class. The first item is the frequency of error feedback. According to the data, it is obvious that the error feedback does not happen frequently. 57.58% students find it is rare or even none. The interaction of error feedback is an effective way of incidental learning English vocabulary which is pointed out by Vygotsky (1978: 123). Lightbown and Spada also categorize interaction into some kinds (1999: 117). In these types of interaction, the error feedback is the most common, especially from teachers to students. However, as for the class in this study, the outcome is different. There are some reasons for it. Firstly, considering the level of students' English, teachers adopt simple activities; secondly, many students have been asked to prepare for these activities in advance; thirdly, in order to avoid interrupting students' expression, if the mistake is not very severe, teachers will neglect it. Of course, there are still 42.42% students who think teachers usually give them the feedback to correct errors, which means for the key mistake, teachers still will interrupt them or give feedback after students express their ideas. Though the error feedback in the class in this study accounts for 27.27%, 72.73% students still find that it is very useful to help them learn English vocabulary as Vygotsky mentioned (1978: 123). Facing this

circumstance, teachers can make the best of this kind of interaction and help students learn English vocabulary incidentally as much as they can.

According to the analysis of the above three tables, it is very clear that students like incidental method in class more than the intentional method and they also highly appreciate the effect of these activities and interaction from teachers. However, they still need to enhance the English level and enlarge the vocabulary size to attend these activities. On the other hand, teachers also could care for students' improvements, organize more practical activities and give them more interaction.

To sum up the data of the questionnaire, for students, most of them think that learning English vocabulary is important and hard. However, due to lack of enough autonomic study, they have not mastered satisfactory vocabulary size. At the same time, they know learning English vocabulary with incidental methods has the effective function. Of a great number of incidental methods of learning English vocabulary out of class, they prefer to watch English movies and listen to English songs, however, these activities are not enough and incomplete to acquire English vocabulary incidentally. Therefore, they need to spend more time and energy in learning English vocabulary out of class with various incidental ways, taking part in activities in class, and taking note of the unknown English vocabulary when they meet with them attending the autonomic study and planned activities. This can promote them to master English vocabulary and enlarge size incidentally as they acquire the mother tongue.

The data of questionnaire are from the students' views that have been discussed above. Then the next part is concerned with teachers' opinions on English vocabulary teaching.

### **3.2 Interviews**

In order to let interviewed teachers express their attitudes and opinions exactly, these interviews are made in Chinese. Based on the data from the interviews (see Appendix B), the

analysis concerning the 9 research questions listed in method is presented below in 5 aspects.

### **3.2.1 The whole attitude to present situation of English vocabulary teaching**

This involves question 1. Interviewed teachers express their opinions on English vocabulary teaching in their college, such as the importance of English vocabulary teaching, the effect of it, the difficulty of it, the students' effort on it and the perspective of it.

From the four teachers' statements, some conclusions can be drawn out. Firstly, all these teachers think that English teachers in this college pay attention to English vocabulary teaching, and try some ways to improve the effects of teaching. Secondly, all teachers admit that the students' mastering English vocabulary is not so ideal. They spend little time in learning English vocabulary out of class with autonomy. At last, they all have the positive expectation on the English vocabulary teaching.

However, there are still some different opinions from some teachers. One teacher says that students' mastering English vocabulary on listening and writing is especially bad, because students lack the practice of speaking with target language speakers and writing in English which has also been confirmed from students' angle described in Table 7. Another teacher states that she usually teaches important new words in class and leaves some assignments of learning and remembering English vocabulary for students, such as reciting vocabulary from textbooks and dictionaries, reciting original passages. From her statements, she thinks English vocabulary teaching is important and teachers should arrange many tasks out of class for students rather than the autonomic study. The third teacher thinks that her students have a better mastery of English vocabulary in textbooks than vocabulary out of class, which also results in the data of Table 7. The last teacher finds that students are usually interested in new words which are related to their interesting topics. For these kinds of words, they will learn easily because these kinds of words are common in daily life from which they have learned incidentally, after all, learning vocabulary is for communication in true life (Rivers 1984:

3-16).

