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**Addressing EFL Teachers' Cognitions and Practices  
About Oral Interaction Through Professional Learning  
Opportunities in Chile**

**Paloma Calderon Avendaño**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
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## **Abstract**

Oral interaction is a central component of the most recent reform to the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum in Chile. Teachers in elementary schools play a critical role in the successful implementation of this curriculum innovation yet little is known about what these teachers think, know and believe about oral interaction and how it is promoted in their classrooms. This research aims to address these gaps by investigating the cognitions about oral interaction and the teaching practices of EFL teachers in Santiago, Chile. The study also examines the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the cognitions and practices of the teachers. Using Borg's framework for research into language teacher cognition and education (Borg, 2006), this study adopted a mixed-methods design implemented in two phases.

In Phase 1 data were collected from an online questionnaire sent to teachers in public and semi-private elementary schools in the metropolitan area of Santiago to investigate their existing cognitions about oral interaction. From the 95 respondents, eight participants volunteered to be part of Phase 2 where data were gathered from self-reported data as well as classroom observations. The participants decided to be part of one of two different forms of professional learning. Data from the two groups were analyzed to examine the influence of professional learning opportunities on the cognitions and practices of the eight teachers.

Findings from Phase 1 indicated that over half of the respondents considered that oral interaction was a one-way process of communication and used an approach that did not include oral interaction or communication. This seemed to contradict the teachers' indication of the importance of listening and speaking skills. Findings from Phase 2 suggested that most teachers thought that promoting oral interaction was not feasible in

elementary school contexts although their cognitions were not informed by theoretical or pedagogical knowledge of Communicative Language Teaching. In general, these cognitions were predominantly grounded on their experiential knowledge gained in grammar-oriented lessons. Classroom observations indicated that oral interaction was rarely promoted.

The findings of the second part of Phase 2 indicated that the professional learning sessions had a positive influence on the cognitions and practices of the teachers from the learning sessions group. Teachers attempted to include these new cognitions in their practices and some students were immediately responsive to their teachers' new practices by attempting to initiate interaction. In contrast, the focus group interview did not influence positively the cognitions about oral interaction or the practices of the teachers.

In conclusion, the existing cognitions about oral interaction of the teachers in general seemed to negatively influence their decisions and practices to promote oral interaction. However, professional learning opportunities helped teachers challenge these cognitions and prior experiences with theories and strategies to promote oral interaction to young students and concrete practice opportunities. This study contributes to the study of language teacher cognition in a key area for the development of communicative language: oral interaction. Findings from the study offer insights into the influence of teachers' cognitions on the implementation of curriculum innovations to those in charge of language teacher education and language teaching policy in Chile and other contexts.

## **Dedication**

To my beloved daughter Isabella:

Only those who strive to challenge a goal and work toward it at their own pace and their own way; only those who keep trying, no matter how many times they may fail, can develop unshakable confidence in themselves. Self-confidence is synonymous with an invincible will. (Daisaku Ikeda)

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## **List of Abbreviations**

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
I group	Interview group
LS group	Learning Sessions group
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
L1	First language
L2	Second/foreign language
CF	Correction Feedback

## Prelude

*Every teacher I have met is the best teacher they know how to be. But unless we support our teachers with professional learning opportunities, they will act in isolation of the wider knowledge that research is making available and which could enhance their effectiveness*

— (Young, 2007, p. x)

I had the best teachers of English at school, although I now realise that I did not learn English. I claim that I did not learn English because what I “learned” did not reflect what language students were expected to do according to the curriculum for English as a foreign language (EFL) in Chile at that time, that is to say, to *communicate* in English. My teachers made me feel that what I was studying was important and relevant for my future and they were mainly responsible for my decision to become a teacher of English.

Learning to communicate in English, particularly orally, for me was the most difficult aspect of my teacher education at university because I rarely had had opportunities to speak or interact in English when I was at school. I realised that most of my classmates at university were used to listening to the teachers conducting the class in English and interacting with them in English. However, I recall that I cried all afternoon after my first lecture at university because I barely understood what my teacher said during the lesson and I was not able to introduce myself in English. The difference between these classmates and me was that they had studied English in private schools, while I did so in a public school.

I feel very fortunate, nonetheless, because I had the opportunity to learn to communicate in English after studying it for four years at university. However, I often thought about my classmates at school who loved English and believed that they

finished school “learning” English as I did, but like me they did not. Moreover, I wondered why my English teachers at school were not able to help us develop oral skills if they really cared about us and wanted us to learn. This question was the beginning of my endeavour to understand teaching and learning from the teachers’ perspectives, particularly those who teach in public and semi-private schools.

In 2010, an English standard test was administered to all Chilean students aged 16, in order to measure their reading and listening comprehension skills. The test showed that only 2% of students who attended public schools, and 9% of the students from semi-private schools, were able to meet the minimum required level (A2) established by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages, after studying English for seven years. In contrast, 90% of the students who studied English at private schools met level A2 (Ministerio de Educación, 2010). According to language educational experts, this outcome was attributable to the fact that English teachers in public and semi-private schools generally teach English in Spanish. The news inspired me to do something to understand public and semi-private EFL teachers, and also to attempt to find potential solutions to help them promote oral communicative and interactional competencies in their lessons. After all, all students, without exception, deserve the same opportunities to learn English at school in Chile and teachers deserve opportunities for professional learning to help them achieve this goal.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

The present research study examines the cognitions about oral interaction of a sample of Chilean English as a Foreign Language (EFL) elementary teachers and the relationship to their classroom teaching practices. Cognition is “an inclusive term referring to the complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs that language teachers draw on in their work” (Borg, 2015a, p. 321). The study also investigates the quantity and quality of oral language and oral interaction that occur in the teachers’ classrooms and the influence of teacher learning opportunities on their cognitions and teaching practices.

The current chapter, designed to frame the study, is organised into six sections. Section one provides the rationale for this research while section two outlines the three bodies of literature that inform the research which will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter (Chapter 2, Review of the Literature). Section three presents the context of the study. Section four elaborates the study’s significance. Section five presents the research questions. Finally, section six provides an outline of the organisation of the thesis.

### **1.1 Rationale**

English has become a global language and thus governments of non-English speaking countries have been concerned with introducing English as a compulsory subject starting in elementary education. The rationale for teaching English as a foreign language to young students, that is, children from 7 to 11 years old, arose from an assumption that teaching English has a value for education and employment. English has increasingly been used as a medium of instruction in universities and has enabled people all over the world to connect for business, educational and technological reasons (Shin & Crandall, 2014).

In order to prepare and enable students to respond to these communication demands, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has become central to the aims of diverse EFL language curricula for young students internationally (Ahn, 2011; Garton, Copland, & Burns, 2011; Littlewood, 2007; Nunan, 2003). One of the most important components of CLT is oral interaction, which enables teachers to afford students greater opportunities to communicate and interact in the classroom in order for students to learn a second or foreign language (Garton, Copland, & Burns, 2011). Evidence from a number of studies, however, suggests that oral interaction is rarely promoted in the EFL classroom (e.g., Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Pinter, 2011; Xie, 2010). Pinter (2011) describes the reality of EFL young students classrooms as follows:

Young students are not exposed to the target language sufficiently to learn to participate in meaningful communication. They may learn songs and rhymes, some basic vocabulary and carefully rehearsed dialogues, but they rarely progress further, and typically they are unable to express their own meanings spontaneously. (p. 91)

Although, widely acknowledged that “if teachers are to implement an innovation, it is essential that they have a thorough understanding of the principles and practices of the proposed change” (Carless, 1999, p. 355), a concern has been expressed that teachers do not have a clear understanding of oral interaction (Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Walsh, 2013). Furthermore, while it is well accepted that teachers are active decision makers (Borg, 2006), responsible for shaping and enhancing oral interaction in the classroom, little is known about their cognitions about oral interaction and their own approaches to teaching English. Neither it is known if there are differences between curricula innovations and teachers’ actual teaching practices, nor about the nature of teacher learning opportunities needed to enhance oral interaction (Thoms, 2012), especially in elementary school contexts (Borg, 2015a; Wilden & Porsch, 2017).

Chile is one of the countries that has incorporated CLT in the foreign language curriculum. It first appeared in the language curriculum from 1990 to 1998 (McKay, 2003). Under this curriculum, students studied the English language for six years, beginning in year 7 of elementary school (12 year olds) to the end of secondary school (which corresponds to year 12, 17 year olds). However, the Chilean Ministry of Education replaced CLT in 1998 with an approach based on the receptive skills (reading and listening). The Ministry argued that, due to cultural and economic globalisation, it was vital for Chilean people to have opportunities for developing linguistic competence oriented to reading and listening comprehension in English (Ministerio de Educación, 2004). The focus of language learning shifted away from speaking and writing because the Chilean people had few opportunities to interact with native speakers due to Chile's geographical, social and economic situation (Ministerio de Educación, 2004). The shift specified that 80% of the curriculum should be devoted to developing reading and listening comprehension and only 20% to developing speaking and writing skills. Fariás' study (2000) surveyed 64 EFL secondary teachers in Santiago revealing that 78 per cent of the teachers who were surveyed considered that developing oral skills was not feasible in the Chilean context. The data revealed that these EFL teachers supported the decision of the Ministry of Education to exclude CLT within the language curriculum.

Similarly, McKay (2003) investigated the self-reported practices and beliefs about CLT of 50 EFL elementary and secondary teachers in Santiago and other cities such as Copiapó and La Serena, concluding that the Ministry of Education and EFL teachers agreed that CLT was not appropriate for the Chilean context. Among the reasons that EFL teachers gave in rejecting CLT were large classes, lack of physical space, lack of time and discipline problems.



In 2004, a national diagnostic test for competence in English was conducted on a representative sample of students (1000 students across 299 schools) from year 8 in elementary school and year 12 in secondary school. The test was conducted to provide a snapshot of the situation of the English learning in Chilean schools and to offer a baseline for the Ministry to measure future progress (Matear, 2008). The results of the diagnostic test revealed that 77 per cent of students in year 8 and 49 per cent in year 12 were not able to achieve the most basic level of performance according to the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) levels. Furthermore, despite evidence of an upward trend in competence between elementary and secondary students, only four per cent of secondary students achieved a level of English that could allow them to study abroad or find a future job.

The same year, the Chilean Ministry of Education increased the compulsory study of English language from six to eight years, from year 5 of elementary school (10 year old students) to the end of secondary school. It also defined levels of English in order to evaluate the proficiency levels achieved by students and teachers. The levels were aligned with international standards and, in particular, with the levels defined and developed by the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) (English Opens Doors Programme, 2011). The CEFR provides a self-assessment grid that is divided into five skills: listening, reading, speaking, oral interaction, and writing. According to the grid, beginner students who have an elementary level (A1) in L2 oral interaction

can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help them formulate what they are trying to say. They can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24)

Although CEFR prioritises the use of oral interaction from the first stage, the emphasis for learning English in Chile remained focused on the development of the receptive skills (Ministerio de Educación, 2004).

In 2010 and 2012, the Chilean Ministry of Education administered standard English tests to all students aged 16 (year 11) in order to measure students' listening and reading comprehension skills. The results of these tests showed that after seven years of studying the English language, a small percentage of the students who attended public<sup>1</sup> and semi-private schools<sup>2</sup> obtained the minimum required level established by the CEFR to comprehend English (A2). The poor results in English language proficiency were attributable to the EFL teachers' methodology in the classroom which relied heavily on teaching English in Spanish (English Opens Doors [EOD] Programme, 2011; Ministerio de Educación, 2010).

To address this problem, the Ministry of Education re-introduced the CLT approach as the core of the elementary and secondary school EFL curricula in 2012. The purpose of this reform was to enable students to use English for communicative purposes in order to respond to global communication demands (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). The new curriculum proposes learning objectives that involve teachers providing students with opportunities to develop and integrate the four language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) through authentic and meaningful communicative tasks. The curriculum expects that such tasks will help students, especially year 5 students introduced to English for the first time, to gain confidence to deal with the language in the classroom. Although the curriculum expects students to participate in a range of meaningful activities and tasks that represent contextualised communicative situations which promote oral interaction (Ministerio de

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<sup>1</sup> 2% and 4% respectively (Agencia de la Calidad de la Educación, 2014; Ministerio de Educación, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> 9% and 15% respectively (Agencia de la Calidad de la Educación, 2014; Ministerio de Educación, 2010).

Educación, 2012), it does not include oral interaction as a skill, as CEFR does. It is argued in this thesis that having a clear separation of speaking and oral interaction is pivotal because there is a difference between developing students' skills to produce accurate, fluent and appropriate linguistic forms (speaking) from developing skills to be able to interact with other students or the teacher (oral interaction). Preparing fluent and accurate students is not sufficient when the endeavour of CLT is to create effective communicators that are able to interpret and negotiate meaning (Savignon, 2005).

At the time of the re-introduction of CLT, little empirical research had been conducted to examine the cognitions about CLT and oral interaction of elementary EFL teachers, especially those who taught the youngest students (year 5 and 6), to understand the extent to which teachers were willing and prepared to meet the expectations of the new curriculum. The few studies that existed (Fariás, 2000; McKay, 2003), as already discussed, had concluded that CLT was not appropriate for the Chilean context. Díaz, Martínez, Roa, and Sanhueza's study (2010) was the only empirical research published at that time to show that teachers had a strong orientation towards an eclectic approach to teaching English where communication was essential. Díaz and colleague's study, which was funded by the Ministry of Education, investigated the self-reported practices of 10 secondary EFL teachers in Concepción although teachers' actual teaching practices were not examined.

In Chile, it is widely accepted that oral interaction in L2 is rarely promoted in public and semi-private schools (McKay, 2003). This view was clearly taken by the Ministry of Education who concluded that the poor results in the two standard tests of 2010 and 2012 were attributable to the lack of use of L2 in the classroom. No empirical studies were found to support the claim, however, either in elementary or secondary contexts. Neither is there any research to establish what practices the EFL teachers are actually using in the classroom

to promote L2 oral interaction. To tailor future teacher professional learning activities to help teachers improve their practices, this information is needed.

It is widely accepted that top-down approaches to educational reform, in this case to specifying the L2 curriculum and how L2 will be taught are unlikely to meet the desired educational goals because teachers' perspectives are not considered (e.g., Borg, 2015b; Littlewood, 2014; Zhu & Shu, 2017). Examining teachers' cognitions about curriculum innovations and their own approach to teaching English is considered crucial; teachers are active decision-makers and not simply mechanical implementers of prescriptions made by external people (Borg, 2006).

An examination of EFL Chilean teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and their own approach to teaching English as well as teachers' teaching practices, would appear to be essential to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the current language curriculum. Firstly, there is a need to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs, assumptions and perceptions about oral interaction and communication to understand the extent to which they are likely to accept any shift of emphasis in the curriculum. Secondly, it is essential to investigate teachers' understandings about oral interaction to establish whether they are sufficiently knowledgeable about oral interaction to implement it effectively. Thirdly, an investigation into teachers' actual teaching practices appears necessary to ascertain to what extent they use L2 in their oral language interactions in the classroom, and the kinds of interaction that occur in L2. Fourthly, there is a need to establish the processes of in-service teachers' professional learning for oral interaction, and to understand what influences changes in cognitions and teaching practices in the Chilean context.

This overview of the Chilean situation suggests that research on teachers' cognitions about oral interaction, their teaching practices and teacher learning is needed, particularly in the light of past findings (Farías, 2000; McKay, 2003) that teachers rejected CLT and oral

interaction because they felt it did not reflect the Chilean context. The present study argues that studying EFL teachers' cognitions in elementary school contexts is crucial to understand how teachers can be best supported to achieve the learning goals established by the curriculum.

The following subsection provides an overview of the three bodies of research that inform the present study in the Chilean context. These are, teachers' cognitions, oral interaction and teacher learning.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

In this study, three bodies of research came together through the lens of the teacher cognition framework proposed by Borg (2006). These are teacher cognition, oral interaction and teacher learning. The first, teachers' cognitions, gained greater currency in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning as the view of teachers changed from being "mechanical implementers" to "active decision makers" (Borg, 2006, p. 7). Research in this area of study indicates that teachers' cognitions provide a basis for action (Freeman, 2002), influence teachers' decision making (Arnett & Turnbull, 2008) as well as their acceptance of new approaches and curriculum reforms (Borg, 2009). This area of inquiry also points out the influence of contextual factors (Basturkmen, 2012), prior learning experiences as students and student teachers, and professional learning on teachers' cognitions and their practices (Borg, 2003b, 2011; Phipps, 2010).

The current international conversations among researchers in this area point out that previous research did not have a justifiable purpose for conducting studies and used unsophisticated methodological approaches (Borg, 2016). For example, a great number of studies examined teachers' beliefs about a specific aspect of SLA or EFL but failed to provide a strong argument, supported by an underlying theoretical or practical rationale to explain how an envisioned gap in the literature would contribute to the field of language

teaching. Similarly, the methodologies adopted in such studies commonly used solely questionnaires (Barnard & Burns, 2012; Borg, 2016). Furthermore, this research largely focused on specific individual mental dimensions such as beliefs or knowledge which do not fully exemplify the complexity of teachers' work (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). Within this field, different aspects of SLA and EFL, such as grammar, reading, and writing, have been studied, but, teachers' cognitions about oral interaction have been received scant attention.

The second body of research concerns oral interaction. With the advent of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, oral interaction became an essential component of language teaching (Littlewood, 1981; Nunan, 1989; Savignon, 2005). Oral interaction is considered to facilitate L2 learning (Long, 1996). The present study adopts the definition of oral interaction provided by the CEFR since the Chilean EFL curriculum established this framework as a referent to determine the levels of proficiency in English of elementary students.

In interaction at least two individuals participate in an oral exchange in which production and reception alternate and may in fact overlap in oral communication. Not only may two interlocutors be speaking and yet listening to each other simultaneously. Even where turn-taking is strictly respected, the listener is generally already forecasting the remainder of the speaker's message and preparing a response. Learning to interact thus involves more than learning to receive and to produce utterances. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 14)

While oral interaction is fundamental to achieving L2 development and learning, there are claims in the literature that language teachers do not understand what oral interaction entails (Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Walsh, 2013). Furthermore, little is known about the nature of language teacher learning processes that may enhance oral interaction (e.g., Borg, 2006, 2015a; Thoms, 2012).

This connects us to the last body of research involved in this study, which is teacher learning. Language teacher learning is defined as a complex non-linear and “gradual process of proceduralising aspects of formal and experiential knowledge gained from teacher education and classroom experience mediated by beliefs and contextual constraints” (Phipps, 2010, p. 23).

Within the body of research on language teacher learning, the most current and salient gaps identified were found in Wilden & Porsch’s book (2017) that brought together studies conducted by a number of researchers from various disciplines including EFL education. The authors address the urgent need to investigate what is really happening in elementary EFL classrooms and what its effects are. They also state that there is a great need to investigate teachers’ cognitions, the influence of cognitions on their practices and whether cognitions and practices may be influenced by teacher learning opportunities.

While such concerns in the three bodies of literature are relatively well established, there are few empirical studies that have addressed these concerns and examined them empirically to find possible solutions. This study, therefore, attempted to take an initial step through providing evidence of the interplay between EFL teachers’ cognitions about oral interaction and teacher learning in the Chilean EFL elementary school context. The next section presents further details of the broader educational context of the study.

### **1.3 Context of the Study**

Since this study is focused on the Chilean context, this section provides background information about the country’s educational system, curriculum and current EFL teacher learning initiatives. Three types of schools exist in Chile, namely, public, semi-private and private schools. Public schools are run by town councils and provide students free education; semi-private schools have private owners but receive government subsidies. These schools used to be fee-paying (at lower rates than private schools) but a law established that these

schools would be free from 2015. Private schools are completely run by their private owners and are free to set their fees. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2011 stated that the average income of the wealthiest ten per cent of the Chilean population was 26.5 times greater than the poorest ten per cent (British Council, 2015). Despite efforts to eradicate poverty through increased access to education for the lowest socio-economic sectors, private schools continue to offer a quality of education that is considerably higher than that provided in public and semi-private schools.

Schooling in Chile is compulsory for children aged six to 17; it consists of elementary school which comprises eight school years (1 to 8) with students starting schooling at age six and finishing at age 13, and secondary school, which includes four school years (9 to 12), with students starting schooling at age 14 and finishing at age 17.

As far as teacher qualifications are concerned, teachers have to complete five years study to obtain an undergraduate qualification. This qualification entitles teachers to teach in elementary schools (if they studied general elementary education) or in secondary schools (if they studied a specific subject such as English or Maths). Teachers who specialised in specific subjects can teach in elementary schools with special permission from the Ministry of Education.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education created the English Opens Doors (EOD) programme with responsibility for EFL and for improving the level of English for students in public and semi-private schools. The EOD programme is responsible for assessing the development of the foreign language curriculum and providing teachers with teacher development. EOD has support from the business community, the state, the private sector and international organisations. According to Matear (2008), the programme emphasises the significance of “English as a global language to national economic performance and to



individual employment opportunities and also its role in facilitating fair access to knowledge and progression through higher study” (p. 134).

English is taught as a foreign language in Chile. This means that the classroom is frequently the only place where students are exposed to the target language. Students are expected to use the language mainly in monolingual target language situations (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). In this context, teachers are frequently the main linguistic model for students and the main provider of target language input (Turnbull, 2001). There are three types of professionals who are in charge of teaching English in Chilean schools: teachers of English, teachers of general elementary education who are asked to undertake short English courses by the Ministry of Education (approximately 200 hours) and are then appointed to teach English to the elementary schools, and other professionals who come from English-speaking countries to teach in Chile (English Opens Doors Programme, 2011). According to an evaluative study carried out by the Ministry of Education (English Opens Doors programme, 2011), there are 558 EFL teachers and 967 teachers of general elementary education teaching English from school years 5 to 8 in Santiago. Furthermore, 86 foreign professionals and 217 foreigners who are native English speakers and have no professional qualification to teaching English are teaching English in elementary schools in Chile.

To improve EFL teaching and learning in Chile, the Ministry launched the EFL-strengthening plan in 300 public schools in Chile in 2015 (Ministerio de Educación, 2015). Participating schools had to give teachers time within school hours to attend the activities that the plan offered, and teachers had to complete the Cambridge Placement Test (CPT), which measures receptive skills (listening and reading) in the English language, with at least a B1 level.

EFL teachers from the schools participating in the EFL-strengthening plan have experienced numerous benefits (Ministerio de Educación, 2015). The first benefit is

professional development opportunities, in which teachers attend workshops on teaching methodology facilitated by Chilean or foreign experts. Teachers also participate in online or face-to-face professional development programmes to help them implement the curriculum reform. The curriculum, as already discussed, focuses on the CLT and development of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) (Barahona, 2016). Finally, teachers become part of a professional network that was created with the objective to share lessons of “good practice.”

The second benefit for teachers is provision of support in the teaching and learning process in and outside the classroom to implement the EFL curriculum effectively. Teachers are offered a chance to be video recorded in their classes in order to examine the quality of their classes and to receive subsequent feedback from the experts; classroom observation, however, is not compulsory. English native speaker volunteers are also available to support teachers in the classroom. Finally, a group of students in years 5-9 take a test annually to examine the effectiveness of the plan.

These initiatives indicate that the Chilean Ministry of Education is making great efforts to help teachers improve their practices and meet the requirements of the EFL curriculum. The plan, however, seems to fall short from addressing the teachers who have not taken any test to certificate their proficiency in English and the important role of oral interaction in learning English in the curriculum. The next section outlines the purpose and significance of the current study.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study addresses the issues identified in the Chilean EFL teaching context while responding to the research gaps within the three bodies of literature identified in this chapter. Filling these lacunas and responding to the challenges surrounding EFL teaching in Chile are crucial because EFL teachers are considered to play a pivotal role in promoting and

enhancing meaningful interaction for the benefit of the language students (Thoms, 2012). The first aim of this study, thus, was to examine the EFL teachers' cognitions about oral interaction in the Chilean context in order to inform the Ministry of Education, teacher educators, policy makers and teachers themselves as to the extent to which teachers' cognitions accord with CLT and oral interaction in the language teaching context. Secondly, the aim was to understand the quantity and quality of oral language and interaction in L2 that occur in the elementary EFL classroom, and how it reflects teachers' cognitions. Finally, the aim was to investigate the influence of teacher professional learning opportunities on teachers' cognitions and their practices to bridge the gap between the curriculum innovation and teachers' actual practices.

As will be established in the Review of the Literature chapter, little research has examined teachers' cognitions about oral interaction (e.g., Kubanyiova, 2015; Li & Walsh, 2011; Petek, 2013). The few studies that exist have focused on isolated dimensions within the umbrella term of teacher cognition (Borg, 2003b), especially beliefs, which fails to capture teaching as "an interrelated whole comprised of many functional relationships between thinking and action" (Marcos & Tillema, 2006, p. 114). This study provides insights into the teachers' cognitions by integrating various dimensions that represent the broader and inclusive term of teacher cognition, responding to Marco and Tillema's (2006) concern that: "By studying only particular aspects, no matter how important each may be, these studies fragment teacher activity, and portray isolated understandings" (p. 114). Thus, this study, and the literature that has informed it, helps to understand why oral interaction is not promoted in language learning classrooms and to suggest possible solutions. Hence, it is hoped that this study will be of significance for all stakeholders interested in the areas of teachers' cognitions, oral interaction and EFL teacher learning, particularly those involved in the Chilean language teaching context.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions arose from the issues identified associated with EFL teaching in the Chilean context and the three bodies of research interrogated.

1. What cognitions do Chilean EFL teachers in public and semi-private elementary schools in Santiago hold about L2 oral interaction?
2. What is the quantity and quality of oral language and interaction in L2 in EFL classrooms?
3. To what extent are EFL teachers' cognitions reflected in their actual practices?
4. What is the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the teachers' cognitions about L2 oral interaction and on their actual practices?

## **1.6 Overview of the Thesis**

The main body of this thesis consists of eight chapters which are outlined briefly below. The current chapter has provided the rationale for conducting this research study and has briefly outlined the literature that underpins the study. It has also given relevant contextual information about Chile and has stated the significance of the study and its research questions. The remaining chapters are structured as follows.

Chapter 2 contextualises the current research within the body of existing literature in the three areas involved in this study, namely, teachers' cognitions, oral interaction and teacher learning. It also presents a review that includes a description and a critical evaluation of previous research, major findings, contemporary developments, the main points of view and debates, and a general conclusion that presents the gaps that this study aims to fill.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in the study including research paradigm and its design, and sets out the methods used for collecting and analysing data. It describes the participants and the instruments used, together with the details of the small-scale professional learning sessions.

The next three chapters report the findings from the study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of Phase 1 of this research. Data for this phase was collected from a questionnaire where participants EFL teachers reported their cognitions about L2 oral interaction.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 report the findings of Phase 2 of this study. Chapter 5 focuses on the eight teachers, a voluntary subgroup of the participants, who assigned themselves into one of two groups that experienced different professional learning opportunities. It reports data gathered through a questionnaire, classroom observations of teacher practice, a focus group interview, and a personal document at the beginning of Phase 2. These data represent the baseline findings that were used to trace changes in teachers' cognitions and their practices at the end of the study.

Chapter 6 concentrates on the second part of Phase 2 of the study. It reports on the extent to which the two forms of teacher learning opportunities influenced the cognitions and teaching practices of the teachers already explored in the previous chapter.

Chapter 7 synthesises and interrogates the findings of the previous three chapters. It discusses whether the teachers' cognitions and their classroom teaching practices met the expectations of the EFL curriculum in Chile, particularly the use of oral interaction in the classroom, and the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the cognitions and practices of the teachers. This discussion is interwoven with the body of existing knowledge of the underlying literature that structures and informs this study.

Chapter 8 provides a conclusion to this thesis identifying the theoretical and methodological implications of the research and practical implications for the Chilean Ministry of Education. It presents the contributions of the study, together with its limitations and suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of the Literature**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This study examines the cognitions about oral interaction of Chilean elementary EFL teachers and the relation to their teaching practices. It also investigates the quantity and quality of oral language and interaction that occur in EFL Chilean classrooms, and the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the teachers' cognitions and teaching practices.

In this study, three bodies of research came together through the lens of a teacher cognition framework proposed by Borg (2006): teacher cognition, oral interaction and teacher learning. The sections that follow contextualise the current research within these bodies of literature. Each section presents a review that includes a brief outline of the developments of research in each field, a description and a critical evaluation the research, major findings and debates, and a general conclusion of how the research informs the current study and identifies areas the present study addresses.

#### **2.2 Teachers' Cognitions**

This first section focuses on the field of teachers' cognitions. Research on the role that teachers' cognitions play in influencing their instructional decisions, their pedagogical practices, receptiveness to new curriculum reforms, and teacher learning is discussed. The assumption that teachers' cognitions, and what they do in their classrooms, has a dialectical relationship is emphasised. The section is divided into four subsections: the first presents a brief review of the development of research on teachers' cognitions; the second subsection deals with definitional issues; the third subsection concentrates on teacher cognition as a framework and its complex, interactive and dynamic processes; and the fourth presents a discussion of research on how teachers' cognitions has contributed to understanding the domain of oral interaction.

### **2.2.1 Development of research on teachers' cognitions.**

The study of teachers' cognitions in general teaching, and teacher education, arose in the 1970s as a response to the increasing influence of constructivism and cognitive psychology in education. Until that time, the dominant research paradigm was the process-product approach concerned with the connection between teachers' and students' behaviour and students' achievement (Clark & Peterson, 1986). The shift of the research paradigm led to the view that teachers were "active, decision-makers," and not "mechanical implementers of external prescriptions" (Borg, 2006, p. 7). The first studies, focused on teacher planning, judgement and decision-making (Shavelson & Stern, 1981), were aligned with educational psychology. Clark & Yinger's study (1977), for example examined how teachers collected, organised, interpreted and evaluated information in order to gain insights into the human processes that guide teacher behaviour. Nonetheless, it was not until the 1980s that research on teacher cognition became a crucial area of research in the study of teaching (Borg, 2009). During this period, the amalgamation of reasoning and knowing in action (Schon, 1983) provided opportunities to gain a better understanding of what was really happening in classrooms. Moreover, the contribution of the study of teachers' beliefs and knowledge in developing understanding of the process of teacher learning was recognised (e.g., Calderhead, 1988; Kennedy, 1991).

Research in this field has revealed the influence of contextual factors on both teachers' cognitions and their classroom practices, the influence of teachers' cognitions on the success or failure of teacher education, the resistance of cognitions to change, the continuing long-term effects of cognitions on teachers' instructional practices, and the bi-directional relations between cognitions and practices (Borg, 2009).

The study of teacher cognition was established in the field of second and foreign language education in the 1990s (Borg, 2003b, 2006; Freeman, 1992, 2002; Freeman &

Johnson, 1998; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Johnson, 1992, 1994; Richards, 1998; Woods, 1996) and has grown rapidly, contributing to elucidation of the complex inner lives of language teachers that underlie their work (Kubanyiova, 2012) by providing a greater understanding of

How language teachers conceive of what they do: what they know about language teaching, how they think about their classroom practice, and how that knowledge and those thinking processes are learned through formal teacher education and informal experience on the job. (Freeman & Richards, 1996, p. 1)

Research has also contributed to insights into cognitions within specific curricular areas. In the field of teacher cognition, according to Borg (2009), the most researched curricular area of language teacher cognition has been grammar teaching (e.g., Phipps & Borg, 2009), followed by reading (e.g., Bamanger & Gashan, 2014), and writing (e.g., Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011; Tsui, 1996), with only a small number of studies focused on communicative language teaching (e.g., Kim, 2014; Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood, & Son, 2005; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Woods & Cakir, 2011). Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015), in a special issue on the relevance of language teacher cognition in applied linguistics research, added that recent published studies have examined cognitions from other aspects of second language such as pronunciation (e.g., Baker, 2014), speaking (e.g., Baleghizadeh & Nasrollahi, 2014), listening (see Graham, Santos, & Francis-Brophy, 2014), assessment (e.g., Buyukkarci, 2014), and technology (e.g., Sardegna & Dugartsyrenova, 2014). Although oral interaction is a fundamental aspect of CLT in language curricula, oral interaction has barely been specifically examined from a teacher-cognition perspective.

The growing body of research on teacher cognition has brought a degree of conceptual ambiguity because the construct of cognition has been defined in different ways, with different terms used to describe teachers' cognitions. The following subsection will



discuss these issues.

### **2.2.2 Definitional issues.**

Within the area of teachers' cognitions, there has been a number of terms used for similar, or even identical, concepts. Of particular concern for research has been the definition of the construct of teacher cognition. Borg (2015a) defined cognition as "an inclusive term referring to the complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs that language teachers draw on in their work" (p. 321).

Much of the research in this field of inquiry, however, has focused on specific individual mental dimensions such as beliefs, knowledge, or perceptions. Such terms, however, do not provide an overall picture of teachers' work (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015).

The current study used the inclusive term "cognitions," provided by Borg (2015a). Within this inclusive term, "beliefs" are defined as evaluative propositions that are accepted as true by individuals (Borg, 2001) and "knowledge" as information accepted as a fact (Barnard & Burns, 2012), that is objective and true (Woods & Cakir, 2011). Such knowledge can be "received," and is "the intellectual content of the profession" (Wallace, 1991, p. 14); it consists of linguistic and pedagogic knowledge that teachers require in order to teach. Knowledge can also be "experiential," and is thus "not a matter of fact, but a complex mix of feelings, thoughts and individual perspective" (Mann, 2001, p. 58), gained through experiences in the classroom. Other studies, in contrast, have used the term "beliefs" to refer to what teachers know and believe (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; Kagan, 1992; Kim, 2014; Nishino, 2008), indicating that it is difficult to distinguish between these two terms (Pajares, 1992). For instance, Brown (2002) and Kumaravadivelu (2001) argued that teachers are not able to explain what they know by only focusing on impersonal or objective knowledge. Although it is acknowledged that knowledge and beliefs are connected, this study aims to examine whether teachers are able to articulate the concepts, theories or principles in

relation to oral interaction, or at least give evidence of such knowledge through descriptions of what they do in the classroom – their teaching practices. Within the dimension of knowledge, the term “understanding” is embedded. Understanding is defined in this study as teachers’ capacity to articulate the principles (Carless, 2003) of their approach to teaching English, CLT and oral interaction. The dimensions, “assumptions”, and “perceptions” are also included within the umbrella term of cognitions in this study. Perceptions are understood as teachers’ awareness of their teaching practices through their senses. Assumptions refer to teachers’ axioms which allow them to make pre-judgements about the world around them (Barnard & Burns, 2012). Barnard and Burns (2012) gave as an example that teachers who start teaching in a new school assume that their new classes will be like their previous classes. After some months, however, they may perceive that their new class has its own characteristics that cause them to develop certain attitudes towards their students and the class. These attitudes are fine-tuned, dismissed or formulated with more experience and then integrated in a set of beliefs.

### **2.2.3 Elements and processes in language teacher cognition.**

Borg (2006) proposed a framework suggested by general mainstream educational research on teacher cognition that intended to capture the complex processes in language teacher cognition.

The framework, as shown in Figure 1, identifies relationships among teachers’ cognitions, teacher learning (acquired from schooling and professional education) and classroom practice. It also indicates the important role of contextual factors in mediating the relationship between cognitions and practices.

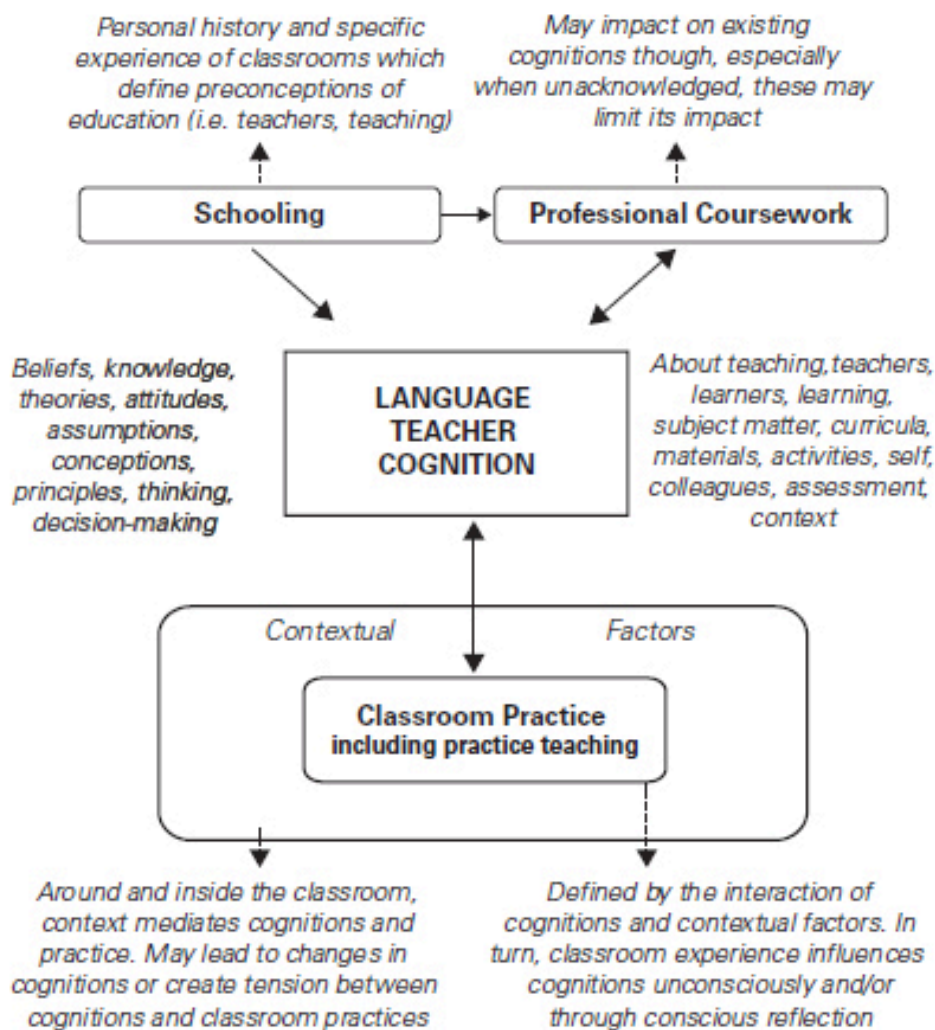


Figure 1. Elements and Processes in Language Teacher Cognition (Borg 2006, p. 283)

Teacher learning, acquired from schooling and language teacher education, informs teachers' cognitions about teaching and learning. From the mid-1970s, prior language learning experiences have attracted research interest in the field of language teacher cognition (e.g., Borg, 2005; Gutiérrez, 1996; Woods, 1996). Lortie (1975) claimed that all the years that teachers (as students) spent in the classroom observing their teachers as well as participating in the activities in the course of their schooling, affects the way in which they teach and react to learning opportunities. This "apprenticeship of observation," as the author called it, shapes teachers' cognitions and influences their practices. These cognitions help teachers establish

their teaching profiles and teaching practices (Lortie, 1975), are deep-rooted (e.g., Borg 2006), and resistant to change (e.g., Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992).

Empirical research has shown the influence of pre-service and novice teachers' experience as students on their own cognitions and instructional decisions (e.g., Bailey, Bergthold, Braunstein, Jagodzinski Fleischman, Holbrook, Tuman, Waissbluth & Zambo, 1996; Baharona, 2014; Johnson, 1994; Numrich, 1996). Numrich (1996) for example, examined the insights of 26 novice English as second language teachers. Their diaries revealed that teachers, who had positive learning experiences at school when studying English with specific techniques, reported replicating these techniques in their own teaching; they also reported refusing to use other techniques they remembered to be ineffective. In Chile, Barahona (2014), who examined pre-service teachers' beliefs about learning to teach English through interviews, reports and fieldnotes, found that the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) shaped their beliefs about English language teaching and learning. Most of the participants reported that teachers had taught only grammar and when they enrolled in the programme thought that was the way students learnt English. The teacher educator participating in this study reported that student teachers still thought that memorising grammar rules is the correct way to learn English, although the purpose of the programme in the study was to help them change their beliefs.

Research on in-service teacher education provides further evidence of the influence of prior learning experiences on teachers' cognitions and instructional decisions (e.g., Wood, 1996; Borg, 1999, 2005). For instance, Borg (2005) examined experienced teachers' cognitions about grammar in Malta and Hungary and reported that prior language experiences impacted their grammar teaching. He suggested that teacher educators should be aware of their teachers' prior language experiences in order to help them make sense of what they do and support their development of knowledge about language.

The argument that language teachers were not simply executors of theoretical and pedagogical content knowledge provided by others but active thinkers and decision makers led to acknowledging teachers' prior knowledge. Students commence teacher education programmes with beliefs and prior experiences as students, as language students and as students of language teaching that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape their teaching practices (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Freeman and Johnson (1998) further stated that teachers' prior experiences and beliefs tend to develop understandings about teaching that contrast with the concepts being taught in teacher education programmes. For example, teachers' understandings were often found to be impractical and inadequate (e.g., Brookhart & Freeman, 1992).

The relationship between teachers' cognitions and classroom practices has received significant attention (e.g., Basturkmen, 2012; Beach, 1994). Teachers' cognitions and their practices are accepted to have an interactive relationship, that is, while cognitions drive actions, teachers' experiences and reflections on actions may give rise to changes in cognitions (e.g., Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). In other words, teachers' cognitions and teaching practices have a mutually informing relationship.