Based on these conclusions, the researcher finds obviously that more and more English teachers have stressed the importance of vocabulary teaching as the premise of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Lewis 1993:23), which is a good condition to learn English vocabulary successfully. However, on the aspect of students, they need to make larger effort on it and raise the autonomy. Considering the interest and need of students to learn English vocabulary, teacher also should bring into more practical vocabulary to stimulate their learning passion and motivation.

### **3.2.2 The opinion of mastering a word**

Many teachers and students previously think that mastering a word means knowing its meaning, its pronunciation and its form. However, with the usage of vocabulary, more and more teachers and learners find that mastering a word means more. The below summaries of four teachers opinions affirm this.

These four teachers all unanimously think that to master a word is not only the meaning. It should be identified in communication, either in listening and speaking which is about its pronunciation; it should be understood in different contexts, which means the register is necessary to be known. They also stress that words need to be used in real life perfectly involving the grammatical behavior, collocation and frequency. Therefore, the task of teaching English vocabulary is complicated (Schmitt 2000: 5). Only knowing the meaning in dictionaries is not enough, and thus teachers should teach students English vocabulary in concrete contexts and care for other characteristics of a word. That means teaching English vocabulary should be in the comprehensible inputs which will improve incidental learning (Krashen 1989: 440-464).

### **3.2.3 The method of presenting words**

This part of interview is about how teachers present words and expressions to students in oral English class. In China, many teachers are still adopting the traditional method to teach English vocabulary, especially for some senior teachers. Four interviewed teachers give their views.

From the illustration of these four teachers, it can be made out that they like to use the incidental method to teach English vocabulary. They usually present new words and expressions in communicative tasks directly. However, two of them also adopt the intentional method sometimes to present the difficult and low frequent words. It is an effective matching for English vocabulary teaching. Incidental and intentional method are both useful method in teaching English vocabulary, however, they also have some disadvantages, so teachers should use them in balance (Nation: 2001: 232, Schmitt 2000: 121). Other two teachers often use the incidental method because their students have mastered certain English level to be adapted to this method; furthermore, this is the oral English class, the aim of it is to let students speak and listen, therefore teachers give a lot chances for students to use vocabulary in true usage to receive comprehensible input and make comprehensible output which can promote them to acquire English vocabulary incidentally (Krashen 1989:440-464, Schmitt 2000: 150, Swain 2005: 471-474).

### **3.2.4 The activities in class and teachers' roles**

This part describes the popular activities adopted in oral English class and what teachers are doing when students are preparing and doing these activities. Here questions 5 and 6 are analyzed.

Undoubtedly, all these four teachers like to organize activities in class. The first teacher prefers pair work to make dialogue and group work to discuss; second one likes to make dialogue and discussion; third one use almost all kinds of activities. The last one likes

dialogue and role play, especially the role play, which, in her opinion, can raise students' enthusiasm in taking part in activities. They can play and add roles creatively. Moreover, the topics of activities are selected from real life so students can acquire practical vocabulary. Nation (2001:138) claims that the role play provides students with access to generative use of vocabulary. For example, in order to fulfill the role play, students should know of some background knowledge, the problems, the constraints on the solution and the roles in advance and during this process, they get the comprehensible input. During this process, students can learn English vocabulary incidentally. When doing role play, students are encouraged to use the wanted vocabulary which can make students learn them incidentally too. On the other side, teachers also prefer students to do discussion, which is the activity of expressing feelings (Hedge 2000: 58). During this process, students can express themselves with freedom using known words and can make comprehensible output or receive comprehensible input incidentally.

However, two teachers stress that they do not like to use the retelling which is also a kind of effective incidental activities (Nation 2001:138). One teacher thinks that it is too simple for students and has no obvious effect. The other one says that she has tried this method in her class, but this method leads them to recite, so there are not effective for learning English vocabulary incidentally. The concrete reason will be needed to study further in other research.