The relationship between cognitions and practices is not necessarily congruous or converging, and can be inconsistent. Among the likely reasons for inconsistency in the relationship are: situational constraints that hinder teachers from putting their cognitions into practice (Borg, 2003a); changes in cognitions that precede changes in practices (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991); the existence of multiple belief systems (Graden, 1996); tensions between teachers' core and peripheral beliefs (Phipps & Borg, 2009); the selection of research methods in the studies examining relationships (Barnard & Burns, 2012), and teachers' perceptions of students' proficiency and expectations (Burgess & Etherington, 2002). Other studies have shown a close relationship between cognitions and practices (e.g.,

Farrel & Ives, 2015; Tolosa, 2009). For example, Farrell and Ives' (2015) case study revealed that the beliefs about reading, of an English second language (ESL) teacher in Canada, were evident in his actual practices. This teacher had just completed his first two years as an ESL teacher in a university programme and was interested in his own professional development. This study also showed that, through articulating and reflecting on his beliefs, he became more aware of the meaning and impact of his beliefs on his actual practices.

Finally, teachers' cognitions are deemed to be highly context-sensitive due to their situated nature (Borg, 2015a). For example, Nishino (2008) in Japan examined the beliefs and reported practices of 21 secondary EFL teachers regarding CLT through a questionnaire. He revealed that teachers had a sound knowledge of CLT and a good understanding of learners' and teachers' roles within it. The teachers, however, reported that they felt class hours and class size affected its effective implementation.

As discussed above, research in the field of teachers' cognitions has contributed to an understanding of their influence on teachers' practices, and an acceptance that teachers' cognitions arise from teachers' experiences as language students, student teachers and language teachers, from their engagement in professional learning and development, and the context in which they live, study and work. Nonetheless, little research has examined how language teachers can best provide students with a meaningful learning context, nor how best to provide for language teachers' professional development (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). This will further discussed in subsection 2.4.

Most research in the field of teachers' cognitions has been in tertiary and secondary education contexts. Studies that examine the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their teaching practices in elementary school contexts, however, are scarce. An example of the latter is a study by Carless (2003), which investigated the implementation of task-based teaching by three elementary teachers in Hong Kong. Data were gathered by classroom

observations, interviews and a attitude measurement tool. Six issues appeared to impact on how teachers approached the implementation of communicative tasks. These were teachers' beliefs, teachers' understanding, the teaching time available, the textbook and the topic, preparation and the available resources, and the level of language proficiency of the students. Carless argued that, as did Lee (2009) in a later study, it is not until teachers are asked to explain, analyse, evaluate and justify their practice that it can be established whether contextual constraints have indeed impacted on teachers' practices. Lee suggested that teachers might report such constraints to justify their practices.

#### **2.2.4 Teachers' cognitions about oral interaction.**

Oral interaction has not been an area of interest to be studied through the lens of teachers' cognitions, according to reviews done by Borg (2009) and Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) and the researcher's own search. Although studies on teachers' cognitions about CLT were found (Carless, 2003; Ho, 2004; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Kim, 2014; Li, 1998; Littlewood, 2007; Nishino, 2008; Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood & Son, 2005; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Woods & Cakir, 2011), none of them investigated oral interaction as a component within CLT. This is surprising as there is evidence that teachers can play a pivotal role in promoting oral interaction to enhance language learning.

These studies report that teachers' understandings of CLT have some characteristics in common. These include: the use of authentic material in a communicative context; the fact that teachers are considered facilitators; the belief that group work activities are fundamental and that speaking, listening, reading and writing should all be included. Although no studies were found in the review of the literature in which teachers referred to oral interaction as a component of CLT in their cognitions, some studies reported that teachers have sound understandings about CLT (Kim, 2014; Nishino, 2008; Mangubhai et al., 2005; Woods & Cakir, 2011). For instance, Mangubhai et al. (2005), in Australia examined the similarities

and differences of the conceptions of CLT between a group of elementary and secondary teachers of languages other than English (LOTE) and researchers. Teachers and researchers had similar understandings of the CLT approach but teachers reported that their classroom practices were also influenced by their own personal application of CLT. Other studies that have suggested teachers lack understandings of CLT (Carless, 2003; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999), Carless, for example claimed that teachers' lack of understandings about tasks and their inability to choose appropriate activities hindered them from providing students with opportunities to engage in communicative activities. Similarly, Nazari's study (2007), that examined teachers' perception of the concept of communicative competence through an open question, indicated that teachers were only able to include linguistic competence, that is to say, knowledge of the rules of grammar, within the broad definition of this important concept that also comprises other competences such as sociolinguistic and pragmatic.

Other studies have examined teachers' perceptions of the implementation of CLT. For instance, Li (1998) examined Korean EFL teachers' perceptions of their implementation of CLT through a questionnaire and an interview. Teachers reported that, although they had studied CLT at university, they had not implemented CLT, as they did not understand how it worked and saw it as knowledge they should possess but not to use. As this study did not examine teachers' actual understandings of CLT to complement their perceptions, the researcher was not able to examine the extent to which their received knowledge of CLT, gained at university, affected their decisions not to implement CLT.

Only three studies were found that examined teachers' cognitions about oral interaction specifically. Li and Walsh (2011) examined oral interaction between teacher and students to investigate the pedagogical beliefs about teaching and learning of two EFL secondary teachers (one novice and an experienced teacher) in China. Using interviews and classrooms observations to obtain the data, the study concluded that teachers' beliefs were



congruent with their actual practices. One of the teacher-participants reported that she believed she needed to control patterns of communication, dominate the discourse and emphasise learning new vocabulary and this was evident in her observed teaching practice. The other teacher-participant said he believed that language is used for communication. His observed practices revealed the use of oral interaction using a three-part elicitation script, known as the IRF structure, in which a teacher initiates the interaction, students respond and the teacher gives feedback. Although oral interaction was observed being used in the classroom by both participants, the researchers indicated that, without information about their specific pedagogic goals, it was not possible to determine the extent to which their beliefs were consistent with their practices.

The second study reported in Petek (2013) examined the beliefs of two teachers of English (a native and a non-native), in a university in Turkey, about classroom oral interaction and their teaching practices. In contrast to Li and Walsh, Petek (2013) found contradictions between teachers' beliefs and their practices. Firstly, teachers reported in an interview that they preferred the use of referential questions over display questions, yet classroom observations showed they used mainly display questions. Secondly, the non-native English speaking teacher stated that she believed in activating students' knowledge through elicitation. She was observed, however, repeating students' previous turns and switching into Turkish. Finally, teachers' use of L1 was moderate to high despite indicating that they thought a little use of L1 was not detrimental. This was especially noticeable with the non-native English speaking teacher. In both studies, the focus was predominantly on the construct of belief. In Li and Walsh's study, the construct was defined using the definition of Calderhead (1996, p. 175), as "suppositions, commitments and ideologies." Teachers' understandings of what oral interaction involved were not investigated. It is argued that

teachers' beliefs may have been the result of not having a clear understanding of oral interaction, but this was not examined.

Finally, Kubanyiova (2015), in Slovakia, examined the extent to which a secondary language teacher created opportunities for L2 development during teacher–student interaction by investigating whether her beliefs and possible selves informed her actual practices. The study reported that the image of her ideal ‘language-teacher self’ was “as a well-organised and highly competent language educator who is in full charge of the teaching process and a primary knower in her interactions with the students” (Kubanyiova, 2015, p. 579). This self-image may have hindered her from giving students opportunities to interact orally.

Kubanyiova proposed that professional development should be offered to language teachers to provide opportunities to articulate, reflect and challenge their images of a good teacher. The aim should be to change teachers' cognitions and practices and to encourage oral interaction between teacher and students.

In summary, the field of teachers' cognitions has helped in understanding the mental dimensions of teachers' lives and how such mental dimensions influence teachers' decisions and practices. Although the area of teachers' cognition has grown rapidly, the examination of them within the domain of inquiry of oral interaction has still received scant attention. The next section reviews research on oral interaction.

## **2.3 Oral Interaction**

### **2.3.1 Introduction.**

The review that follows shows how research in this field has concentrated on describing the interactional processes in the language classroom and how students' interact. There has been little attention given to investigating the teachers' rationales for the decisions as they engage in those processes, or how to help them understand oral interaction and what it involves. The following section has six subsections. The first subsection outlines the development of

research on oral interaction, providing a brief overview of the two broad approaches that have been used to study its role in L2 acquisition, as well as the theories that inform, and arise from these approaches. The second subsection focuses on definitional issues regarding the term oral interaction. The third subsection examines the close relationship between oral interaction and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. The fourth subsection provides information and presents research studies that have used the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) scheme to investigate the oral language and oral interaction that occur in classrooms. Finally, the fifth subsection discusses research on approaches to promote oral interaction, specifically with young language students.

### **2.3.2 Development of research on oral interaction.**

Oral interaction research dates back to the 1930s but only developed in the 1960s when audio technology and subsequently video technology came into existence (Seedhouse & Jenks, 2015). This technology enabled researchers to transcribe and investigate classroom interaction and its connection to learning processes.

Two broad perspectives have been used to study the role that interaction plays in L2 acquisition. The first perspective is based on a cognitive model of L2 acquisition which has generated a number of theories (Ellis, 2008). Interaction has also been studied following Vygotsky's theory of mediated learning and the role that interaction plays in assisting students to acquire linguistic skills in activities (Lantolf, 2000).

The perspective based on the cognitive model of L2 acquisition lays the foundation for four theories or hypotheses as their authors called them. These theories are (1) the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982, 1985, 1998), (2) the Comprehensive Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1995), (3) the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1983, 1996), and (4) the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1994, 2001).

**2.3.2.1 The Input Hypothesis.** Krashen (1982, 1985, 1998) proposed that language acquisition takes place when students are exposed to comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is defined as “L2 input that learners can understand with the help of contextual cues, prior knowledge, gestures, etc., even though they would not be able to produce comparable language or even to say exactly how the language itself conveys the meaning” (Spada & Lightbown, 2009, p. 158). Krashen (1985, 1994) argued that the Input hypothesis is regarded as a process of acquisition. The process of acquisition is implicit and subconscious rather than as a process of learning which is explicit and conscious which generates metalinguistic knowledge. The main assumptions of the Input hypothesis are that students acquire L2 when they are exposed to input that includes structures that are beyond their current level of competence ( $i + 1$ ); students have to be willing to accept that the input they understand and output is the consequence of acquisition, not its origin. Krashen (1998) provided four explanations of why output does not make a real contribution to acquisition. Firstly, students have restricted instances to speak in the classroom. Secondly, existing evidence shows that output is not essential to accomplish high levels of linguistic competence. Thirdly, students become anxious when they are pressured to speak. Fourthly, empirical research has not showed explicitly that output enhances acquisition.

**2.3.2.2 The Comprehensible Output Hypothesis.** In the mid-1980s, evidence from research conducted in the Canadian French immersion schools claimed that input was not sufficient to guarantee that students would achieve high levels of grammatical and sociolinguistic competence. Harley and Swain (1978) had shown that despite immersion students being able to use L2 confidently and achieve discourse skills, they were unsuccessful in making grammatical distinctions and developing adequate sociolinguistic competence. Swain argued that the main reason for the problem was that the production of the language was not promoted. Later, Swain (1985, 1995, 2005) proposed the Output

Hypothesis, which claims that language production plays a critical part in the process of L2 acquisition. She described the advantages of output as follows

Output may stimulate learners to move from semantic, open-ended, nondeterministic, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production. Output thus would seem to have a potentially significant role in the development of syntax and morphology. (p. 128)

According to Gass (2015), there are four functions of output that may be conducive to L2 acquisition. Firstly, output provides students instances to test hypotheses, that is, determining whether the message that they have given orally is understood by the receptor. Secondly, feedback is an important function of output because it allows students to identify if their utterances accomplished their desired aim and subsequently adapt their utterances in response to that feedback. Thirdly, output serves as a way to practice L2. Fourthly, output requires students to use their syntactic knowledge. Swain (1985) criticised Long's (1981) interaction hypothesis because she argued that students not only have to interact but also have to produce *pushed output*, that is to say, produce language that goes beyond students' current developmental level.

**2.3.2.3 The Noticing Hypothesis.** The Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1994, 2001) claimed that a crucial condition for L2 acquisition is to give conscious attention to the formal characteristics of the input (noticing) and also to identify the way in which the input to which students are exposed is inconsistent with the output they are able to produce (noticing-the-gap). Schmidt (2001) identified three subsystems of attention: attention as alertness, attention as orientation and attention as detection. Attention as alertness concerns about the motivation and eagerness that students have to learn L2. Attention as orientation deals with the focus of the tasks, for example, focus on meaning or form. Attention as detection relates to awareness.

**2.3.2.4 The Interaction Hypothesis.** The Interaction Hypothesis was first proposed by Long (1983). This early version of the Interaction Hypothesis was influenced by Krashen's Input Hypothesis and claimed that interactional modifications and simplified input promote L2 acquisition. The interactional modifications happen when people who take part of a conversation become involve in negotiation of meaning to resolve a communication problem. Long (1996) later presented an updated version of the Interaction Hypothesis integrating Swain's Output Hypothesis and Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis. He argued that negotiation of meaning works for acquisition when it "assists learners to notice linguistic forms in the input and the forms that are noticed lie within learner processing capacity" (Ellis, 1999, p. 8). The updated version of the Interaction Hypothesis also provided three ways of how negotiation can facilitate language learning. First, it provides students with positive evidence, that is, "models of what is grammatical and acceptable" (Long, 1996, p. 413). Second, it gives students negative evidence or "direct or indirect evidence of what is ungrammatical" (Long, 1996, p. 413). Finally, it provides students opportunities for modified output that involved students attempting to solve a problem that arose in the conversation (repair) or produce a correct utterance after receiving corrections (uptake). The general claim of both early and late versions of the Interaction Hypothesis is that "engaging in interpersonal oral interaction in which communication problems arise and are negotiated facilitates incidental language acquisition" (Ellis, 2008, p. 253). In other words, oral interaction that engages negotiation of meaning enhances acquisition but does not cause it.

Recent interest in the role of interaction has focused on corrective feedback (CF) because feedback is considered facilitative of L2 development. Feedback can be positive or negative. Positive feedback confirms students that their responses focused on content or linguistic aspects are correct. Pedagogically, positive feedback is considered important because "it provides affective support to the learner and fosters motivation to continue

learning” (Ellis, 2009, p. 3). However, in SLA, positive feedback has received scant attention because studies of classroom interaction have shown that teachers’ positive feedback moves are ambiguous. Negative feedback, in contrast, refers to feedback provided to students that signals lack of veracity or an error of language form (Ellis, 2009). Within negative feedback, CF is one type and six CF strategies have been identified: recast, repetition, clarification request, explicit correction, elicitation and paralinguistic signal. In EFL contexts, Ellis (2012) added that confirmation and understanding through backchannels, such as “yes” and “right,” are very important in interaction because they help teachers ensure that their students feel safe and included and, consequently, more confident to participate in the interactions.

The following discussion involves the second paradigm to study oral interaction that is framed within a sociocultural theory. The following review outlines the place of social interaction in sociocultural theory and then briefly discusses how research framed in the sociocultural theory has criticised the input-output hypothesis.

**2.3.2.5 Sociocultural theory.** Sociocultural theory advances the idea that interactions between an expert and a novice such as a teacher and a student are central for learning (Vygotsky, 1986). According to this theory, external-social and internal-psychological processes occur when interacting orally. Children’s language emerges through interaction in social participation and, subsequently the language is internalized. In other words, oral interaction is the source and the outcome of internalization processes (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). There are two types of oral interaction: monologic interaction and dialogic interaction. In spite of the fact that both types of interaction help teachers mediate learning, dialogic interaction is the only type of interaction that enables teachers to determine what students are able or unable to do without assistance (Anton, 1999).

From a sociocultural theory standpoint, dialogic oral interaction provides children opportunities to develop from object-regulation, to other-regulation and finally to self-

regulation. Defining these terms from a Second Language Acquisition (SLA) point of view, object-regulation involves students' actions that are determined by the language they experience in their classroom. Other-regulation refers to students who are able to produce the language but only with assistance of a more expert person (the teacher). Self-regulation is where students become independent and capable of producing the language without assistance.

Sociocultural theorists have criticised the input-output hypotheses for two reasons. Firstly, theorists argued that acquisition is not exclusively a phenomenon that occurs inside the head of a person. As Vygotsky (1978) explains, “any function in a child’s development first appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane” (p. 163). Secondly, theorists (e.g., Platt & Brooks, 1994) contend that seeing interaction simply as a provider of input or instances of output fail to show the rich nature of the interactions that occur between teacher-students or student-student. Van Lier (2000) argued further that interaction cannot be examined by dividing it into its components because this kind of examination does not allow researchers to show the emergence of learning.

The review in the following section focuses on oral interaction and language teaching and learning; specifically, how oral interaction is defined in the literature.

### **2.3.3 Definitional issues.**

Although the importance of oral interaction in facilitating language learning is established and accepted, interaction has been articulated in the literature in different ways and with the use of different terminology. These differences have caused confusions at times.

Some researchers have equated oral interaction with oral communication (Herazo, 2010; Lee & Ng, 2010), but they have not defined what oral communication means. The term “oral communication” is complex and it has been defined differently. For instance, McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey (2006) defined oral communication as creating



messages that stimulate meanings in the minds of others using oral messages, involving a speaker producing and a listener solely receiving the message. Other scholars have argued that oral interaction and communication are not synonymous. Richards (1983) stated that the interaction between the speaker, the listener and the message has an impact on the successful development of communication; similarly, Brown (2007) claimed that interaction is at the heart of communication. Neither of these scholars, however, articulated what oral interaction is. Spada and Frohlich (1995) provided a clearer definition, stating that oral interaction was communicative oral exchanges, but without providing a succinct explanation of the term exchanges. Other researchers (Council of Europe, 2001; Ellis, 2005; Mariani, 2010) have proposed that oral interaction is a communicative activity among another three activities, namely, reception, production, and mediation. For example, Ellis (2005) stated that input and output contribute to acquisition when both co-occur in oral interaction. Similarly, the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) states,

In interaction at least two individuals participate in an oral exchange in which production and reception alternate and may in fact overlap in oral communication. Not only may two interlocutors be speaking and yet listening to each other simultaneously. Even where turn-taking is strictly respected, the listener is generally already forecasting the remainder of the speaker's message and preparing a response. Learning to interact thus involves more than learning to receive and to produce utterances. (p. 14)

Furthermore, the CEFR claims that, "the language user acts alternately as speaker and listener with one or more interlocutors so as to construct conjointly, through the negotiation of meaning following the co-operative principle, conversational discourse" (p. 73). This definition shows not only that oral interaction and communication are not synonyms, but also explains what oral interaction is and what is involved in it. More recently, Mariani (2010)

further argued that oral interaction includes both spoken production and audio-visual reception (listening and watching). The current study uses the definition of oral interaction established by the CEFR.

The Common European Framework also provides a self-assessment grid to assess oral interaction in different levels. This study is focused on the breakthrough level that states:

I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics. (p. 24)

### **2.3.4 Oral interaction and the communicative language teaching approach.**

The advent of the communicative language teaching approach (CLT) marked a significant change in language teaching pedagogy because CLT aimed to replace a linguistic/grammatical emphasis represented in approaches such as the grammar-translation and audio-lingualism.

Communicative language teaching is an approach to L2 teaching that aimed to develop students' communicative competence. According to Savignon (2007), CLT has two different definitions that derived from Howatt's (1984) distinction between strong and weak versions of CLT. The first definition describes CLT as a meaning-based, learner-centered approach to L2 teaching where fluency is priority. In contrast, the other definition considered that although CLT is primarily focused on meaning, it includes attention to both fluency and accuracy.

CLT considered interaction both the means and ultimate objective of study. As Brown, (2001) puts it, "In the era of communicative language teaching, interaction is, in fact, the heart of communication; it is what communication is all about" (p. 165). Even at an elementary stage, interaction enables students to increase their language store as they listen to

“authentic linguistic materials” or the output produced by the teacher or classmates in conversations or tasks (Rivers, 1987).

The importance of interaction within CLT has influenced new realisations of CLT such as a task-based language teaching which “aims to reconcile, on the one hand, the primary importance of fluency (with its implications for... communication) with due attention, on the other hand, to accuracy (with its implications for proficiency)” (East, 2012, p. 23).

CLT also has led to greater attention in the literature on ESL and EFL on oral interaction. Since the first studies on oral interaction, there has been general agreement in the literature about the relative importance of the role of oral interaction in affording students opportunities to achieve successful language learning outcomes. A range of strategies to help teachers promote and implement oral interaction and empower students to speak and interact in English in EFL classrooms have been proposed (e.g., van Hees, 2007; Walsh, 2006). Nonetheless, current research shows that oral interaction is rarely promoted in secondary school and university contexts with the result that students continue to be reluctant to speak English in the classroom. In elementary school context, what happens and how oral interaction works in EFL classrooms is still understudied.

### **2.3.5 Oral interaction and the communicative orientation of language teaching (COLT) scheme.**

The assumption that interaction facilitates learning has led language researchers to observe and describe interactions in the classroom to understand how teachers encourage such opportunities for language learning. One of the most well-known interaction analysis systems that has been used in classroom research to describe interactions in L2 classroom is the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) scheme (Ellis, 2008). The COLT scheme (Spada & Frohlich, 1995) describes particular aspects or instructional practices in L2

classrooms, classroom talk and oral interaction. It examines features of communication that have been described in the theoretical and pedagogical literature on communicative language teaching. The aim of investigating these features of communication is to identify whether the features that are found in research encourage language learning, as communicative theorists and L2 researchers have established.