Sometimes, these four teachers let students appreciate some original English movies which can give students the comprehensible input. When meeting with wonderful expressions, three of them will stop to stress them and explain them. This also provides ways to let students acquire English vocabulary incidentally. However, they have only few times to stop to explain some words, because this can cause students to feel impatient. Many students do not have the habits of taking notes when they meet with new and useful words, which has been shown in Table 6 and they watch movies for fun mostly. One teacher never stops to explain some words, which is too wasteful and troublesome for her.

Before operating these activities, all these four teachers limit the topics, and number of

persons in a group. In addition, they will write some hints and situation on blackboard. Here, they act as the planner, the manager and group organizer rather than the empowerer (Richards & Charles 1996: 105). However, one teacher only gives the general topic and lets students do work in sub-topics creatively. Here, she tries to act as an empoweror, reducing the degree of controlling, though it is not fulfilled completely.

When students are preparing activities, all these four teachers usually go around among them, inquiring their preparation, helping them solve difficulty in vocabulary, expression or others. Doing these, they can know how well the process goes along or whether the students know of the task. In this process, teachers work as the facilitator. However, only one teacher takes part in students' activities sometimes, others rarely or never do that, so they hardly work as a team member, which keeps distance between teachers and students (Richards & Charles 1996: 105). Considering this, some teachers can try the new role to add the interaction with students.

After students presenting the activities, these four teachers all evaluate them and usually use the encouragement. Therefore, they adopt the roles of quality controller and motivator (Richards & Charles 1996: 105). All these roles are important for teachers to promote students to learning English vocabulary incidentally, however, from the statements, some roles are found to be used rarely. In order to control the discipline of class and lead the result to the expected aim, teachers control a lot of in activities.

However, one teacher finds two problems when students are doing discussion: firstly, she finds that students like using Chinese to discuss; secondly, in a group, the talkative ones always dominate the discussion. Therefore, teachers can often take part in them to observe and control the language quality. During arranging the member of a group, teachers can match the dominant and subordinate member averagely.



### 3.2.5 The interaction in class

This part is about interaction between teachers and students involving questions 7, 8 and 9. It includes: the error feedbacks, negotiation and questions from teachers. In oral English class, the interaction is a good way to learn English vocabulary incidentally. The interviewed teachers state their views on this.

According to these four teachers' statements, it is clear that all of them correct students' mistake on every aspect of language, meaning, pronunciation, or grammatical problems after their presentation, because they think mastering a word not only means mastering the meaning of the word which is consistent with Schmitt's opinion(2000: 5). They think if they interrupt them, they will make students nervous. If the mistake does not affect understanding the whole meaning, they even do not correct them, though error feedback is an efficient way to learn English vocabulary incidentally (Hedge 2000: 15). Only one teacher corrects students' mistake directly on every aspect of language. This method can be called explicit correction or metalinguistic feedback. She thinks the effect of it is better than others, because some low English level students almost cannot find the mistake by themselves. Other three teachers like to repeat students' errors or recast the sentences, and let students find them by themselves which will not hurt their confidence. All these methods belong to feedback on error.

Other important interaction is negotiation for incidental English vocabulary learning (Lightbown & Spada 1999: 117). However, this method is used rarely among these four teachers. Three teachers say that if they cannot understand students' expressions, they just let the students repeat or let their deskmates explain them, and will not negotiate with students, which is a waste of time for them. Only one teacher states that if she cannot understand students' expressions, she will let them repeat, and then she can reach the exact meanings by negotiating with the students. She stresses that this can strengthen the impression and has a higher effect on learning English vocabulary. This behavior is confirmed by Nation (2001:123) and Ellis (1990: 107).

All these teachers say that the interaction among students is common, and they usually correct each other directly. Three of them point out that many students will negotiate if they do not understand each other. However, one teacher says that this phenomenon will not happen among students, because many activities are prepared in advance by students.