The COLT scheme has been used as an instrument of analysis to obtain a robust description of classroom lessons in non-experimental contexts, and to evaluate the extent to which teachers develop oral communication skills. In elementary school contexts, it has been reported that teachers are aware of the importance of developing these skills and use different strategies to develop speaking and listening skills. For example, Lim (2003), using parts A and B of the COLT scheme, examined the interactional strategies used by a public elementary language teacher with his year three class (10-year-old students) in Korea. The results revealed that the teacher emphasised the development of oral production skills in English. The author, however, did not provide examples of the sort of activities that were conducted, in order to understand how the teacher developed speaking skills. Listening skills were also developed, but only to identify and remember short phrases or isolated words. Although the teacher had little knowledge about CLT, he reported that he had prepared himself to meet the language curriculum. Analysis of the classroom observations, however, suggested that the teacher interpreted oral communication as one-way communication in which students engaged only in solo performance, instead of oral interaction using L2. In contrast, Osada (2008) who examined the interactions between elementary EFL teachers and students (10-12 years old) in Japan, reported that teachers were able to use listening and speaking relatively equally, as required by the language curriculum of the country. This study, however, used only part A of the COLT scheme, focused on the interactional patterns in general, which does not identify the use of L1 or L2, as it does in part B.

Using the COLT scheme has advantages. Firstly, the focus of the scheme on the classroom talk framed within CLT enables the researcher to account for not only oral interaction but also all the possible features of communication occurring in L2. This is an advantage because, in EFL contexts, it is not common to see teachers and young students who have just been introduced to L2 interacting orally in the classroom. COLT thus provides researchers an opportunity to observe the input students are exposed to, the opportunities to produce the oral language and how teachers encourage interaction in the classroom. Secondly, the COLT scheme collects “live data from live situations” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 305) which allows the researcher to explore aspects about teachers’ practices that are not included in questionnaires and interviews. Thus, the COLT scheme enables the researcher to go beyond what teachers perceive and report about their practices. The COLT scheme also helps to condense data and facilitate the process of recognising patterns. Thirdly, the scheme is widely used and provides psycholinguistic validity, that is, it measures those features of instructions which are considered relevant to classroom language acquisition (see Chapter 3, subsection 3.4.1.4.1 for information about these features). Finally, the COLT scheme can be used in real time or following an audio or video recording (Walsh, 2006).

The COLT scheme, however, has also limitations. Firstly, the COLT scheme fails to consider context (Seedhouse, 1996) and therefore ignores the social environment of the classroom. It has been argued that the data that researchers collect do not include relevant aspects central to interpretations (Delamont & Hamilton, 1984). Secondly, it has been criticised for only focusing on quantitative data, failing to notice rich information that can emerge through only qualitative data analysis (Tsui, 1995). Another criticism is that the scheme uses predetermined categories which might hinder researchers from gaining a full understanding of the complexities in classroom processes (Tsui, 1996), and that it only

provides a partial view of the classroom. Croll (1986), however has argued that the partial nature of the descriptions provided by interaction analysis systems such as COLT is not a limitation of this classroom observation method but an inescapable issue in any description of the social world because such descriptions inevitably involve selection. Fieldnotes, context factors, affective factors, and patterns of oral interaction dissimilar to the scheme categories potentially help to ameliorate these criticisms. Finally, a critic of the COLT scheme (Denscombe, 1998) has argued that despite describing what happens in the classroom, it cannot explain why it happens. Nonetheless, if COLT is complemented with an examination of teachers' cognitions, it can provide useful descriptions of teaching practices and inform tentative explanations.

### **2.3.6 Characteristics of oral interaction in EFL elementary schools contexts.**

Although language policies and curricula have been designed and implemented to teach young students, it is argued they lack an informed foundation of the priorities to achieve so that they can become effective and sustainable (Enever & Moon, 2009).

While there is still no conclusive evidence about the best way to teach English to young students (Ganton, Copland & Burns, 2011), it is now widely accepted that young students require meaningful and comprehensible input with plenty of opportunities to practice the language and interact with others in L2. Literature on how young students in elementary schools learn EFL (e.g., Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2011; Shin, 2014; Shin & Crandall, 2014) states that students who are taught the linguistic form of the language do not learn the language because they are not cognitively prepared to do so successfully. Young students have a better chance of learning L2 when they learn the language implicitly (Muñoz, 2006). It has also been claimed that learning of a foreign language will depend on the opportunities for interactions in which they are involved in language use (Dornyei, 2009). Young students can

experience learning through games, songs and stories and the exclusive use of a textbook and a practice book is not sufficient (Strakova, 2015).

Recent literature about the role of L1 and L2 use in foreign language classrooms advocates for interactions to be central to successful language learning and that L2 should predominate in the language learning classrooms, although L1 is accepted when it is judiciously used (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Richards & Rogers, 2014). It is also argued that the role of language teachers in elementary schools as mediators of L2 input and output is crucial and that to support L2 learning, teachers should “listen to the high quality target language, read picture books, use language in natural context, and use and recycle language in a variety of contexts” (Strakova, 2015, p. 2437).

The majority of the studies sourced for this review investigated the use of L1 in teacher-student interaction, with few empirical studies on oral interaction in EFL elementary contexts found (e.g., Inbar-Lourie, 2010; Tognini & Oliver, 2012). Inbar-Lourie (2010), one of these few studies, examined the language choices of six EFL teachers of young students (6 to 8 year olds) in Hebrew and Arabic medium schools and investigated teachers’ motives to use L1. The few studies that have considered L2 teacher-student interaction in the EFL elementary classroom (e.g., Pen & Zhang, 2009; Philp & Tognini, 2009) have concluded that the use of L2 in teacher-students interaction is far from satisfactory. For example, Pen & Zhang (2009) examined the interaction between 54 EFL elementary teachers and their 203 students through classroom observation, interviews and a questionnaire. The study indicated that there were considerable variations in the amount of L2 used by the teachers but it was not more than 60% of their talk. According to Shapson, Kaufman & Durward (1978), teachers should spend at least 75% of their talk using L2 while Turnbull (2000) stated that teachers who spend less than 25% of the class time using L2 are depriving students of rich L2 input.

In Chile, a recent empirical study (Inostroza, 2015) has shown that English lessons in public elementary schools consist of lexicon repetition, translation and explicit use of grammar. Inostroza explored the challenges and complexities in the Chilean young students' classroom and noted that all her data were collected in Spanish (L1). She analysed the data in Spanish and then translated into English the extracts that she considered important to include in her thesis to illustrate and support her findings.

The present research argues that despite L2 rarely occurring, the characteristics of L2 teacher-student interaction must be studied to understand how teachers are promoting L2. These data can then be a base from which to explore how teachers may best be supported to enhance L2 oral interaction. At present, L2 teacher-student interaction in Chilean elementary school EFL contexts seems to be overlooked.

### **2.3.7 Patterns of oral interaction.**

In EFL contexts, L2 instruction often involves whole-class, teacher–student interaction, which may alternate with pair or group work. Characteristics of oral interaction observed in EFL contexts, however, have been reported to be similar. Within a lesson, for example, teachers control the topic, the content, the procedures and who participates and the interaction that occurs most of the time. There is an unequal role between teachers and students; teachers modify their talk to students, talk most of the time and employ a large number of pseudo-questions (Cazden, 1988, 1995; Walsh, 2002).

Van Hees (2007, 2011) developed a categorization of oral interaction patterns as the basis for an intervention to enhance the quality and quantity of oral language in the classrooms of low-socioeconomic schools in New Zealand. The interactional patterns include (1) teacher questioning and questions, (2) turn-taking, (3) classroom activity structures, and (4) topicalisation. The present study adopted these interactional patterns because van Hees' study (2011) took place in a low socio-economic context similar to the Chilean public school



context in which the present study was conducted and because in her study students were also young language students, although not EFL students. These patterns were also chosen because they have been identified as key aspects in interactions between teacher and students in literature on oral interaction in both ESL and EFL (Council of Europe, 2001; Ellis, 2012; Herazo, 2010).

**2.3.7.1 Teacher questioning and questions.** Questioning is an important part of teaching and teacher-and-student talk, and one of the most frequently used strategies to initiate interaction (McGrew, 2005). Questioning occupies much of a language teacher's time; it is one of the most important strategies used in the classroom to elicit responses from students (Walsh, 2011). Different kinds of questioning can be observed in the classroom (Dillon, 1997), with a range of opinions expressed as to how teacher questioning and questions can contribute to language learning. A number of taxonomies with details of the different types of questions have been used in research. Long and Sato (1984), for example, used a taxonomy of types of teachers' questions in ESL lessons. It consisted of four main types of questions: echoic, epistemic, expressive and social control. Echoic questions are asked to request a repetition, such as "Pardon?" Epistemic questions are divided into two types: referential or genuine questions, which give contextual information, for example, "What did you do last weekend?" and evaluative questions which establish whether the person who answers the question knows the answer, for instance, "Who invented the telephone?" Expressive questions communicate information about the attitudes of the person who answers, for example, "Will you eat the banana, or won't you?" Social control questions make use of authority, for example, "Are you paying attention?" Hakansson and Lindberg (1988) also established a taxonomy of questions related to cognitive level, that is, questions that involve reproduction of information or convergent thinking; communicative value (that

is, genuine or pseudo-questions); and orientation, or the extent to which the questions concentrate on language or real-life content.

Genuine and pseudo-questions are the most common types represented in taxonomies used in second- and foreign-language classrooms (Shomoosii, 2004). Genuine questions are designed to promote discussion and debate, and to engage students in producing longer and more complex responses. Questions to which teachers already know the answer to the question are referred to as pseudo or display questions. These also serve a range of functions such as eliciting a response, checking understanding, guiding learners towards a particular response, promoting involvement, and concept checking. Evidence from a number of studies has shown that language teachers use pseudo-questions more than genuine questions (Hamiloglu & Temiz, 2012; Meng, Zhao & Chattouphonexay, 2012; Setiawati, 2012; Shomoosii, 2004). For instance, one study (Shomoosii, 2004) revealed that 82% of all the questions used in EFL classrooms were pseudo-questions; the main reason for their use was that teachers liked instant responses from their students.

The most dominant pattern of questions used in language classrooms is the Initiate-Response-Feedback (IRF) exchange (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). The IRF pattern of interaction allows teachers to dominate the discourse. Teachers play the role of the initiator and primary knower; the required response leads to a follow-up move to finish the exchange which affirms (or denies) the response. This pattern of interaction, according to educators and SLA researchers, prevents students from using interactional resources that further learning. For instance, IRF hinders students from producing extended utterances, restricts the variety of language functions produced by students, and limits the opportunities for negotiating meaning (Barnes, 1976; Tuan & Nhu, 2010).

Nonetheless, some researchers have suggested that IRF may have a particular functionality that can be compatible with educational goals. The IRF exchange could be

advantageous if teachers scaffold students' extension of knowledge through supported dialogue, and position themselves as enablers of talk for thinking (Chin, 2006). Thus, teachers can lead students to be willing to participate in interaction and to think critically (Li, 2014).

Formulaic speech is another means which teachers and, to some extent, students, use to request questions. The use of formulaic speech is considered one of the early developmental stages of second language acquisition (Ellis, 1984) with formulas considered basic tools to help students participate in daily activities from the first day students are introduced to L2 (Fleta, 2007). According to Wray (2000), formulaic speech is defined as

A sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other meaning elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is stored and retrieved whole from the memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar. (p. 465)

There are three types of formulaic speech. The first involves routines that consist of whole utterances that are learned as memorised chunks, such as "I do not know." The second type consists of types of questions, such as "How do you say?" (Krashen & Scarcella, 1978). The last type consists of entire scripts that students have to memorise because they are fixed and predictable, for example, greeting sequences (Ellis, 1984). Despite formulaic speech not allowing students to produce creative utterances during interactions, they allow beginner students to learn the basic communicative skills, particularly the kind of obtained-linguistic and rule-based knowledge that will enable them to be involved in more creative interactions (Ellis, 1984; Girard & Sionis, 2003; Shin & Crandall, 2014).

Teachers characteristically ask most of the questions in lessons. The allocations of turns and the opportunities of students and teachers to request information and speak in the conversations, which optimise oral interaction is discussed in the next section.

**2.3.7.2 Turn-Taking.** Turn-taking is the second interactional feature adopted from van Hees' model. The conversations that occur in natural settings are completely different from those that happen in the classroom. For example, in the classroom, the allocations of turns, and who speaks to whom, are controlled by the teacher, causing a lack of turn-by-turn negotiation and a discouraging of student participation (McHoul, 1978). To achieve that students develop social and linguistic skills that enable them to interact orally, teachers should provide students opportunities to become observers and participants of the interactions because interacting is considered a "learned and highly skilled art" (van Hees, 2007, p. 97). Regarding beginner students, van Hees (2007) suggests that teachers should start providing students opportunities to share ideas in controlled and nonspontaneous interactions. Students first need time to think and prepare what they want to say and how to say it in pairs or small groups before interacting orally with the teacher or other students. Once students are ready to begin the interaction, teachers have to guide students to share one idea only before the another student has his or her turn to avoid that only few students control the interaction. Teachers' guidance should also include modelling the expected interactions to establish the process and provide examples of the content. When turn-taking becomes a more normal classroom practice in the lessons, teachers may ask students to be engaged in more spontaneous and responsive turn-taking. Studies on turn-taking mechanisms have been undertaken to understand interaction and discourse patterns in classrooms. One of these studies (van Lier, 1988), introduced the three basic rules governing L2 classroom turn-taking. These are: (1) one speaker speaks at any one time; (2) different speakers are allowed to speak at the same time if they say the same thing or, at least, part of the conversation that is happening at the same time is comprehensible; and (3) if not (1) and (2), then repair-work, described by Ellis (2012, p. 100) as "treatment of trouble ... of anything that the participants consider is impeding communication" will be conducted. Another study, which had the most

detailed account of turn-taking in the L2 (Ellis, 2012), revealed that the organisation of interaction varied according to the context (Seedhouse, 2004). The study established four classroom contexts, namely, form and accuracy context, where in turn-taking, the adjacency pair (composed of two utterances, one after the other) includes the teacher prompt and the student production, and a follow-up exchange is not compulsory; meaning and fluency context, in which turn-taking is controlled by the students; task-oriented context, in which turn-taking varies depending on the task; and procedural context, where turn-taking does not occur normally.

**2.3.7.3 Classroom activity structures.** The third feature from van Hees (2007; 2011) is concerned with classroom activity structures. Structuring classroom activities that enable students to interact orally involve a strategic balance between, pair, small-group and large-group opportunities (e.g., Shin & Crandall, 2014; van Hees, 2007). The decisions over grouping should take into consideration the students and the learning purposes as students' reaction to grouping will vary according to the knowledge and skills that they bring to the context (Baines, Blatchford, & Kutnick, 2003). Young students, for example, do not have the conversational strategies or the confidence to interact in large groups. Furthermore, students need to be regulated by the teacher to co-ordinate turn taking in conversations. Baines et al. (2003) also advocated for inclusion of individual work, as it allows students time to reflect on ideas, and prepares them to work in groups.

When working as a whole-class groups, it is recommended that students are positioned in a way that they can see and hear the teacher and their classmates adequately (van Hees, 2007). Circle or U-shape configurations are considered useful to allow students to engage in interaction because all students have eye contact with their classmates and the teacher and students can listen to the messages well both across and forward. Another possible configuration, although not as effective as the ones mentioned above, are double

rows in two semicircles or U-shapes. This configuration can be used when the class are large and the classroom space is small. Using these configurations, the teachers can enable students to pay attention to their classmates' messages and be able to ensure that turn-taking occurs.

Studies of teaching and learning in infant (5-7 years old) and junior (7-11 years old) schools, undertaken in earlier decades (Bennett, Desforge, Cockburn, & Wilkinson, 1984; Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, & Ecob, 1988) noted that students usually worked alone or listened when the teacher instructed the whole class. While students sat in groups, however, they did not work in groups. Other studies have shown that group work has increased (see Galton, Hargreaves, Comber, Wall, & Pell, 1999; Galton & Williamson, 1992). Insofar as teachers allow students to participate in pair-group activities, the students will have the opportunity to be in control of the discourse, or topicalisation, which is discussed in the next section.

**2.3.7.4 Topicalisation.** This process is the means by which students can take control of the discourse (van Lier, 1988). To understand oral language interactions in the classroom it is important to consider who controls and manages the discourse. Typically, it is the teacher who takes control of the discourse (Ellis, 2012; Walsh, 2002) with the contribution of students frequently scarce because students are restricted to responding to previous questions asked by the teacher which involves a predominantly IRF exchange (Ellis, 2012; Herazo, 2010). However, research evidence has revealed that students should be the ones who are in charge of the discourse because the quality of the interaction becomes richer. With the aim of providing students with opportunities to achieve control of the interaction, in order to achieve learning, the focus of the class should be on the topic with the teacher legitimatising topicalisation in the classroom (Ellis, 1999). An example is provided by Polio and Gass (1998) who, in comparing the comprehension scores of two dyads in an information-gap task,

showed that the students who had most control of the interaction were the one with higher comprehension scores.

### **2.3.8 Summary.**

This section showed the important role of oral interaction in facilitating L2 learning and presented research that has been conducted to understand how it works. It also described a set of interactional patterns that are considered useful to facilitate young students interact orally in the classroom. However, existing research has given little attention to investigate the teachers' rationales for the decisions to promote or reject these interactional patterns, whether oral interaction is actually used or not in EFL elementary contexts, or how to help them understand oral interaction and what it involves. The next section discusses the third body of literature that is a strand within the language teacher cognition domain: teacher learning.

## **2.4 Teacher Learning**

### **2.4.1 Introduction.**

The section is divided into four subsections. The first subsection offers a brief outline of the development in the study of teacher learning in education in general and particularly the field of English language teaching; and, it also defines teacher learning. The second subsection examines the relation between curriculum innovation and teacher learning. The third subsection investigates and evaluates existing research on teacher learning. The last subsection describes the few empirical research that was found on teacher learning regarding oral interaction.

### **2.4.2 Development of research on teacher learning.**

In the 1970s, teacher learning involved programming teachers to behave in specific ways that were considered central to students' effective learning (Borg, 2015b). In the 1980s, with the development of cognitive psychology, this view of teacher learning started to be criticised for ignoring teachers' individual experiences and points of view. It was realised that teachers did

not always behave in ways in which they were programmed. The role of teachers in general education then moved from implementers, who put their training into practice, to active thinkers who make judgements and decisions (Borg, 2006). This new view of teachers led to interest in investigating teachers' decision making (Shavelson, 1973) that considered that "any teaching act is the result of a decision, conscious or unconscious" (p. 144) and teachers' thought processes (Clark & Peterson, 1986) which involved a set of constructs about teacher thinking (the individual) and teachers' actions and observable effects (the social) (Freeman, 2006).

In the field of language teaching, teacher learning became important in the mid-1990s when the first seminal study on language teachers' decision-making was conducted (Woods, 1996). Decisions continued to be the unit of thinking, but they were elaborated as Beliefs, Assumptions and Knowledge (BAK). Years later, Borg (2003b) redefined the construct of thought processes as cognitions which are informed by schooling, professional coursework, contextual factors and classroom practice. The examination of these psychological constructs (Borg, 2003b) has shown that what teachers know integrates elements learnt in social interaction and other that have been explicitly taught. However, there is not a consensus about how information that teachers have learnt explicitly influence teachers' views that have been learnt through experience (Freeman, 2006).

It is well established that "teacher learning is central to improving classroom practices, instruction and thus, student learning" (Freeman, 2006, p. 7), with teacher professional development essential for continuing teacher learning. The most common professional development is the one that focuses on a top-down approach that includes formal courses and workshops that involve predetermined topics that do not always relate to teachers' interests and needs (Wyatt & Oncevska, 2017). More recently bottom-up approaches, which include action research (e.g., Pinter & Mathew, 2017) and exploratory



action research (e.g., Smith, Connelly & Rebolledo, 2014) have been recommended for continuing professional development because they allow teachers to have control over their own professional learning. A bottom-up approach provides teachers with opportunities to decide the content and the process of the professional learning. It also enables teachers to explore and deepen their understandings of their beliefs and practices and to connect them with received knowledge in the process (Borg, 2015b).

The present study adopts a notion of teacher learning that encapsulates a current view of such learning, that it is complex, personalised and iterative, amongst other attributes. Teacher learning is defined in the present study as a complex non-linear and “gradual process of proceduralising aspects of formal and experiential knowledge gained from teacher education and classroom experience mediated by beliefs and contextual constraints” (Phipps, 2010, p. 23). This process can be facilitated by making teachers feel dissatisfaction with aspects of their cognitions and practices and become aware of and question them. It also can be facilitated by providing teachers exposure to alternative ideas and practices which are considered plausible and fruitful and opportunities to explore their teaching and try out alternative practices (Phipps, 2009).

The advent of the field of teacher cognition caused a gradual shift of the conception of knowledge (Freeman & Johnson, 1998) leading to the examination of the processes of teacher learning (Phipps, 2009). According to Johnson (2009), the knowledge-base of L2 teacher learning draws from three domains: The content of L2 teacher education programmes: *What L2 teachers need to know*; the pedagogies that are taught in L2 teacher education programmes: *How L2 teachers should teach*; and the institutional forms of delivery through which both the content and pedagogies are learned: *How L2 teachers learn to teach* (p. 11).

Teacher learning implies changing cognitions and practices and involves opportunities to challenge teachers' cognitions and practices through formal and informal instances of learning. According to Knezedivc (2001), the first phase of the process of changing cognitions and practices is helping teachers to increase awareness of their own cognitions and practices. Teachers, she claimed, will not learn "unless they are aware of who they are and what they do" and "developing awareness is a process of reducing the discrepancy between what they do and what they think they do" (p. 10). Clarke and Hollingworth (2002) noted that teacher learning is possible when mediating processes that involve reflection and enactment occur. According to these authors, four domains comprise these processes which are the personal domain (teacher cognitions), the domain of practice (professional experimentation), the domain of consequence (salient outcomes) and the external domain (sources of information, stimulus or support).

The relationship between cognitive and behavioral change is complex. Early research studies (e.g., Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Loyd, 1991) showed that changes in teachers' cognitions were necessary if effective changes in teachers' practices were expected. Recent studies (e.g., Borg, 2006, 2015a), however, posited that changes in cognitions do not necessarily bring changes in teachers' practices and vice versa.

Effective changes in cognitions and practices require that teachers are provided with up to date theories that are comprehensible, feasible and help them examine the cognitions underlying their practices. Teachers need opportunities to generate discontent with their cognitions, reflect on their teaching experiences and examine the advantages of new practices. Professional learning should also provide teachers with opportunities to experience new practices and be guided to incorporate the new practices in their own teaching (Phipps, 2009).

The two studies below are some of the few examples of teacher professional development in the Chilean context. Firstly, Smith, Connelly and Rebolledo's project (2014) called "Champion Teachers," a project funded by the British Council in Chile and endorsed by the Chilean Ministry of Education, is one of the few initiatives conducted to help teachers continue learning through their careers. The project aimed to support a group of 32 secondary in-service teachers in public and semi-private schools to recognise problematic issues and good practices in their lessons. They designed and conducted a small-scale classroom research project to understand the problems in depth and also find possible solutions. Secondly, the Chilean Ministry of Education launched the EFL-strengthening plan in 300 public schools in Chile in 2015 (Ministerio de Educación, 2015) in order to improve EFL teaching and learning in Chile. Teachers attended workshops facilitated by Chilean or foreign experts which focus on teaching methodology. They also participated in online or face-to-face professional development programmes that helped them be prepared to implement the curriculum reform. The curriculum, as already discussed, is focused on the CLT and development of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) (Barahona, 2016). A group of students who belong to years 5-9 have to take a test annually in order to examine the effectiveness of the plan.

For teacher learning in EFL elementary contexts, the most current and salient gaps identified in the literature were found in Wilden & Porsch (2017) that brought together studies conducted by a number of researchers from various disciplines. The authors addressed the urgent need to investigate what is really happening in elementary EFL classrooms and its effects. They also stated that there is a need to investigate teachers' cognitions, their influence on the teachers' practices and whether cognitions and practices may be influenced by teacher learning opportunities.

### **2.4.3 Curriculum innovation for CLT and teacher learning.**

English curricula and foreign language education policies in countries around the world have subscribed to the communicative language teaching approach (e.g., British Council, 2015, in the context of Chile; Nunan, 2003, in the context of Asia-Pacific). Empirical research has shown, however, that the implementation of curricula innovations does not fully reflect curriculum designers' expectations (e.g. Canh & Barnard, 2009; Carless, 2003, 2004; Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Li, 1998). For example, Orafi and Borg (2009) investigated the implementation of a new communicative English language curriculum in secondary schools in Libya and found "considerable differences" (p. 234) between the principles of the curriculum and the teaching practices. Although there is clear evidence of the problem, there has been a paucity of research that has addressed the issue providing teachers teacher learning opportunities that give them the necessary support to implement innovations (Fullan, 2007). Furthermore, it has been argued that educational innovation has failed because it has not recognised the importance of teacher learning (Bakkenes, Vermunt & Wubbels, 2010).

Two interventions have been described which have successfully influenced teachers' teaching practices to include CLT in their practices. Nunan (1987) prepared a teacher to use referential questions while Kamaravadivelu (1993) examined whether the implementation of a set of macrostrategies created more opportunities for meaningful interaction. Both interventions successfully influenced teachers' teaching practices in the short term. Neither of these studies, however, examined the cognitions of the teachers. According to Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood and Son (2007), inquiry into teacher cognition has only recently been considered when investigating teacher learning.

Regarding studies that have investigated the influence of teacher learning on the cognitions and practices of teachers about CLT, few examples of research have been found (Wyatt, 2009; Zhu & Shu, 2017). Zhu & Shu's study (2017) examined the influence of a

four-year-long curriculum innovation project, introducing a weak form of communicative language teaching on the cognitions and practices of a teacher at a Chinese secondary school. The teacher was observed across five stages of the project: the pre-project stage, the top-down stage, the bottom-up stage; the exam preparation stage, and the post-project stage. At the pre-project stage, Zhu and Shu investigated the basic situation of English education in the research setting. Subsequently, in the top-down stage, the teacher participant was spoon-fed with “dos and don’ts” and her practices were manipulated by teacher educators. The bottom-up stage focused on the context-specific reality of the teacher. The exam preparation stage involved preparing students for examination and finally, the post-project stage consisted of the teacher volunteering to teach at a rural secondary school.

Consistencies between the cognitions of the teacher and her practices were observed at the pre-project, the bottom-up and the post-project stages. In contrast, at the top-down and exam stages of the project, changes in the teacher’s cognition were not reflected in her practices.

#### **2.4.4 Research on teacher learning and teachers’ cognitions.**

It is well-known that teacher education and professional development should strengthen and extend teachers’ cognitions, change cognitions, allow teachers to put their cognitions into practice, and develop links between teachers’ cognitions and theory (Borg, 2011). Most research studies in teacher education have focused on the impact of cognitions in pre-service contexts, but have produced mixed findings (Borg, 2006, 2015a; Kubanyiova, 2012). Some studies finding that teacher education did not have any impact on teachers’ cognitions. For example, a case study of a four weeks pre-service course (Borg, 2005), on the development in pedagogical thinking, showed no impact on teachers’ cognitions. This suggested that the influence of the “apprenticeship of observation” or experiences as language learners on a trainee’s beliefs was long-lasting. Another study involving a teaching English as a second

language methodology programme also revealed that the beliefs of 146 trainee teachers about language learning differed from those of experienced ESL teachers, despite a three-year programme that aimed to change the beliefs (Peacock, 2001). None of the studies (neither the short nor the long) showed changes in cognitions. Conversely, other studies have provided evidence that teacher learning opportunities can lead teachers' cognitions to change (e.g., Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000; Clarke, 2008; Mattheoudakis, 2007). A three-year longitudinal study, for example, that investigated the impact of an English language teaching pre-service education programme in Greece showed that the beliefs developed gradually, due to the fact that teachers were exposed to declarative and procedural knowledge, a combination which is most likely to promote changes (Mattheoudakis, 2007).

Research that examines the impact of teacher in-service learning on teachers' cognitions is limited (Borg, 2011). Such studies have dealt with different aspects of the EFL curriculum such as writing (Scott & Rogers, 1995), grammar (Phipps, 2009), CLT (Lamie, 2004), and language teaching and learning (Borg, 2011). All of these studies revealed a positive impact on teachers' cognitions, although exactly what constitutes such impact has not been resolved to-date (Kubanyiova, 2012). Lamb (1995) proposed that the focus of teacher learning for in-service teachers should be on the beliefs of the teachers themselves. Teachers should articulate their beliefs in order to examine whether these beliefs compete with other of their beliefs, their students' beliefs and their context. If teachers are able to understand and articulate their beliefs, they will be more likely to be able to change their cognitions and their practices.

The next subsection reviews research on the impact of teacher learning on oral interaction in the classroom.

#### **2.4.5 Teacher learning and oral interaction.**

Although it is claimed that teachers are not clear about what interaction is, and what constitutes it (e.g., Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Herazo, 2010; Walsh, 2013), and that there is evidence that oral interaction is rarely promoted in EFL classrooms (e.g., Cameron, 2001; Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Petek, 2013; Pinter, 2011; Xie, 2010), little is known about the processes of teacher learning that may enhance interaction (Thoms, 2012).

A few studies were found that focused on language teacher learning and classroom oral interaction through professional development (Cullen, 1998; Richards, 1990; Thornbury, 1996; Tsui, 1996; Walsh, 2006, 2011) and aimed to train language teachers to make better use of different oral interaction strategies. Richards' study (1990) focused on improving teachers' questioning strategies through a training course that involves the use of film, self-evaluation and microteaching. The results of this study revealed that teachers were able to ask more genuine questions after the course.

Similar results were achieved by Thornbury (1996). His study examined the communicative classroom talk in classroom interaction. He asked teacher trainees to record, transcribe and analyse one segment of their own lessons and recognise which features of their communicative classroom talk were more or less communicative. The study revealed that teachers gained awareness that the features that are more communicative in nature are genuine questions, content feedback, wait-time and student-initiated talk.

Other studies have concluded that judging the interaction of teachers' and students' talk depends on the way in which interaction is defined in the specific contexts of study. For example, Cullen's study (1998) concentrated on examining teacher-talk from a qualitative perspective, arguing that "good teacher talk does not necessary mean little teacher talk; rather effective teacher talk facilitates learning and promotes communicative interaction" (p. 179).

Cullen suggests that judging the communicativeness of teachers' or students' talk should be made according to what communicativeness is understood to be.

Walsh's (2006) study aimed to improve a group of university language teachers' interactional competences through the use of Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) and guided reflective practice. He argued that using SETT, teachers were expected to gain classroom interactional competence (CIC) defined as "teachers' and students' ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning" (Walsh, 2011, p. 132) with the objective that by understanding and extending CIC, more opportunities for learning would occur.

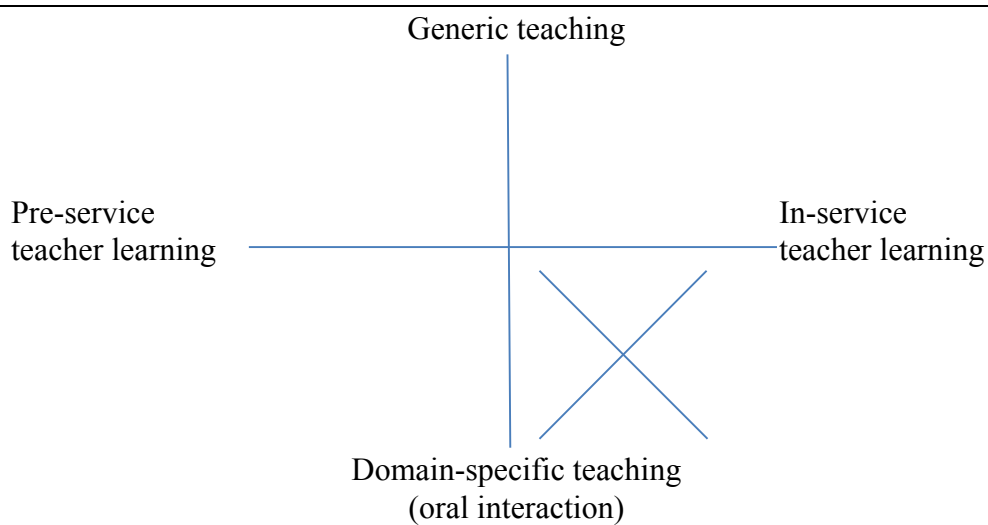
In summary, although some research has focused on teacher learning and oral interaction and provided teachers opportunities to understand which are the strategies that can help them enhance oral interaction in the classroom, little is known about what teachers know, believe and think about oral interaction and how these cognitions are reflected in their teaching practices.

The review showed that the three bodies of research have had parallel shifts in paradigms which have brought greater understanding of the more complex processes of teaching and learning L2. The studies ranged from those from a paradigm in which teachers were provided with "recipes" to teach, and implement, based on other people's ideas, to a paradigm in which teachers became active agents and decision makers of their own teaching. In Chile, there has been little acknowledgment of the role of in-service teacher professional learning in promoting oral interaction. Furthermore, although it is acknowledged that oral interaction rarely occurs in the EFL classroom, there is little evidence that describes how it works and why, especially, in elementary school context.



## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

The present research study is placed within a framework for research into language teacher education from a language teacher cognition perspective proposed by Borg (see Chapter 2, subsection 2.2.3 for more details). Substantively, this research is domain-specific, that is, aims to understand cognitions within a specific curricular area which is oral interaction. It also focuses on in-service teachers. Figure 2 shows where this study is placed within Borg's framework (2006, p. 282)



*Figure 2. A Framework for Language Teacher Education Research*

Teacher cognition as a framework includes cognitions about all aspects of teachers' work. Different dimensions have been described and used in the literature to represent the broad and inclusive term of teacher cognition. These dimensions include beliefs, knowledge, theories, assumptions, understandings, and conceptions among others. The dimension used in the present study to represent the term cognitions are teachers' understandings, perceptions, beliefs and assumptions (see Chapter 2, subsection 2.2.2 for more information about these constructs). Although these dimensions are studied separately, it is acknowledged that they are inextricably intertwined in the mind of the teacher (Borg, 2006). The present research study aimed to extend further the understandings of the complex relation between teachers' cognitions, teaching practices and teacher learning.

The following chapter presents the methodological aspects of this study, together with the methods of data collection and analysis.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This research study examines EFL elementary teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and how these relate to their teaching practices in Santiago, Chile. The study also investigates the quantity and quality of the oral language in L2, and the extent to which oral interaction is promoted in teachers' classrooms. It also reports on evidence on the influence of teachers' professional learning opportunities on the cognitions and teaching practices of a small sample of teachers.

The methodology of this study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What cognitions do Chilean EFL teachers in public and semi-private elementary schools in Santiago hold about L2 oral interaction?
2. What is the quantity and quality of the oral language and oral interaction that occur in the teachers' classrooms?
3. To what extent are EFL teachers' cognitions reflected in their actual practices?
4. What is the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the teachers' cognitions about L2 oral interaction and their actual practices?

This chapter presents the research paradigm, research design, the collection and analyses methods, and the participants. It also describes the professional learning sessions and the ethical issues that were addressed.

#### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

The present study is guided by "systems of beliefs and practices that influence how researchers select both the questions they study and methods that they use to study them" (Morgan, 2007, p. 49). This study follows a pragmatic worldview "that embraces

superordinate ideas gleaned through consideration of perspectives from both sides of the paradigms debate in interaction with research question and real-world circumstances” (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 73). In the present study, the pragmatic worldview is especially important in investigating teachers’ cognitions and their actual teaching practice because investigating teachers’ lessons aims to provide an objective description of the state of language teaching regarding oral interaction which represents a single reality, and to explain how this reality works in a particular setting. It is also believed in this study, however, that each teacher has his/her own unique interpretation of this reality that need to be investigated to understand and explain why it happens. These interpretations are informed by teachers’ cognitions about what, how and who they teach, teachers’ prior learning experiences and mediated by contextual factors.

Thus, in order to understand language teaching and learning, it is important to pay attention to both to what it is objectively seen in teachers’ classrooms and to teachers’ implicit interpretations and explanations of what it is observed. This is needed to capture a broader picture of the nature and complexity of language teaching and learning and to find ways to support teachers to enhance such teaching and learning.

Consistent with the pragmatist approach, the selection of methods of this study was in accordance to what the researcher considered worked best for answering the research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). A description of the two phases of this mixed-methods research with its data collection methods and the considerations underpinning their use are presented in the next two sections.

### **3.3 Research Design**

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to investigate teachers’ cognitions about oral interaction, the relation to their practices and the influence of teacher learning opportunities on teachers’ cognitions and their practices. Mixed-methods is defined

as “research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry” (Tashakkori & Crewell, 2007, p. 4).

The study is divided into two phases. Phase 1 used a questionnaire to inquire into the existing cognitions about oral interaction of a sample of EFL elementary teachers. Table 1 is provided to summarise Phase 1 of the study.

Table 1

*Overview of Research Design (Phase 1)*

Participants	Research question	Method	Time-frame
95 EFL teachers in Year 5 and 6 from different elementary public and semi-private schools in Santiago, Chile	What cognitions do Chilean EFL teachers in public and semi-private elementary schools in Santiago hold about L2 oral interaction?	A questionnaire administered online and in teachers’ L1	July-October, 2013

The questionnaire was written in the teachers’ native language (Spanish) to ensure that teachers understood the questions and could answer without language limitations. The questionnaire was administered online through [freeonlinesurveys.com](http://freeonlinesurveys.com) and completed anonymously by 95 EFL teachers from July until October, 2013.

Phase 2 supplemented and extended the information provided by the questionnaire in Phase 1 with a smaller number of teachers. The purpose of this phase was to gain additional insights into the teachers’ cognitions about oral interaction, to investigate the quantity and quality of oral language and interaction, and how they reflect teachers’ cognitions about oral interaction. This phase also examined the influence of professional learning opportunities on the cognitions of oral interaction and teaching practices.

Data to inform Phase 2 were collected from several sources (different for each group as shown in Table 2 below): a questionnaire, classroom observations, an individual interview, a focus group interview, semi-structured personal documents, fieldnotes and a stimulated recall interview in order to that the sources complement and corroborate one another. The use of multiple methods provides a view of what teachers reported (questionnaire, focus group interview, individual interview and personal documents), what teachers do (classroom observations and fieldnotes) and what they thought of what they did (stimulated recall sessions and individual interview) at the beginning and at the end of the study. Table 2 summarises the data collection for Phase 2 of the study and the relationship of the data to the research questions.

Table 2

*Overview of Research Design (Phase 2)*

Participants	Research questions	Methods		Time-frame
		Learning sessions group	Interview group	
	1. What cognitions do Chilean EFL teachers in public and semi-private elementary schools in Santiago hold about L2 oral interaction?	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	October, 2013
		Personal document 1	Focus group interview	October, 2013
8 EFL teachers in Year 5 and 6 from different elementary public and semi-private schools in Santiago, Chile. These teachers were divided into two groups: learning sessions group and interview group (4 teachers each group)	2. What is the quantity and quality of the oral language and oral interaction that occur in the teachers' classrooms?	Classroom observations 1	Classroom observations 1	October, 2013
		Fieldnotes 1	Fieldnotes 1	October, 2013
	3. To what extent are EFL teachers' cognitions reflected in their actual practices?	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	October, 2013
		Personal document 1	Focus group interview	October, 2013
		Classroom observations 1	Classroom observations 1	October, 2013
		Fieldnotes 1	Fieldnotes 1	October, 2013
		<b>Teacher learning sessions</b>		October-November, 2013
	4. What is the influence of teacher learning opportunities on teachers' cognitions about L2 oral interaction and their practices?	Personal document 2	Individual interview	December, 2013
		Questionnaire	Questionnaire	December, 2013
		Classroom observations 2	Classroom observations 2	December, 2013
		Fieldnotes 2	Fieldnotes 2	December, 2013
		Stimulated recall sessions		December, 2013

**3.3.1 Phase 1 participants**

The participants in this phase of the study were EFL elementary teachers in public and semi-private schools in the metropolitan region of Santiago, Chile. The Ministry of Education of Chile contacted 400 EFL teachers on their databases in July 2013 and forwarded an email to invite teachers to participate in the study. To be eligible to complete the questionnaire teachers were required to be currently teaching EFL in classrooms with young students

ranging from 10-11 years old in Santiago, and to hold a bachelor degree in education, specifically in English language pedagogy. The age group was selected to focus on teachers whose students have been recently introduced to the English language as a formal subject at school.

Attached to the email was a covering letter and a Participant Information Sheet. The Participant Information Sheet included details of the project, with a link to the questionnaire that teachers could fill out online anonymously. The covering letter also included the researcher's personal details in case teachers were interested in volunteering for Phase 2 of the study. Completing the questionnaire did not commit teachers to participation in Phase 2.

By the end of September 2013, only 10 of the 400 EFL teachers who received the invitation had agreed to complete the questionnaire. The researcher then arranged to meet with the directors of language and pedagogy schools in two universities and of 20 elementary schools. The former were asked to forward the invitation to former student teachers, who were now working at schools while the latter were asked for their consent to talk to their teachers and invite them to participate in the study. Emails were sent to 50 directors of other elementary schools in the metropolitan region of Santiago, explaining the project and asking them to forward the invitation to their English teachers. The invitation was also posted in different groups of English teachers on Facebook. Furthermore, meetings were arranged with four directors of the education area of different municipal councils (organisations that are responsible for public and semi-private schools in Santiago) to explain the project and encourage them to invite their teachers to get involved in the professional learning sessions. After all these efforts to recruit a sizable group of participants, the questionnaire was completed by 95 teachers.