As far as asking questions is concerned, which involves the comprehensible output and input, four teachers have their own points. One teacher likes to ask students genuine question. She thinks it can be interesting and help students bring more vocabulary in real life. The other two teachers prefer to ask advanced students the genuine questions and ask the low English level students the display questions. When the advanced students are answering this kind of questions, they can bring more modified and comprehensible input which can let all students learn English vocabulary incidentally as Swain says (2005: 471-474). For low English level students, teachers let them answer display questions to consolidate the known words incidentally. The last teacher, however, does not pay much attention to the distinctions between the two kinds of questions. She usually prepares open questions for students which are related to both kinds of questions.

In a word, from the analysis of the interviews, teachers try their best to improve the effects of teaching English vocabulary with both the intentional and incidental methods. They organize varied activities in classes especially pair work and group work, such as making dialogues and discussions. Moreover, they play different parts in these activities. They also make use of interaction in teaching English vocabulary incidentally.

#### **4. Summary**

By adopting the research methods of questionnaire and interview, the study summarizes the following findings.

Firstly, most students admit the importance of English learning and some of them have a positive attitude to acquiring English. However, the difficulty of English vocabulary learning blocks their learning enthusiasm and causes them to fail in enlarging vocabulary size.

Secondly, it is positive that students learn English vocabulary out of class. Most students are interested in English learning and pay attention to it. They also adopt some strategies to promote their English vocabulary learning incidentally, such as watching English movies and listening to English songs. However, there are still some aspects to be improved. They can read extensively, obtain more opportunities to chat with target language speakers and form the habit to keep a diary in English which all contribute to the effects of learning English vocabulary incidentally. Furthermore, they still need to build confidence and form reasonable habits of learning English vocabulary such as taking notes.

Thirdly, most students like incidental methods in class and they highly appreciate the effect of planned activities in class and interaction with teachers. However, they still need to enhance the English level and enlarge the vocabulary size to attend these activities more smoothly and actively, and in turn their active participation helps them gain more harvest of learning English vocabulary incidentally.

Fourthly, teachers have paid attention to English vocabulary teaching, and tried some ways to improve the effects of teaching. However, they think that the students' mastering English vocabulary is not so ideal because they spend little time in learning English vocabulary out of class with autonomic learning. In spite of these problems, teachers still have the positive expectation on the English vocabulary teaching.

Fifthly, these interviewed teachers all think that mastering a word means knowing its meaning, its pronunciation, its form, its register, its grammatical behavior, collocation and frequency. Therefore only knowing the meaning in dictionaries is not enough; they should teach students English vocabulary in concrete contexts and care for the other characteristics of a word.

Sixthly, teachers like to use the incidental method to teach English vocabulary combined with the intentional methods. In their opinions, incidental and intentional methods are both useful methods in teaching English vocabulary. At the same time, all these four teachers like to organize activities in class which belong to pair work or group work. While organizing these activities, they play as many different roles as possible to enhance the effect of teaching vocabulary incidentally.

Lastly, all these four teachers correct students' language mistake after their presentation with different types of error feedback. However, they do not negotiate with students so much considering the English level of them. As for asking questions, they use different questions in accordance with the students' English levels. For advanced students, they use the genuine questions, while the low English level ones are often asked display questions.

All in all, both students and teachers have adopted the incidental methods in learning and teaching English vocabulary and varied activities are used. However, there is plentiful room for development to make full use of incidental study.

## **5. Pedagogical implications**

By answering the research questions, this study is expected to shed new light on future English vocabulary teaching in colleges in China. Based on the data of the questionnaire and interviews, some pedagogical implications are put forward in the following.

Firstly, teachers should stimulate students' enthusiasm of autonomic learning. According to the questionnaire, only a part of students are found to like English learning and spend a lot of time on autonomic study, so teachers could make efforts to motivate the enthusiasm for it. For example, teachers can bring some interesting materials into students' daily life, such as humorous English stories, classic English movies, or English songs. They can still encourage students to take notes of the useful expressions to acquire incidentally.