### 3.3.2 Phase 2 participants.

From the 95 teachers who completed the questionnaire in Phase 1, eight teachers volunteered to participate in Phase 2. The eight teachers assigned themselves into two groups, each experiencing a form of professional learning. Teachers were able to choose in which group to participate. One group became the learning sessions group who participated in a series of professional learning sessions; the second group was an interview group who took part in a focus group interview, but did not take part in the professional learning sessions. The cognitions about oral interaction and teaching practices of these eight teachers were traced at the beginning and at the end of the study.

Table 3 summarises the information on the eight teachers. Of the eight participants in Phase 2, seven were female and one was male. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, the teachers were given pseudonyms.

Table 3

#### *Summary of Information About Teachers*

Teachers	Age	Bachelor degree	Teaching experience	Type of school	Certification in English	Introduction of English at schools	Hours of English per week	Observed class	Research group
Ignacia	24	English language teaching	7 months	Semi-private	First Certificate in English (FCE)	Year 5 (10 year old students)	3	Year 5	Learning sessions group
Ingrid	25	English language teaching	1 and a half years	Semi-private	FCE	Year 1 (6 year old students)	3	Year 5	Learning sessions group
Irma	47	English language teaching	12 years	Public	No	Year 5 (10 year old students)	3	Year 6	Learning sessions group
Isidora	35	English language teaching	10 years	Public	FCE	Preschool (5 year old students)	3	Year 5	Learning sessions group
Camilo	29	English language teaching	8 years	Public	No	Year 5 (10 year old students)	3	Year 5	Interview group
Carla	47	English language teaching	5 years	Public	No	Year 5 (10 year old students)	3	Year 6	Interview group
Celeste	52	English language teaching	19 years	Semi-private	FCE	Year 1 (6 year old students)	5	Year 5	Interview group
Cristina	54	English language teaching	18 years	Public	No	Year 5 (10 year old students)	3	Year 6	Interview group

### 3.4 Research Methods

This section describes the approach to data collection and analysis adopted in this study. An iterative process by which analysis of data from each instrument informed the next instrument of data collection was used (Dornyei, 2007; Hopkins, 2002; Phipps, 2009). The section is divided into two subsections. First, the methods and tools for data collection will be presented followed by processes used for data analysis.

#### 3.4.1. Methods of data collection.

Multiple sources enabled data to be collected to address the research questions. A summary of the collection procedures is presented in the following table

Table 4

*Methods of Data Collection Phase 2*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Purpose(s)</i>
October, 2013	Questionnaire	Both groups	Baseline data, preparatory to focus group interview and discussion in the first LS group session (personal document 1)
October, 2013	Classroom observation 1	Both groups	Investigation of quantity and quality of oral language and oral interaction that occur; relation between cognitions and teaching practices
November, 2013	Focus group interview	Interview group	Further examination and explanation of questionnaire results in Phase 1 and 2
November, 2013	Personal document 1	Learning sessions group	Further examination and explanation of questionnaire results from Phase 1 and their results from Phase 2
December, 2013	Personal document 2	Learning sessions group	Examination and explanation of any changes in teachers' cognitions
December, 2013	Classroom observation 2	Both groups	Investigation of any changes in teaching practices (oral interaction)
December, 2013	Questionnaire	Both groups	Examination of any changes in teachers' cognitions. Prelude to individual interview and stimulated recall session
December, 2013	Individual interview	Interview group	Investigation and explanations of any changes in teachers' cognitions and practices
December, 2013	Stimulated recall session	Learning sessions group	Teachers' explanations of any changes in their cognitions and practices.

These methods of data collection were used to address two methodological issues in language teacher cognition research. Firstly, self-reported teacher change in cognitions does not imply teachers' behavioural change and vice versa (Borg, 2003b; 2006; Kubanyiova, 2012).

Secondly, because of the complex networks of teachers' cognitions, a single data collection method is not able to provide definitive insights.

The study thus used a range of methods to corroborate data gathered from one method with another, and to enhance or elaborate findings generated from one method with another method (Caracelli & Greene, 1997).

Each of the methods of data collection is described in the following seven subsections.

**3.4.1.1 Questionnaire.** A questionnaire was chosen for Phase 1 of the study because it enabled the researcher to collect large amount of data quickly and economically (Borg, 2006). It is a nonthreatening method to collect data because the names of the teachers who complete the questionnaire are completely unknown, even by the researcher.

Before the professional learning sessions began, the researcher went to the schools of the eight Phase 2 teachers to give them a hard copy of the questionnaire they had completed online in Phase 1. As the questionnaire completed online was anonymous, they were asked to complete it again. This completed questionnaire was later collected by the researcher. At the end of the study, the same questionnaire was sent again to the teachers via email and they were returned to the researcher via email when completed. The questionnaires were used to investigate the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the cognitions about oral interactions of the eight teachers, comparing data obtained in the questionnaire at the beginning of Phase 2 with data at the end of Phase 2.

Questionnaires are widely used in the field of language education to elicit reactions to, perceptions of, and opinions about different issues (Brown, 2001). They are also used to

obtain demographic information (Creswell, 2005); obtain and consider respondents' values and preferences and reports of their abstract and cognitive processes (Brown, 2001; Dornyei & Taguchi, 2010; Wagner, 2010). This method of data collection also has, nevertheless, limitations. Questionnaires are limited in their ability to capture the complex nature of teachers' cognitions (Borg, 2012); neither do researchers have an opportunity to ask for clarification or to obtain further expansion of respondents' answers. To deal with these limitations, the information gained from the questionnaire was complemented by other methods of data collection (individual and focus group interviews and personal documents) in Phase 2.

*3.4.1.1.1 Format and content of the questionnaire.* The questionnaire sought to enable a general description of the teachers' cognitions about oral interaction through open-ended, closed-ended and rating-scale questions. Questions included in the questionnaire were developed from the review of the literature on teachers' cognitions and oral interaction promotion in young students' classrooms (see Chapter 2, Review of the Literature).

The questionnaire was divided into four parts (Appendix A). Part 1 elicited information on teachers' studies and experience; classes currently taught; highest formal qualification to teach English; and perceptions of their proficiency in English. Part 2 contained closed-ended questions and rating-scale statements created by the researcher to elicit teachers' perceptions about what they do in the classroom. This section elicited the importance of the four language skills in a typical week of teaching, how confident teachers felt to teach them, and the language (L1/L2) that teachers and students used in different activities. Part 3 consisted of open-ended questions that asked teachers to define oral interaction, and to name and to describe their approach to teaching English. Part 4 consisted of 10 Likert rating-scale statements selected from two well-known inventories (explained in detail below): the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI; Horwitz, 1985) and

the Foreign Language Attitude Survey (FLAS; de García, Reynolds & Savignon, 1976). From the BALLI survey, six statements were used that investigated teachers' beliefs about language learning specifically in relation to promoting oral communication skills. These six statements did not represent a unified construct (see Chapter 4, section 4.4).

From the FLAS survey, four statements were utilised that involve assumptions about foreign language teaching concerning promoting oral communication skills. The statements were analysed separately, given the low internal consistency (see Chapter 4, section 4.5) when grouped as a sub-scale.

These 10 close response statements were selected because no surveys to elicit teachers' beliefs and assumptions about oral interaction specifically were found by the researcher, and because oral communication skills are considered crucial within the process of promoting oral interaction. The survey used a scale of responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The next two subsections provide a general description of the BALLI and the FLAS survey.

*3.4.1.1.2 The beliefs about language learning inventory (BALLI).* This inventory has been used in a large number of studies (e.g. Horwitz, 1999) to assess the beliefs of teachers of foreign languages and students regarding language learning and teaching. The aim of the inventory is to understand the reasons teachers adopt particular teaching practices. It has been used in professional learning activities such as foreign language methods classes for in-service workshops and teacher education. The inventory comprises 27 statements (Likert response scale) in five major areas, as follows: Foreign Language Aptitude, Difficulty of Language Learning, Nature of Language Learning, Language Learning Strategies and Motivations. The inventory was not designed to provide composite scores (Horwitz, 1985) but to gain insights into teachers' views of language learning and teaching.

The inventory was developed in three stages. Firstly, four groups of approximately 25 language teachers of diverse cultural background were requested to make a list of their personal beliefs, other people's beliefs and students' beliefs about language learning by means of free-recall tasks. A 30-item list was compiled from the tasks which subsequently was examined by foreign language educators from different cultural groups. The educators were also asked to provide their own beliefs or beliefs that they had experienced. Finally, the resulting list of 27 belief statements was then piloted with 150 first semester language students at the University of Texas to guarantee content and construct validity of the inventory.

*3.4.1.1.3 The foreign language attitude survey (FLAS).* This survey was developed in order to help teachers understand their own attitudes and assumptions about language teaching (de García et al., 1976). The original survey consisted of 53 Likert-scale statements that address different issues in language teaching. The survey was shortened to 25 statements in order to deal with the issue of time constraints and has been used in a range of inservice workshops. The 25 statements are divided into three major categories named: Motivating Students, Dealing with Students Responses, and the Nature of Language Learning and Instructional Strategies for Developing Oral Skills. The survey has been used extensively in workshops and in-service courses because its efficacy in helping language teachers investigate the validity of their assumptions about language teaching has been confirmed (Horwitz, 1985).

*3.4.1.2 Focus group semi-structured interviews.* A focus group interview was adopted in the study because the cooperative effect of group interaction can elicit a rich variety of data (Ho, 2006; Johnson, 1996). The interview group teachers (see Table 3, p. 70) took part in a focus group interview to elaborate and corroborate their cognitions captured in the questionnaires and to talk about their prior learning experiences. It also provided them

with opportunities to interact with colleagues, practice L2, exchange information, develop professional and social contacts and gain further insights into their cognitions.

The focus group interview was led by the researcher who played the role of moderator to lead a discussion on teachers' understanding, perceptions, beliefs, assumptions and teaching practices in relation to oral interaction and their own approaches to teaching English. The questions from the questionnaire were asked again to investigate in more depth the information that had been provided by the 95 teachers in the questionnaire (anonymously for those who did not become part of Phase 2 of the study), and possibly, to help clarify any information that the researcher found more difficult to interpret from the responses to the questionnaire. Teachers were audio-recorded in order to help the researcher translate and code the information that was collected (Appendix B).

The original design of the study considered two focus group interviews: the first at the beginning of the study, and the second after the professional learning sessions finished. Both interviews were scheduled once the four teachers agreed a day and time, and a venue was confirmed. The four teachers, however, attended only the first focus group interview, which lasted 70 minutes. The researcher's expectation was to conduct the focus group interview in English (L2) to provide them opportunities to practice L2 but the preference of the teachers was to have the interview conducted in Spanish. Celeste was the only teacher who favoured L2 during the interview. Clearly, then, the participants considered that Spanish would give them the opportunity to express their ideas more readily.

For a number of reasons beyond the researcher's control, the second focus group did not take place. Instead, each teacher was interviewed individually in Spanish at the teachers' convenience at their schools.

**3.4.1.3 Personal documents.** The teachers who participated in the teacher learning sessions, at the beginning and at the end of the sessions were asked to complete a personal

document (Appendix C). The personal documents were written in the teachers' native language (Spanish) to ensure that teachers understood the questions and could answer without language limitations. Personal document in this study refers to first-person statements that describes an individual's actions, experiences, and beliefs (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Teachers had to comment or answer the topics discussed during the first and last session of the professional learning sessions, which corresponded to the same questions and topics discussed in the focus group and individual interviews, respectively, with the interview group. The personal documents were included to provide an opportunity for these teachers to explain further their cognitions because the teacher learning sessions were not video or audio recorded. In the personal document that was written at the end of the study, teachers were asked to give feedback on the professional learning sessions and to give their opinion regarding whether their expectations were met.

**3.4.1.4 Classroom observations.** Classroom observations were used in Phase 2 of the study to examine the quantity and quality of the oral language in L2 used in the classrooms, the opportunities that students had to interact orally with their teachers and classmates and to investigate the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their actual teaching practices. The purpose of the observations after the sessions was to investigate the influence of the teacher learning opportunities on the teachers' practices by comparing the data collected prior to and after the professional learning sessions and focus group interview.

Classroom observations have some limitations however, such as the observer's paradox which states that the observation will change the perceived person's behaviour (Labov, 1972). Teachers in this study reported in the post-observation meetings that neither they nor their students appeared to be affected by the camera or the researcher's presence. This response may have been influenced by the researcher's attempt to gain trust and



acceptance from the beginning, by introducing herself and explaining why she was interested in observing the lessons.

The observations were video recorded to reduce possible bias (Agar, 1996), and to provide the researcher with an opportunity to view them as needed to corroborate, or to dismiss, earlier assumptions, and to include evidence that may have been missed. Recordings also allowed the researcher to review the observations in context and to encourage teachers later to reflect on their practices using the video recordings as stimuli.

Each of the eight teachers was asked to choose one of their classes, either a year 5 or year 6 to be observed. Five teachers were observed teaching a year 5 class, and three a year 6. Teachers were observed twice with the same group of students.

Most of the lessons were 90 minutes long with the exception of one that lasted 60 minutes because it was “teacher’s day” and the school day was shortened. Observations of the classrooms were conducted by a stationary video camera focused on the teacher positioned at the back of the classroom. Two different methods were used to gather data from the classroom observations: the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme (Spada & Frohlich, 1995) and fieldnotes.

*3.4.1.4.1 The COLT scheme.* This scheme was used to investigate the quantity and quality of oral language and interaction (see Chapter 2, subsection 2.3.5 for information about the rationale for using this scheme and more information about the scheme).

The COLT scheme is divided into two parts. Part A comprises seven categories and depicts classroom events at the level of activity and episode. The categories include “Time,” “Activity & episode,” “Participant organisation,” “Content,” “Content control,” “Student modality” and “Materials.” In this study, as seen in Table 5, only four categories were used: “Time,” “Activity & episode,” “Participant organisation” and “Student modality.” Although the categories “Content” and “Content control” were analysed, the results of these two

categories were not reported in this study because they overlapped with the results obtained in category “focus on form or message” of Part B.

Table 5

*COLT Observation Scheme Part A*

Time	Activity & Episode	PARTICIPANT ORGANISATION							STUDENT MODALITY					
		Class			Group		Individual		Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Grammar	
1	2	T↔S/C	S↔S/C	Choral	Same task	Different tasks	Same task	Different tasks						10

The first category (“Time”), is used to indicate the starting time of each activity and/or episode. The second category (“Activity”) is open-ended, that is, the researcher writes the name of the activity in each class with no predetermined descriptors to choose from. The third category, “Participant organisation” has three basic patterns of organisation: class, group and individual. The pattern of organisation of the class is divided into three features which are: teacher-to-student or class (T↔S/C), student-to-student or student-to-class (S↔S/C), and choral work by students; the patterns of organisation group and individual are divided into two features: same task and different task. The fourth category (“Student modality”) examines the language skills (writing, speaking, listening and reading) with which students engage in each episode and/or activity.

Part B, as shown in Table 6, examines the communicative features of verbal exchanges between teachers and students as they occur within each activity. It is divided into seven main communicative features that include “Target language,” “Information gap,” “Sustained speech,” “Reaction to form/ message,” “Incorporation of student utterances,” “Discourse initiation” and “Form restriction.” The categories “Sustained speech,” and “Form restriction” were analysed but the results of these categories were not reported in the thesis because the results of these categories overlapped with the findings of the fieldnotes. This

part of the scheme is divided into two parts: teacher verbal interaction and student verbal interaction.

Table 6  
*COLT Observation Scheme Part B*

TEACHER VERBAL INTERACTION																															
Target language		Information gap					Reaction to form/ message	Incorporation of student utterances																							
		Giving Information		Requesting Information																											
1	L1	2	Code-Switching	3	L2	4	Predictable	5	Unpredictable	6	Pseudo request	7	Genuine request	8	Form	9	Message	10	Correction	11	Repetition	12	Paraphrase	13	Comment	14	Expansion	15	Clarification request	16	Elaboration request

STUDENT VERBAL INTERACTION																																	
Target language		Information gap					Reaction to form/ message	Incorporation of student utterances																									
		Giving Information		Requesting Information																													
17	Discourse initiation	18	L1	19	Code-Switching	20	L2	21	Predictable	22	Unpredictable	23	Pseudo request	24	Genuine request	25	Form	26	Message	27	Correction	28	Repetition	29	Paraphrase	30	Comment	31	Expansion	32	Clarification request	33	Elaboration request

The first category “Target language” consists of two features in the original scheme, namely, L1 (native language) and L2 (foreign language). This study also included another feature named “code-switching” as it occurred frequently in the oral language that was observed.

The second category “Information gap” is divided into two features: giving information and requesting information. Giving information consists of predictable information, which is the information that commonly follows a request to which the teacher knows the answer, and unpredictable information, which is information that the teacher does

not know in advance. Requesting information involves pseudo-questions or display questions, for which the teacher knows the information that has been requested, and genuine questions or referential questions, for which the teacher does not know the answer in advance.

The third category, “Reaction to form/message” involves the linguistic form of sentences (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation). Reaction to message entails the meaning and context of the sentences. The fourth category, “Incorporation of student/ teacher utterances” is divided into seven features: correction, repetition, paraphrase, comment, expansion, clarification request, and elaboration request. Corrections correspond to any linguistic correction of a preceding exchange or indication of incorrectness, such as “we don’t say ‘he have’; we say ‘he has’.” Repetition is considered a full or partial repetition of a preceding exchange. An example of this feature is when students repeat a word or phrase requested by a teacher. “Paraphrase” involves a reformulation of preceding exchanges, including translations. For instance, a student tells the teacher “I went to the cinema yesterday” and the teacher responds “Oh, you went to the cinema yesterday.” “Comments” are positive or negative responses to a preceding exchange. Comments can be focused on message or focused on form. For example, the teacher asks a student “name a countable noun” and the student answers “pencil.” The teacher replies to the student’s preceding exchange “very good.” “Expansion” is an extension of the content of the preceding exchange or the addition of information that is connected to it. For example, the teacher asks a student what the name of the most famous tourist attraction in France is. The student answers “the Eiffel tower.” The teacher replies to the student “right, and it was constructed in 1887.” “Clarification requests” deal with information that was not clearly understood in the preceding exchange. For example, a student tells something to the teacher but the teacher did not hear, and the teacher asks the student: “Could you say that again, please?” Finally,

“elaboration request” involves asking for further information connected to the subject matter of the preceding exchange. For example, a student tells the teacher that he went to watch a movie the previous night. The teacher asks him “What movie did you watch?” and the student answers “Transformers.” The teacher requests “did you like it?”

**3.4.1.5 Fieldnotes.** Fieldnotes are “the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data” (Bogdan & Knopp, 2007, p. 119). The objective of fieldnotes is to record details of what has happened in the classroom. Fieldnotes focus on salient features concerning the participants of the study (Merriam, 2002), the environment, and the rapport between teachers and students evident in the classroom.

In the present study, the fieldnotes were descriptive. The first aspect included were descriptions of the teachers; for instance, teachers’ ways of talking and acting, gestures, and facial expressions. The second aspect was a documentation of the conversations in L2 that occurred among students in the classrooms. These were not included in the COLT scheme because that focused only on interactions between the teacher and students. The relationship between the teachers and students were another aspect that was observed and described. Finally, the third aspect was a description of the physical setting; for instance, descriptions of resources and stimuli such as what was hanging on the walls and on the bulletin board, and furniture arrangements were included.

**3.4.1.6 Individual semi-structured interviews.** Due to the fact that teachers’ cognitions are tacit and unobservable (e.g., Borg, 2003b, 2006; Kagan, 1992), an individual semi-structured interview was used to make the cognitions of teachers who were part of the interview group more explicit (Appendix E).

The aim of the interview was to gain additional understandings of the cognitions about oral interaction obtained from the questionnaire and the focus group interview. The

data gathered in this interview were used to examine the extent to which teachers' cognitions had changed from the beginning to the end of Phase 2 of the study. The conversation between the researcher and the teachers arose from the same questions that were included in the questionnaire and semi-structured focus group interview. The individual interview was also used to give teachers the opportunity to explain their teaching practices. The researcher used the coding of the hard copy of Part A of the COLT and fieldnotes of both observations as stimuli to ask the interview group teachers for explanations.

**3.4.1.7 Stimulated recall session.** A stimulated recall interview "is a complement of other data, since other data are used as a stimulus for the recall" (Gass, 2012, p. 154). An individual session with each of the four teachers who were part of the learning sessions group was scheduled, after the second classroom observation. Video recordings were used as a stimulus to ask teachers about their thoughts and interpretations of their practices and to reflect on the extent to which their practices had changed after the sessions.

Recall sessions lasted between 30 and 40 minutes with the location decided by the teachers. Sections of the lessons, such as the beginning of each activity, and short periods of the lessons when the teacher interacted with their students, were selected to view as the time available was insufficient to view the entire video. Discussion was focused on variables and features of oral interaction that teachers used in the classroom in each observation. The video recording was stopped to give teachers opportunities to comment on the activities and interactions. Efforts were made to guide teachers to interpret the sections of each video recording without coercion.

### **3.5 The Professional Learning Sessions**

The professional learning sessions aimed to discuss with teachers up-to-date theories.

Opportunities to understand, reflect on and practice through concrete practical activities were

provided, together with discussion to link theories and research with teachers' prior experiences and existing cognitions.

Teachers are considered “critical, reflective, decision-making agents with their own assumptions, attitudes, thinking, and beliefs about the classroom” (Burns, Freeman, & Edwards, 2015, p. 589). Teachers generate their own new understandings based on the interaction between their prior knowledge and beliefs, and the phenomena or ideas with which they come into contact (Richardson, 1997). They also create their new understandings through discussing with others new concepts and sharing ideas. The sessions intended to provide empowering experiences to teachers through giving them opportunities to present their own ideas and also allowing them to hear and reflect on the ideas of others (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). The sessions were informal with the researcher a “self-appointed” facilitator of the sessions who did not propose right answers and encouraged teachers to participate through reflection, discussion and collaborative dialogue.

The sessions involved a microteaching simulation designed to create multiple opportunities for reflection, authentic participation in teaching activities, and for teachers to attempt to materialise teachers' teaching practices. The microteaching simulation used in this study also involved asking teachers to teach the lesson plan designed in the sessions, in their own classrooms. A microteaching simulation for in-service teachers was used to provide experience in using and promoting oral interaction.

The series of sessions lasted five weeks, two sessions per week from October to November, 2013, after school hours. The first session was to gain additional insights of the teachers' cognitions obtained from the questionnaire in Phase 1 and at the beginning of Phase 2. The session followed the same structure of the focus group interview in which the teachers of the interview group participated. The session consisted of oral and written reflection of

their cognitions about oral interaction (personal document). Furthermore, the session aimed to understand teachers' motives to be part of the study and their expectations of the sessions.

Sessions two, three and four covered the following content: (i) the definition of oral interaction established by CEFR and oral interaction self-assessment grid for beginner students; (ii) a set of interactional patterns that was part of a model taken from a study that concerned the oral expressions of five- and six-year-olds in low socioeconomic schools in New Zealand (van Hees, 2007, 2011); (iii) principles of CLT; (iv) teaching English to young students and (v) assessing oral interaction. The interactional patterns of the model were chosen for three reasons. The interactional patterns were successfully implemented in the New Zealand context; the low socioeconomic school context of the New Zealand study resembled the context of the present study and interactional patterns used in van Hees' study were informed by other research on oral interaction (Cullen, 1998; Ellis, 2012; Herazo, 2010; Thornbury, 1996; Walsh, 2013). These latter researchers considered the interactional patterns beneficial for an effective promotion of oral interaction in ESL and EFL classrooms. From the model, four interactional patterns were adopted in this study: teacher questioning and questions, topicalisation, classroom activities structures, and turn-taking (see Chapter 2, subsection 2.3.7.2 for more information about the interactional patterns).

Teachers received a portfolio with copies of chapters of the books suggested as readings to be discussed in the sessions. Table 7 presents the contents and chapters of books and journals used to discuss and engage in collaborative dialogue in the professional learning sessions.



Table 7

*Contents, Books and Journals Used in the Professional Learning Sessions*

Contents	Core books/ journals
Interactional patterns	Expanding oral language in the classroom (van Hees, 2007)- Chapter 7: Structuring and enabling maximised participation: Think, prepare, then share in pairs; Chapter 8: Sharing at the whole-class/group level; Chapter 9: Teacher questions and questioning, Chapter 10: "Saying is not enough"- The importance of input in oral language expansion; and Chapter 11: Focusing on two specific text types to expand oral language expression
Principles of CLT	Approaches and methods in language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001)- Chapter 14: Communicative Language Teaching/ Journal article "Beyond the communicative language teaching: What's ahead" (Savignon, 2007)
Definition of oral interaction and self-assessment grid	Common European Framework of References for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment (Council of Europe, 2001)
Teaching young students	Expanding oral language in the classroom (van Hees, 2007, Chapter 4: The oral language- literacy interface  <i>Children learning second languages</i> (Pinter, 2011), Chapter 3: Context for language acquisition in Childhood
Assessing oral interaction	Assessing students' interaction in the target language: Exploring the potential of the interact standard in year 11. Martin East (2011)

Session five focused on the designing a collaborative lesson plan which was implemented in the following sessions as a microteaching simulation and, subsequently, in their own classrooms. The four teachers were divided into two groups with each asked to choose a topic for their lesson. Each pair of teachers chose a unit from the textbook the Ministry of Education provides to all public and semi public schools in Chile and received a lesson plan model provided by the researcher. The lesson plan included the topic of the lesson, achievement objectives, student's learning objectives, time, teacher activity, student activity, resources and theoretical justification.

In session six, a discussion took place between both groups giving feedback after sharing and reading the lesson plan of the other group. Following their peers' feedback,

teachers made some changes to their lesson plans when they found it pertinent. Finally, they prepared materials they would use to teach the lesson utilising some materials supplied by the researcher.

Sessions seven and eight focused on putting into practice the lesson plans through the 45 minute microteaching simulations (one microteaching per session). Teachers brought the materials created in the previous sessions, CDs, a hard copy of the unit that they chose from the book and worksheets they had designed. Each group also designed and brought to the session a bulletin board with classroom expressions and other materials to create an English environment in the classroom. At the end of the session, teachers were asked to teach the same lesson in their own classrooms.

In session nine, each teacher was given 20 minutes to describe the lesson they had taught in their own classroom and to give an evaluation of it. Two of the four teachers had managed to teach the lesson in their own classroom, but the other two apologised saying that they had to use the lesson to prepare students for the final test. Preparing students for the tests involved the teachers making sure that students practice the kind of exercises that they would be asked to do in the test.

The last session was one of written and oral conversations and reflections similar to the individual semi-structured interview that undertaken by the interview group. During this session, teachers discussed whether or not their expectations about the sessions had been met.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Procedures**

#### **3.6.1 Phase 1.**

The questionnaire in Phase 1 sought to uncover the nature and significance of existing teachers' cognitions about oral interaction of EFL teachers in Santiago.

The analysis of the data started before Phase 2 of the study was conducted. Textual data from the online questionnaire were typed into the computer, translated into English, read

and coded as initial development of categories (pre-coding process) by the researcher. When data collection was completed, the coding of the data was revised, refined and interpreted.

The first open-ended question of the questionnaire was responded by 75 of the 95 teachers. The responses during the pre-coding process were categorised according to the verbs teachers used to define oral interaction. The verbs included communicating, speaking, asking and answering questions, holding conversations, using the language orally, dialoguing, conveying information, expressing ideas and using English. These categories were transformed into quantitative counts on the basis of the number of respondents who mentioned each category to examine the frequency of the occurrence of each category.

In the coding process, similar categories were assembled together to establish their commonalities in order to create a theme. After the researcher reflected and read the definition of oral interaction and self-assessment grid for oral interaction established by the CEFR, four themes were created for the above data. These were (1) one-way communication, (2) two-way communication, (3) responses impossible to categorise as a one-way or two-way communication, and (4) personal comments unrelated to oral interaction as a one-way or two way process of communication. Subsequently, data in these themes were transformed into quantitative counts on the basis of the number of respondents who mentioned each theme in order to examine the frequency of the occurrence of each one.

The second open-ended question responded by 91 out of the 95 teachers asked the teachers to name and describe their approach to teaching English. In the pre-coding process, the 91 responses were classified according to the name of the approach or the brief descriptions that teachers provided. In the coding process, the brief descriptions and reported approaches with commonalities were classified into one of eight categories. The categories were the following: (1) teachers mention components of CLT without naming; (2) teachers mention the use of different language skills without naming any approach; (3) teachers name

an identifiable approach to language teaching without defining it; (4) teachers identify an eclectic approach; (5) teachers explicitly report not to have an approach to teaching English; (6) teachers report an approach that meets the requirements established by the Ministry of Education but they do not name it or describe it; (7) teachers name an approach based on theories of language learning; and (8) teachers give idiosyncratic responses that did not fit into any of the above categories. Then, these categories were transformed into quantitative counts by determining the percentages of teachers whose responses included each of the categories.

Numerical data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) database. Data were first screened for missing values. The part of the questionnaire that examined teachers' perceptions of the importance of the four language skills and use of L2 did not present any missing value. The part of the questionnaire that gathered information about teachers' beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning regarding oral communication had a considerable number of missing values. Only the questionnaires that were fully responded to in this part were considered (74 questionnaires). Likert-scale statements and closed-ended questions items were assigned a numerical code.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, revealed patterns of interest obtained from a priori categories and themes predetermined by the researcher to understand EFL elementary teachers' perceptions of their own teaching practices regarding the integration of the four skills, their confidence to teach them and the use of L2; teachers' beliefs about learning oral communicative skills and teachers' assumptions about teaching English for communication and interaction. Tables were designed to summarise and present the findings clearly and succinctly.

**3.6.1.1 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire.** Five features were included to enhance the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The first feature was that the statements used

to investigate teachers' beliefs and assumptions about language teaching and learning regarding promoting oral communication were taken from established questionnaires, used extensively in research. Another feature was that the questionnaire was field-tested to ensure that the statements were not ambiguous, and to confirm the feasibility of the procedures (Gillham, 2007). A group of seven EFL teachers participated in the field-testing to give feedback about the clarity of the statements and the structure of the questionnaires. Furthermore, efforts were made to ensure that the invitation to complete the online questionnaire was received by all the EFL elementary teachers in Santiago in order to try to ensure that the sample could be considered representative of EFL elementary teachers in Santiago. However, although all EFL teachers had an opportunity to participate from the initial Ministry email to those on its database, the extent to which the final 95 respondents are representative is not able to be established.

Another feature to ensure validity and reliability was that a researcher experienced in language-related coding was invited to check out the initial coding of the two open-ended questions. Both researchers met to discuss and cross-check the coding in order to achieve inter-rater reliability. Before the peer review, 83.3% inter-rater agreement was achieved and after the peer review, 100%. Finally, the initial learning session and the focus group interview were used as a form of member checking in which the data from the 95 respondents were shared to the eight teachers and they engaged in a discussion around what was found in the data.

### **3.6.2 Phase 2.**

The analysis of the data in Phase 2 involved cyclical and summative analysis. Cyclical analysis in this phase ensured that the focus group interview and personal document were based on analysis of teachers' responses to the questionnaire of Phase 1 and first part of Phase 2, and the individual interview was based on the analysis of the focus group interview.

A summative analysis was completed by chronologically reviewing the recurrent findings of each teacher and the two groups to examine the influence of teacher learning opportunities on teachers' cognitions and their teaching practices.

Most data in Phase 2 were coded deductively by using a priori categories derived from the literature review, research questions and the questionnaire.

**3.6.2.1 Focus group interview, individual interview and personal documents.** The process of analysis and interpretation of the focus group interview, individual interview and personal documents is divided into two stages. The first stage of data analysis was an on-going process that started during data collection (October, 2013) and was completed after all the data were gathered. This process started with the organisation and preparation of the data for analysis. The focus group interview and the individual interviews were fully transcribed and translated by the researcher. All these transcripts were typed into the computer together with the transcripts of the personal documents of the teachers. Once the transcriptions and translations were done, the teachers received a copy of their translated transcripts of the focus group interview, individual interview and personal documents to check and were invited to make any amendments and/or delete any statements.

Then, the transcripts were read systematically with interesting or unresolved issues noted in analytic memos for future reference. Significant segments of the transcripts were identified and labelled with the categories and themes that were predetermined from the questionnaire and the conceptual framework. The categories included the four dimensions that were used in this study to represent the umbrella term "teacher cognition": understandings, perceptions, beliefs and assumptions. For instance, in a focus group interview transcript, a segment of data was identified in which a teacher was explaining further her approach to teaching English reported in the questionnaire. This segment was labelled "understanding." In the focus group interview and personal document at the

beginning of Phase 2, teachers were also asked to describe their prior learning experiences. Memos were also used to identify and develop contextual constraints that subsequently became themes.

The next stage of data collection was divided into three chronological phases: initial, secondary and final coding. In the initial coding phase, all the transcripts were imported to NVivo and assigned to a case node (each participant of the second phase of the study became a case). The decision was made because NVivo allows the researcher to analyse all the data that were gathered about a case internally and also to compare them with other cases (Bazeley, 2007). The researcher went back to the transcripts (now in a NVivo document) to reread the transcripts. Segments of the transcripts of each teacher were then labelled and organised around predetermined themes within the a priori categories already described. Other themes were generated inductively and organised around a category named “contextual and other factors.” For instance, the theme “institutional constraints” was generated after teachers stated that they did not provide students with opportunities to interact because they had large classes and few hours to teach English in the classroom.

Once all data were initially coded, the secondary phase of coding started; data were synthesised, looking for similar or the same themes within and across groups. Synthesising the data allowed the researcher to generate a new theme. Most teachers reported and were actually observed to focus on providing students explicit grammar explanations and asking them to do grammatical exercises. They explained that their decision to teach grammar was because their students had limited knowledge of the language and were not motivated to learn English. A theme was generated called “teaching young students” because these data suggested that most teachers were not aware of how young students learn (Appendix F).

Table 8 presents the themes corresponding to the focus group interview, personal documents and individual interview.

Table 8

*Themes in Focus Group Interview, Personal Documents and Individual Interview*

<i>Teachers' prior learning experiences</i>	<i>Teachers' understandings</i>	<i>Teachers' perceptions</i>	<i>Teachers' beliefs</i>	<i>Teachers' assumptions</i>	<i>Contextual and other factors</i>
Approach to learning English.	Approach to teaching English.	Importance of language skills.	Young students' motivation to speak English.	A lack of a means of testing oral communicative skills hinders promoting oral communication.	Institutional.
Use of L2.	Oral interaction.	Confidence to teach language skills.	English accent versus international accepted pronunciation.	Drills and practices provide a meaningful context for learning English.	Pedagogical.
Oral interaction.	Teaching young students.	Use of L2.	Difficulty of learning oral skills and oral interaction.	Teachers need to be fluent to teach effectively for communication.  Listening and speaking are the skills that should be most emphasised in the lessons.	Personal.

The final coding phase involved a constant comparison of analysed data from that collected in the initial part with analysed data from the final part of Phase 2 of the study to investigate the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the cognitions of the teachers. The analysis focused on the differences or similarities of teachers' answers and comments before and after the professional learning sessions and focus group interview.

For instance, the teachers' understandings of oral interaction at the beginning of the study were compared with the understandings at the end of the study to identify any changes. Verbatim quotations by teachers provided evidence to support claims.



**3.6.2.2 The questionnaire.** The process of analysis and interpretation of the questionnaires in Phase 2 is divided into two stages. The first stage of data analysis was an on-going process that started during data collection (October, 2013) and was completed after all the data were gathered. The analysis of the responses to the readministration of the initial questionnaire in Phase 2 started before the focus group interview and the first session of the professional learning sessions were conducted. Similarly, the analysis of the responses of the final questionnaire in Phase 2 began before the individual interview (Interview group, henceforth I group) and the stimulated recall session (Learning sessions group, henceforth LS group) were conducted. This decision ensured that the information from the interviews, personal documents and stimulated recall session helped to clarify, corroborate or supplement the responses obtained from the questionnaires at the beginning and at the end of the study. Data analysis of questionnaire in Phase 2 followed the same procedures as for the online questionnaire in Phase 1. However, closed-ended questions and Likert scale statements were categorised through patterns within and across teachers instead of presenting descriptive statistics as for the questionnaire in Phase 1.

**3.6.2.3 Classroom observations.** Classroom observations were analysed using descriptive statistics (percentages) following the same procedures suggested by Spada & Frohlich (1995) in: “*COLT Communicative orientation of language teaching observation scheme: Coding conventions and applications.*” Data analysis started during the data collection period. Part A of the COLT observation scheme was completed on the days of the observations in real time, that is to say, while the researcher was present in the classroom. The researcher took a hard copy of the COLT scheme to every observed lesson and coded the turns of interaction between the teachers and students by hand. Subsequently, Part A was re-analysed using the video recordings to verify information and check the reliability of categorisation.

Data analysis of the observations using COLT part A were as follows: lessons were analysed using Excel. Firstly, each episode of the whole lessons was described and the time in which each episode started was written. Then, a calculation of the length of each episode was done, subtracting the starting time of an activity or episode from the starting time of the following activity or episode, as illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9

*Example of Timing Activities and Episodes*

Length of the activities & episodes	Time	Activities & episodes
0:05:00	8:50:00	<b>A1, E1</b> Teacher asks students to remember what they learnt the previous lesson (the weather)
0:15:00	8:55:00	<b>A1, E2</b> Teacher asks students to work in pairs and ask questions about the weather using a set of cards
	9:10:00	<b>A1, E3</b> Teacher asks students to change classmate and continue asking questions about the weather using a set of cards

As seen in Table 9, the calculation indicates that episode one (E1) of activity one (A1) took five minutes and episode two of activity one, fifteen minutes. Secondly, each episode was classified into two general categories: participant organisation and student modality.

Regarding participant organisation, each episode was classified as being class-oriented, group-oriented or individual-oriented. If the episode was classified as class-oriented, the researcher described whether the interaction observed was teacher-student, student-student or choral. Group-oriented and individual-oriented, the episodes were categorised as same task (students work in the same task) or different tasks (students work in different tasks). If an episode was concentrated on one feature within a category, it was recorded as an “exclusive focus.” “Exclusive focus” was classified with a single tick ✓. When an episode involved two features within the same category, but one of the features was more predominant than the

other, the episode had a “primary focus.” It was classified with a square tick ☑ for the “primary focus” plus a tick ✓ representing the “secondary focus.” Finally, when two features were given equal focus in an episode, it was called “combination.” It was represented by two ticks ✓✓.

Table 10 shows an example of how the percentage of time devoted to the features of the first category of the scheme (participant organisation) was calculated.

Table 10

*Example of Analysis of Category Participant Organisation*

PARTICIPANT ORGANISATION								
Length of activities and episodes	Time	Activities and episodes	Class		Group		Individual	
			T↔S/C	S↔S/C	Choral	Same task	Different tasks	Same task
0:04:04	0:04:52	Teacher asks students to remember what they learnt the previous lesson (the weather)	✓					
0:11:27	0:08:56	Teacher asks students to work in pairs and ask questions about the weather using a set of cards				✓		
0:06:57	0:20:23	Teacher asks students to change classmate and ask questions about the weather using a set of cards				✓		
0:07:50	0:27:20	Teacher shows flashcards and asks students the question what's the weather like?	✓					
0:04:34	0:35:10	Teacher asks students to look at page 82 of the book and match pictures related to the weather with a letter						✓
0:04:10	0:39:44	Teacher checks the activity with the students orally	✓					
0:04:05	0:43:54	Teacher asks students to look at page 82 of the book and match some weather words with some pictures						✓
0:02:10	0:47:59	Teacher checks the activity with the students orally	✓					
0:06:31	0:50:09	Listening activity- teacher introduces the topic of the listening "the weather forecast for America." Teacher asks questions to students	✓					
0:08:51	0:56:40	Listening activity- students listen to the recording						✓
0:05:47	1:05:31	Listening activity- teacher checks the activity with students orally	✓					
0:06:38	1:11:18	Listening activity- teacher asks students to review the numbers	✓		✓			
1:13:04	1:17:56	Class ends						
	Time	Focus	Percentage					
	0:30:32	Exclusive Focus Participant Organisation T↔S/C	41.79%					
	0:18:24	Exclusive Focus Participant Organisation group same task	25.18%					

0:17:30	Exclusive Focus Participant Organisation Individual same task	23.95%
0:06:38	Equal Combination of features Participant Organisation T↔S/C and Choral	9.08%
1:13:04		100.00%

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As seen in the table, most episodes had an “exclusive focus.” However, one of the episodes had a “combination focus.” The amount of time in which the lesson was exclusively class oriented was calculated giving a total time of 30 minutes and 32 seconds. The amount of time spent in class-oriented episodes was then divided by the total amount of time of the lesson (30 minutes and 32 seconds divided by one hour, thirteen minutes and four seconds). In total, the teacher spent 41.79% of her lesson in episodes that were class oriented.

Student modality category was determined according to whether the episodes were focused on listening, speaking, writing, reading or other. When more than one feature was observed in a category, a feature was described as being more “predominant” than the other, and when that two or more features had equal importance this was classified as “combination.” For instance, in an episode, in which the students were asked to read a passage and answer some questions related to the passage, the episode was focused on reading and writing, and so was described as having both features with equal importance. Table 11 illustrates the analysis of this category.