Secondly, teachers should combine intentional approaches with incidental approaches. In the study, students express that they do not like the intentional approaches to learning English vocabulary, for example, the formal instructions on vocabulary. Therefore teachers can use explicit instruction of words then they adopt the incidental approaches to lead students to broaden understanding of collocations, additional meaning senses and other higher-level knowledge (Schmitt 2000: 137).

Thirdly, teachers should organize more activities based on students' interest. Referring to the interviews, teachers admit that students acquire the vocabulary which is related to their interested topics easily and quickly. Therefore, based on this, teachers can let students imitate the scenes which they are interested in to consolidate topic-related vocabulary. For example, the scenes of students' daily life, entertainments and so on. At the same time, most teachers only like to use making dialogue, discussion and role play. Therefore, they can adopt other types of activities to stimulate students' interest and promote them to take part in them.

Fourthly, teachers should offer more error feedback and improve peer interaction. This research finds that it is obvious that most students think it is helpful to be given error feedback in learning English vocabulary incidentally while in fact, teachers do not use error feedback so much. Therefore, teachers should take notice of students' utterances and correct their mistakes with various approaches in appropriate context and time. From the interviews, most teachers say that the peer interaction is also an effective way of learning English vocabulary incidentally. According to this, teachers should organize more activities to give students the opportunities of communicating with each other.

Fifthly, teachers should play more kinds of roles in activities. The results indicate that teachers usually neglect the function of empowerer and team member. Therefore, for the former, they can give more freedom in activities centered around students, for example, they can let students choose the topics by themselves which will stimulate their passion to do them. For the latter, teachers can take part of students' activities as a member which can provide

more comprehensible or modified input to students.

## **6 Conclusions**

The present study investigates whether incidental methods are used in learning English vocabulary and what kinds of incidental strategies are used by non-English major students at colleges in China, and in teaching English vocabulary by their oral English teachers. Based on the data from questionnaire and interviews, the study finds out that the incidental English vocabulary learning methods are adopted by both students and teachers. Students prefer such strategies as watching English movies and listening to English songs. Teachers tend to teaching English vocabulary by organizing role play and discussion, and stress the effect of interaction between teachers and students. Accordingly, some relevant pedagogical implications are put forward.

However, there are some limitations to this study. Firstly, in order to elicit accurate information, both the questionnaire and interviews are conducted in Chinese version, and then they are translated into English. Therefore, some language points will be ambiguous and strange. Secondly, the number of students and teachers in this study is small. There are only 33 students and 4 teachers.

In a word, this study has sought to answers to research questions, however, due to the limitations of the study, the results cannot be generalized. Therefore, there **is** still a large amount of research to be further conducted.

## List of references

- Aitchison, J. (2003) *Words in the Mind: An Introduction to the Mental Lexicon*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Benson, M. (1985) Collocations and Idioms. In R. Ilson (Ed.), *Dictionaries, Lexicography and Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon. 61-68.
- Boyd Zimmerman, C. (1997a) Do Reading and Interactive Vocabulary Instruction Make a Difference? An Empirical Study. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(1), 121-140.
- Boyd Zimmerman, C. (1997b) Historical Trends in Second Language Vocabulary Instruction. In J. Coady & T. Huckin (Eds.), *Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 5-19.
- Carthy, M. Mc. (1990) *Vocabulary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Coady, J. (1997) L2 Vocabulary Acquisition: A Synthesis of the Research. In J. Coady & T. Huckin (Eds.), *Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 273-290.
- Elley, W. (1989) Vocabulary Acquisition from Listening to Stories. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 24 (2), 174-189.
- Ellis, R. (1990) *Instructed Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Ellis, R. (2001) Investigating Form-Focused Instruction. *Language Learning*, 51, 1-46.
- Ellis, R., H. Basturkman & S. Loewen (2002) Doing Focus-on-Form. *System*, 30, 419-432.
- Groot, P. J. M. (2000) Computer Assisted Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition. *Language Learning and Technology*, 4 (1), 60-81.
- Hedge, T. (2000) *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hulstijn, J. H. (1993) When Do Foreign-Language Readers Look up the Meaning of Unfamiliar Words? The Influence of Task and Learner Variables. *Modern Language Journal*, 77 (2), 139-147.
- Hulstijn, J. H. (2001) Intentional and Incidental Second Language Vocabulary Learning: A Reappraisal of Elaboration, Rehearsal and Automaticity. In P. Robinson (Ed.),

- Cognition and Second Language Instruction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 258-286.
- Hulstijn, J. H., M. Hollander & T. Greidanus (1996) Incidental Vocabulary Learning by Advanced Foreign Language Students: The Influence of Marginalglosses, Dictionary Use, and Reoccurrence of Unknown Words. *Modern Language Journal*, 80 (3), 327-339.
- Krashen, S. D. (1982) *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Pergamon Press Ltd.
- Krashen, S. D. (1989) We Acquire Vocabulary and Spelling by Reading: Additional Evidence for the Input Hypothesis. *The Modern Language Journal*, 73(4), 440-464.
- Laufer, B. (1997) What Is in a Word That Makes It Hard to Easy: Some Intralexical Factors That Affect the Learning of Words. In N. Schmitt and M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition, and Pedagogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 140-155.
- Laufer, B. & J. H. Hulstijn (2001) Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition in a Second Language: The Construct of Task-Induced Involvement. *Applied Linguistics*, 22 (1), 1-26.
- Lewis, M. (1993) *The Lexical Approach*. London: Language Teaching Publications.
- Lightbown, Patsy M. & N. Spada (1999) *How Languages are Learned*. 2 uppl. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Little, D. (1995) Learning as Dialogue: The Dependence of Learner Autonomy on Teacher Autonomy. *System*, 23(2), 175-181.
- Loewen, S. (2005) Incidental Focus on Form and Second Language Learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. 27(3), 361-386.
- Meara, P. (1994) Second Language Acquisition: Lexis. In Asher, R. E. (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford: Pergamon. 7, 3726-3728.
- Nation, I. S. P. (1990) *Teaching and Learning vocabulary*. New York: Newbury House.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001) *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Newton, J. (1995) Task-based interaction and incidental vocabulary learning: a case study. *Second Language Research*, 11, 159-177.



- Parry, K. (1997) Vocabulary and Comprehension: Two portraits. In J. Coady & T. Huckin (Eds.), *Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 55-68.
- Piaget, J. (1999) *Play Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood*. Routledge Press.
- Read, J. (2000) *Assessing Vocabulary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. & L. Charles (1996) *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rivers, W. M. (1987) Interaction as the Key to Teaching Language for Communication. In Rivers, W. M. (Ed.), *Interactive Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 3-16.
- Schmitt, N. (2000) *Vocabulary in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swain, M. (1985) Communicative Competence: Some Roles of Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output in Its Development. In S. Gass and C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in Second Language Acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House. 235-256.
- Swain, M. (2005) The Output Hypothesis: Theory and Research. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Routledge Press. 471-474.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wolters, C.A., P. R. Pintrich & S. A. Karabenick (2003) *Assessing Academic Self-Regulated Learning. Paper Presented at the Conference on Indicators of Positive Development: Definitions, Measures, and Prospective Validity*. Washington, DC.

## Appendix A: Questionnaire

A questionnaire about strategies of learning English vocabulary

Major:            Class:            Gender:            Age:

Dear:

I am very thankful for your participation in this investigation. This questionnaire aims to make research about the strategies of learning English vocabulary in colleges for non-English major students.

### Section 1

1. Do you like English?  
a. very much    b. common    c. a little    d. no
2. Do you think that learning English is very important?  
a. very important    b. important    c. common    d. no
3. What do you think of vocabulary learning?  
a. easy    b. common    c. difficult    d. very difficult
4. How long do you spend in learning English out of classroom in autonomy every day?  
a. more than 2 hours    b. 1-2 hours    c. about 1 hour    d. less than 1 hour
5. Are you satisfied with your vocabulary size?  
a. quite    b. fairly    c. not    d. have no idea



- a. very much    b. average    c. a little    d. no
12. Have your English teacher adopted some activities in classes, such as presentation, retelling, pair work, group work, role play, discussion?
- a. yes    b. sometimes    c. rarely    d. no
13. Do you like these kinds of activities?
- a. very much    b. average    c. a little    d. no
14. What do you think of these activities for English vocabulary learning?
- a. very efficient    b. sometimes helpful  
c. usually invalid    d. totally a waste of time
15. Have you attended these activities actively?
- a. yes    b. sometimes    c. rarely    d. no
16. Do your English teachers or partners interrupt and correct you when you make mistakes?
- a. yes    b. sometimes    c. rarely    d. no
17. What do you think of these kinds of interruption or correction for English vocabulary learning?
- a. very helpful and will be retained  
b. sometimes helpful and act as a sign of reminder of learning vocabulary  
c. a bit helpful and will be forgotten after some time  
d. totally invalid and will be forgotten at once

## **Appendix B: Summaries of interviews**

### Question 1:

Teacher A: The method of teaching English vocabulary in this college is good. It is a traditional way which is fit for students here. Maybe sometimes teachers can try other new methods. The situation of students' mastering English vocabulary is not so good especially on the listening and writing. Moreover, there are few students learning and remembering English vocabulary with autonomy. If students can spend more time on it, the situation of English vocabulary learning is positive.

Teacher B: English teachers in this college pay a lot of attention to English vocabulary teaching. They teach important new words in class and leave some assignments of learning and remembering English vocabulary for students, such as reciting vocabulary from textbooks and dictionaries, reciting original passages. For students words are practical and in contexts easy to learn. Mastering English vocabulary is not only teachers' job but also needs students learn by themselves. In general, the situation is hopeful.

Teacher C: English vocabulary is very important in learning English successfully. Students have a good master of English vocabulary in textbooks, however, as college students, they should learn other vocabulary by themselves out of classes. This aspect they have not done so good. Moreover, they are not the English major students, so they are not interested in English learning. Though the situation is not so bad, there is still a long way to go.

Teacher D: English vocabulary is related to the oral English closely and very important. The situation is good mostly. Students are usually interested in new words which are related to their interesting topics. For these kinds of words, they will learn easily and learn with autonomy. However, some students do not make so much effort on learning English vocabulary. If they do, the situation of English vocabulary teaching is better.

## Question 2

Teacher A: To master a word there are 3 characteristics: students can distinguish in listening exercises; they can understand the register in different contexts in reading; they can use it in writing correctly.

Teacher B: From the facial aspect, mastering a word means students can read, recite, and dictate. From the deep class, it should be used in real life.

Teacher C: Mastering a word is not only to know its meaning but also the usage of it in different contexts.

Teacher D: Mastering a word includes its pronunciation, grammatical behaviors, Chinese meaning, and usage in true life.

## Questions 3 and 4

Teacher A: She does not present new word in traditional way. She usually presents new words and expressions in communication tasks, for example, having class of *saying goodbye*, she firstly asks some questions to lead in then lets students to say expressions of goodbye they have known. During this process, some useful and new words will be met with, and then she will explain them.

Teacher B: She uses both the intentional and incidental methods in presenting new words. In the part of instruction about topic and task, she is used to listing the relevant new words on blackboard and explains them. In the part of operation, for example, discussion, when students meet with some problems of vocabulary, she will solve them and by the way explain them. This method can be used in the advanced students.

Teacher C: She almost does not explain new words with traditional way. She usually brings into new words through oral practice and watching original movies.

Teacher D: She usually adopts the incidental method to teach English vocabulary, and she like to present new words in usage. Of course, if some words are too difficult, she also lists them on blackboard and explains them firstly. Because the textbook is simple, this kind of phenomenon is not so much.

Questions 5 and 6

Teacher A: She usually use the pair work to make dialogue and group work to discuss. When students are preparing activities, she often looks around them, write some hints and situation on blackboard, go around to help students solve some problems in words, sentences. She limits the number of people and topic of activities. If there is not enough member, she will take part in them as a member. After activities, she gives them some feedback and encourages them or point out some suggestions. Sometimes she also let students watch some English movies, but she has only few times to stop to explain some words, which causes the complaints from students.

Teacher B: In her class, she likes to let students make dialogue and discussion. They are could be pair work or group work. She orders the numbers of persons and lets students choose members by themselves. Usually she give the general topic and let students do work in sub-topics creatively. When students are preparing work, she goes around them. If students have some trouble, she will help them, all problems such as words, phrases. However, she rarely takes part in students' activities as a member. After activities, she gives them some feedback and encourages them. When students are doing discussion, she finds two questions: firstly, she finds that students like using Chinese to discuss; secondly, in a group, the talkative ones always dominate the discussion. Sometimes, she also will let students watch original movies, and she often stop to explain some useful words though it can cause students to feel impatient.

Teacher C: She usually organizes some activities in class. She likes to use the making dialogue, discussion, group work, and role play. She almost does not use the retelling which is too easy for students she thinks. She orders the number of people and gives students the right

to choose members. Usually she limits the topics to students. After activities, she gives them some feedback and encourages them. Sometimes she also let students watch some English movies, but she never stops to explain some words, which is too wasteful and troublesome for her.

Teacher D: She likes to let students make dialogue and do role play. The former one is usually the pair work. The latter one is the group work. Role play can raise students' enthusiasm in taking part in activities. They can play and add roles creatively. She will give students outlines, hints, situations, roles in advance. Sometimes she organizes the discussion; however, she does not let students retell which promotes them to recite. All number of persons and topic are limited by her and the members of pair and group are decided by students. When students doing activities, she goes around among students, asks students' difficulty and thinking, and answers students' questions, such as how to use a word or how to express a phrase. Doing these, she can know how does the process go along or do students know of the task. She never takes part in students' activities. After activities, she gives them some feedback and encourages them. Sometimes she also let students watch some English movies, but she has only few times to stop to explain some words, which causes the complaints from students.

Question 7, 8 and 9

Teacher A: When students make mistake during presenting, if this mistake does not affect the meaning and the whole expression is fluent, she does not interrupt and correct them. Some students find the mistake by themselves but cannot correct them, and then she will help them to correct them. She likes to recast and let students repeat slowly the mistake. She does not love to point out the mistake directly which will hurt students' confidence. When students can not understand her sentences, she will repeat them again slowly or consider changing the way of expression. If she does not understand students' expressions, she will let their deskmates explain them, and won't negotiate with students, which is a waste of time for her. When asking them questions, she usually asks them the genuine questions.

Teacher B: She won't interrupt students if they make mistake during expressing. She will



point out their mistake after they have finished with the direct way. Sometimes she will just repeat the mistake and let students find out by themselves. When students cannot answer questions she will give them the hints to let them speak as much as possible or find others to provide help. When they cannot understand each other, they can negotiate the meaning, the usage. She likes to ask advanced students the genuine questions and ask the common students the display questions.

Teacher C: When students cannot express themselves, she usually gives them some hints and encourage as much as possible. However, she does not often interrupt students and correct their mistake. Because in her class, the aim is to let students speak regardless the mistake. When they cannot understand each other, they will be asked to repeat or she will repeat. This phenomenon won't happen among students, because many activities are prepared in advance by students. She uses both the genuine and display questions. The latter are used more for common students.

Teacher D: She often correct students' mistake after they finishing expressing or it will make student nervous. Generally speaking, she always repeats the mistake, reminder students and then let them find the mistake by themselves. She usually correct them the mistake of pronunciation, grammar, using words or collocation. It is effective for students in future. Sometimes students will correct each other with direct way. When students cannot answer questions, she usually gives them some clues and encourage as much as possible or let others help them. When she cannot understand students' expressions, she will let them repeat, and then she will tell them her understanding to negotiate with them. About asking questions, she thinks she uses the both questions. She usually prepares open questions for students.