Table 11

*Example of Analysis of Category Student Modality*

STUDENT MODALITY							
Length of activities and episodes	Time	Activities and episodes	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Other
0:04:04	0:04:52	Teacher asks students to remember what they learnt the previous lesson (the weather)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
0:11:27	0:08:56	Teacher asks students to work in pairs and asks questions about the weather using a set of cards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
0:06:57	0:20:23	Teacher asks students to change classmate and ask questions about the weather using a set of cards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
0:07:50	0:27:20	Teacher shows flashcards and asks students the question what's the weather like?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
0:04:34	0:35:10	Teacher asks students to look at page 82 of the book and match pictures related to the weather with a letter					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
0:04:10	0:39:44	Teacher checks the activity with the students orally	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
0:04:05	0:43:54	Teacher asks students to look at page 82 of the book and match some weather words with some pictures					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
0:02:10	0:47:59	Teacher checks the activity with the students orally	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
0:06:31	0:50:09	Listening activity- teacher introduces the topic of the listening "the weather forecast for America." Teacher asks questions to students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
0:08:51	0:56:40	Listening activity- students listen to the recording and match cities with weather words	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
0:05:47	1:05:31	Listening activity- teacher checks the activity with students orally	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
0:06:38	1:11:18	Listening activity- teacher asks students to review the numbers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
1:13:04	1:17:56	Class ends					
	Time	Focus			Percentage		
	0:08:39	Exclusive Focus Student Modality Other			11.84%		
	0:39:23	Primary Focus Student Modality Listening			53.90%		
	0:25:02	Equal Combination of features Student Modality Listening and Speaking			34.26%		
	1:13:04				100.00%		

In this table, to calculate the percentage of time in which students were exclusively focused on “other” (match), the time of all the episodes that were exclusively focus on “other” was added, giving a total time of 8 minutes and thirty nine seconds. Subsequently, this 8 minutes and 39 seconds were divided by the whole time that the lesson lasted (1 hour, 13 minutes and 4 seconds).

Finally, all percentage values under each feature for individual classroom observations visits were summarised for each teacher.

The data analysis of the COLT scheme Part B started when the period of data collection was completed. Due to the rigorous examination of oral interaction that is needed for Part B of the COLT scheme, the coding was not made in real time. This part of the scheme gives a precise description of the oral language that occurred in the classroom (Spada & Frohlich, 1995). Video recordings were transcribed and the transcripts imported to Excel to be categorised into the COLT scheme (see Chapter 3, subsection 3.4.1.4.1).

The turns of teachers and students were analysed as follows. Each turn of every teacher and student was categorised according to whether the teacher or student was using L1, L2 or code-switching. Although the designers of the scheme suggested that the coding should be done using check marks, the researcher used the number one as an identifier in the relevant column in order to make the calculation of the percentages afterwards easier. To determine the percentage of time the teacher used L1, code-switching or L2, the researcher counted all number ones in a specific language and divided them by the total number ones under its specific category. Table 12 illustrates the way in which this analysis was conducted

Table 12

*Example of Analysis COLT Scheme Part B Category Target Language*

Teacher's turns	Target language		
	L1	Code-Switching	L2
1	2	3	4
1 Ahora [Now], open your English books, please. Página ciento ocho. [Page one hundred and eight] The blue book. Si no traje su libro, trabaja con su compañero de banco. [If you did not bring your book, you work with your seatmate].		1	
2 ¿Quién me puede decir que es lo que aparece en las imágenes? [Who else can tell me what you see in the images?] What is it?		1	
3 A garden.			1
4 What else Martina?			1
5 Nature.			1
6 Qué están haciendo los niños? [What are the children doing?] What are the children doing?		1	
7 How... ¿Cómo digo plantar? [How do you say plantar (in English)?]		1	
8 ¿Recuerdan el vocabulario que vimos?	1		
9 To plant.			1
10 Yes.			1
11 ¿Qué más están haciendo los niños? [What else are the children doing?]	1		
12 How do you say that?			1
13 To water.			1
14 Perfect.			1
Total	2	4	8
L1	2	14.29%	
Code- Switching	4	28.57%	
L2	8	57.14%	
Total (Teacher's turns)	14	100.00%	

As seen in Table 12, the teachers used L2 in eight out of the 14 turns in this example. To calculate the percentage of time in which the teacher used L2, the researcher divided the number of times the teacher used L2 by the total number of the teacher's turns, which gave a percentage of 57.14%. The turns in which the teacher or student used L2 were analysed subsequently to investigate the nature of the oral language and interaction in L2. Each turn of teachers and students in L2 was coded in order to investigate whether the turns involved giving or providing information. If the turns of the teachers and students were focused on

giving information, the researcher had to identify whether the turns provided predictable information (information that is already known) or unpredictable information (information that is not known). If the turns aimed to request information, the researcher had to describe whether the questions were pseudo (in which the expected answer is already known) or genuine (in which the answer is not known). Subsequently, the turns were categorised in order to determine if the information that had been given or requested was focused on meaning or form.

Turns not coded as giving or requesting information were classified into the categories of “incorporation of student/ teacher preceding utterances” and “focus on meaning” or “focus on form.” The first of these consisted of seven features: correction, repetition, paraphrase, comment, expansion, clarification request and elaboration request. This analysis required a more complicated procedure because both categories were analysed and calculated in combination. Table 13 presents an example in which the teacher’s turns were double-coded into these two categories.

Table 13

*Example of Analysis Combination Reaction to Form/Message and Incorporation of Teacher/Student Utterances*

Teacher's turns	Incorporation of student utterances											Student's turns	
	Form - Correction	Form- Repetition	Message - Repetition	Message - Paraphrase	Message - Comment	Message - Expansion	Message - Clarif. Request	Message - Elab. Request	Form- Comment	Correction- repetition	Correction- paraphrase		Form- Expansion
1 How many bedrooms does your grandma have in her house													2 S: She have two
3 Oh, she has two bedrooms											1		4. She has
5 She has	1												



As seen in this example, the teacher in her second turn of the interaction responded to the student's error by paraphrasing the sentence in a way which provided the correct form. In her third turn, the teacher repeated the student's preceding utterance to confirm the student this time responded correctly. Once all the turns of teachers and students were classified in this double-coded feature, all numbers 1 in each feature were added and then divided by the total number of teachers' and students' turns in each lesson in order to calculate the percentage of each feature. The percentages of all the features of part B for all the teachers for each observation were summarised in a table. Finally, other tables were designed to present the total number of turns and percentage in which teachers and students used L2 and the number and percentage of the most used communicative features in L2.

Part A and Part B of the COLT scheme of observation 2 were analysed as for observation 1. The analysed data of observation 1 and observation 2 were compared within and across groups to determine whether there was evidence that the two forms of professional learning opportunities had influenced the teachers' teaching practices. Tables were designed to present the comparison of percentages of both observations for Part A and Part B per group.

**3.6.2.4. Fieldnotes.** Data from the fieldnotes were typed into the computer. The pre-coding process for the fieldnotes involved highlighting extracts relevant to the nature of oral language and interaction during the observed lessons. Subsequently, the data were imported in NVivo and added to each case node that was created for each participant. The extracts of the transcriptions of each teacher were categorised and labeled separately. Coding consisted of synthesising the data and looking for recurring patterns within and across cases.

Literature on facilitating young students opportunities to interact orally informed decisions as to the themes established to understand the nature of oral interaction in the classrooms. The

themes that were selected were seating arrangements, stimuli and resources, rapport, teachers' strict control of the interactions and lesson plan.

**3.6.2.5 Stimulated recall session.** Stimulated recall sessions were conducted minutes after the second observation of the teachers. In order to avoid the recall being influenced by memory deterioration, teachers viewed sections of each of their two classroom observations to help them call the lessons. First, the stimulated recall sessions were audio recorded and transcribed into the software NVivo. Pre-coding involved labelling specific segments of the transcriptions in which teachers explained their practices or changes in their practices. Coding consisted of generating themes that emerged from the explanations of teachers' practices and changes in teachers' practices. Explanations of their practices included the themes of institutional, personal and pedagogical factors. Two themes were generated in regards to teachers' changes in their practices: (1) principles of teaching interaction and communication to young students and (2) opportunities to implement principles in practice as concrete activities (Appendix G).

**3.6.2.6 Reliability and validity.** Several procedures were followed in Phase 2 of the study in order to ensure reliability and validity. Firstly, the questionnaire, semi-structured focus group and individual interviews, documents and stimulated recall sessions were conducted in the language of teachers' choice to ensure that teachers used the language they felt most comfortable with: Spanish, English or a mixture of both. As previously mentioned, most teachers chose Spanish which possibly prevented the extra cognitive load involved in using L2 and possible frustration in being able to express adequately their points of view orally or, perhaps, misunderstanding of the questions in sources where teachers had to read and write.

Secondly, a second person was involved in the coding and analysis of the COLT observation scheme to ensure inter-rater reliability. The second rater, an EFL teacher,

researcher and Spanish native speaker was introduced to the research after a training session with the COLT scheme. The training session consisted of explanations of each category to code, analyse, and practice using a transcription of the observations. Transcriptions of all the 16 classroom observations were coded and analysed by the second rater. Once the second rater had finished the coding and analysis, both researchers met to discuss and cross-check coding in order to achieve inter-rater reliability. Ambiguous coding categories such as “listening with primary focus,” were discussed to achieve agreement on coding these categories. After the peer review, a 100% inter-rater agreement was achieved.

Finally, a researcher who possesses expertise in language teaching was invited to check out the preliminary coding of the analysis of one focus group interview, individual interview, personal document and stimulated recall session and her feedback was addressed.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

This section presents the ethical considerations in conducting the study which was approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (Appendix H).

#### **3.7.1 Research procedures and participants.**

Before this study was designed and developed, the researcher made contact with the Ministry of Education of Chile to ask for support to undertake the project. The Ministry of Education, through its programme “English Opens Doors,” agreed to contribute to the development of the study as follows: the Ministry of Education forwarded an invitation from the researcher to all EFL teachers on their database; the Ministry provided the researcher with the location to conduct the professional learning sessions and the focus group interview. The Ministry neither asked for special requirements in providing the researcher with the support, nor stipulated any conditions for conducting the research.

The researcher had sole responsibility for carrying out the study. Data collection took place in different places. Questionnaires were online and hard copy, classroom observations

were conducted in the classrooms where the participants worked, individual interviews took place in teachers' schools, and the professional learning sessions and the focus group interviews were undertaken in the location provided by the Ministry of Education of Chile.

Teachers were given a statement of participation provided by the Head of School of Curriculum and Pedagogy of the University of Auckland at the end of the study to ensure they were aware that their participation in the study was acknowledged and appreciated. The directors of the teachers' schools were sent a letter to inform them that their teachers were in the vanguard (amongst Chilean teachers) in terms of developing the skills of a reflective, inquiring practitioner at the end of the project. Finally, teachers received a CD that contained the two video recordings of their lessons.

### **3.7.2 Information and consent.**

Teachers who participated in Phase 2 of the study were given a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix I) to inform that the instruments were not anonymous but participants were assured that the data would be treated confidentially at all times. Pseudonyms were used for data handling and analysis to protect the identity of the participants. The only person with access to information about participants' identity was the researcher. Participants in Phase 2 had the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Teacher-participants in the professional learning sessions and the focus group interview were asked to keep confidentiality. They were notified that they would be unable to withdraw information once they had returned the signed Consent Form. Participants had to sign a written Consent Form to allow the researcher to observe them and video-record them in the classroom. Students and their parents were asked to sign a written consent to indicate agreement for their children and themselves to be in the classroom during the observation (Appendix J).

In order to ensure fairness in the access to the information provided during the professional learning sessions, the teachers who were part of the interview group received a

portfolio with the documentation from the professional learning sessions at the end of the study.

### **3.7.3 Storage and use of the results.**

All Consent Forms and data were stored in a locked cabinet at the University of Auckland by the researcher. The video and audio recordings were stored electronically. After six years, the Consent Forms and the data will be shredded and the video and audio recordings will be deleted.

To conclude, this section described how the participants of the research were protected against harm, discrimination and identification.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter presented the paradigm, research design, methods of data collection and ethical considerations of the study. The present study adopted a mixed-methods approach, composed of two phases, to gain insights into the cognitions about oral interaction of EFL elementary teachers in Santiago and their teaching practices concerning oral interaction and to investigate the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the cognitions and teaching practices of the teachers.

The next three chapter present the findings of the study. These findings are presented according to the order of the research questions and phases of the study.

## Chapter 4

### Results from the Questionnaire of Teachers' Reported Cognitions and Practices

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the first phase of the study that aimed to provide a general description of the existing cognitions about oral interaction of a sample of Chilean EFL elementary teachers. The purpose of exploring the existing cognitions of the teachers was twofold. The first was to examine the extent to which teachers' cognitions are likely to support or impede EFL curriculum reform in Chile that focuses on teaching and learning English to communicate and interact. The second purpose was to compare these cognitions with those investigated in the second phase of the study. The findings examined in this chapter are derived from an online questionnaire that the teachers responded in their L1 (Spanish).

The questionnaire was designed to elicit the cognitions about L2 oral interaction held by Chilean EFL teachers in public and semi-private elementary schools in Santiago. The questionnaire enabled an exploration of the nature of four dimensions of teachers' cognitions (Borg, 2003b, 2006): (i) teachers' understandings about oral interaction and their own approaches to teaching English, (ii) teachers' perceptions of their own teaching practices in terms of the importance of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in their lessons, their confidence to teach these skills and the types of activities in which they use L2; (iii) teachers' beliefs about language learning regarding promoting oral communicative skills and (iv) teachers' assumptions about foreign language teaching regarding promoting oral communicative skills. Although the research examined these dimensions separately, it is acknowledged that they, in the mind of the teacher, are inextricably intertwined (Borg, 2006).

Responses were obtained from 95 EFL teachers from different public and semi-private elementary schools in Santiago, Chile. All of these teachers reported to hold a bachelor's degree in English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching, and taught year five (10-year-old students) or six (11-year-old students). Most teachers (81.10%) reported that they met the required level of proficiency in English to teach English in Chile, that is they were at an upper-intermediate or advanced level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR).

## **4.2 Teachers' Understandings**

This section presents the findings of the two open questions of the questionnaire. These aimed to examine the first dimension: teachers' understandings about oral interaction and their approach to teaching English. As explained in the Review of the Literature, "understandings" in this respect are defined as teachers' capacity to articulate (Carless, 2003) their approach to teaching English and oral interaction. The section is divided into two subsections. The first subsection focuses on teachers' understandings of oral interaction; the second presents teachers' reported approach to teaching English. Descriptive statistics were used to report the frequency and percentages of the categories presented in this section.

### **4.2.1 Teachers' understandings of oral interaction.**

Teachers were asked to answer the open question (in Spanish): "What does oral interaction mean to you?" Of the 95 teachers who completed the questionnaire, 75 responded to this question. The responses were coded into four categories based on the verbs that teachers used to define oral interaction.

The first category involved responses ( $n = 28$ ) that referred to oral interaction as a two-way communication process where the speaker and the listener exchange roles in order to negotiate meaning. In other words, individuals listen to one another's messages and subsequently provide feedback to those messages. A typical response from teachers that

illustrates this category is the following (all are translations from Spanish): “*oral interaction consists of holding conversations.*” Other responses included actions such as “*asking and answering questions,*” “*exchanging messages,*” and “*dialoguing.*”

The second category of responses indicated that 20 teachers considered oral interaction a one-way process of communication. One-way communication involves a linear process in which a person (speaker) sends a message to another person (listener) who receives it. This linear communication process serves to inform and to express what the speaker intends. Typical responses from the teachers that illustrate this category include the following: “*Oral interaction means that the message that the speaker wants to send is understood by the receptor,*” and another reported: “*Oral interaction means to communicate, that is to say, conveying ideas.*” The remaining teachers’ understandings classified as one-way included verbs such as “*to speak*” and “*to express.*”

The third category (n = 25) consisted of the responses that were not possible to categorise as one-way or two-way communication. Of these, 19 stated that oral interaction meant communication but did not provide any further explanation of what communication involved. The remaining six respondents considered that any opportunity to use the target language equates to oral interaction. For example, a teacher stated: “*oral interaction means that students know how to use the target language in the classroom and in the outside world.*”

The last category (n = 2), involved personal comments that were unrelated to oral interaction as a one-way or two way process of communication. These teachers did not provide a definition of oral interaction, but gave its purpose as a fundamental tool to assess what students are learning. One respondent stated: “*Oral interaction is the best tool to achieve learning,*” and another added: “*It is a personal satisfaction because, when I see my students interact orally, I know that they are learning the language.*”



Overall, the diversity in responses suggests that teachers do not have shared understandings of oral interaction and that the understandings of 62.7% of the respondents did not seem to be aligned with those of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). To be considered aligned to this definition, the researcher would have expected a response indicating that oral interaction entails that reception and production alternate in oral exchanges.

The nature of teachers' understandings about oral interaction may affect their beliefs, perceptions, and instructional and pedagogical decisions around promoting oral interaction in their teaching practices.

#### **4.2.2 Teachers' understandings of their own approach to teaching English.**

Of the 95 teachers who responded to the questionnaire, 91 teachers answered the question: "Please *indicate* and *describe* the approach you use to teach English at your school" (English translation). Eight different categories were generated from the responses, according to the name and/or the description of the approach provided as seen in the table below.

Table 14

#### *Approach to Teaching English at School*

(N = 91)
1. Teachers mention components of CLT without naming it (16.48%)
2. Teachers mention the use of different language skills without naming any approach (4.40%)
3. Teachers name an identifiable approach to language teaching without defining it (25.27%)
4. Teachers identify an eclectic approach (8.79%)
5. Teachers explicitly report not to have an approach to teaching English (15.38%)
6. Teachers report an approach that meets the requirements established by the Ministry of Education but they do not name it or describe it (8.79%)
7. Teachers name an approach based on theories of language learning (9.89%)
8. Teachers give idiosyncratic responses that did not fit into any of the above categories (10.99%)

Table 14 shows that the teachers do not describe their approach in common terms. The first category included responses of 15 teachers who did not say explicitly that they used CLT as

an approach to teaching English, but their answers, however, included features of CLT such as emphasis and integration of the four skills of the language (9.89%); focus on written and oral communication (1.10%); student-centred classrooms (3.29%), and lessons based on functions (1.10%). One teacher reported the use of task-based learning which is considered “the latest methodological realization of CLT” (Littlewood, 2007, p. 243). The responses in this category suggest that these teachers were able to articulate the main characteristics of their lessons which seem to be aimed to develop students’ communicative skills and to be consistent with CLT.

Responses in the next category (n = 4) indicated that teachers focused their lessons on different language skills. Two teachers reported that they focused on oral communication while one focused on listening and another on writing, speaking and reading skills but no listening skills. The data reveal that teachers were able to describe, to some extent, the way they teach although these responses suggest that the teachers did not have a shared understanding in relation to their focus on the different skills to teach young students.

The third category (n = 23) consisted of responses that named an identifiable approach to teaching English without defining it. Within this category, 18 teachers indicated a communicative approach, but not what this might entail while other five teachers reported to follow a grammar-translation method. Although teachers named CLT and grammar-translation as their approaches to teaching English, they did not describe them so it is unclear whether they actually knew what these two approaches involved.

Responses from seven teachers, placed in the next category, eclectic, suggested language teaching that combined elements of several approaches. Three teachers stated that they used a combination of the natural approach and the total physical response while another said “*I focus my lessons on the audio-lingual method together with Total Physical Response.*” The approaches named suggest that these teachers play an active and direct role in their

lessons. Firstly, the natural approach demands a centre-stage role for the teachers because they are the primary source of comprehensible input considered central in order to acquire L2 (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Secondly, in audiolingualism, the teacher is responsible for modelling the target language and monitoring and correcting students' performance (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Responses also suggest that teachers focused their lessons on the oral skills, although in the natural approach and Total Physical Response oral production is not compulsory, that is, students are encouraged to speak when they feel ready to do so. Within the same category, three teachers simply reported that the approach they took to teaching English depended on the content and the skills to teach.

The fifth category included the responses of 14 teachers who explicitly reported that they did not follow any approach to teaching English, and explained their reasons for their views. Within this category, teachers claimed that it is not possible to follow an approach in their schools due to institutional and pedagogical constraints. An example response to this category involves: *"I do not follow any approach to teaching English because two hours of English per week are not sufficient to implement any approach successfully."* The data suggest that either teachers were aware of the existence of approaches to teaching English, and consciously decided not to follow any of them because of contextual factors or that they did not know about approaches, responding in a way to cover their lack of awareness.

In the sixth category (n = 6), teachers stated that their approach met the requirements established by the Ministry of Education but they did not mention the approach. This category included the responses of two teachers who stated that they used the textbook that was provided by the Ministry of Education. These findings suggest that teachers were not able to articulate the approach that the Ministry of Education required and they reported to follow. Additionally, the findings suggest that some teachers considered that using the

textbook that the Ministry of Education provides them was their “approach” to teaching English.

The seventh category consists of responses (n = 9) which identified learning theories such as constructivism and behaviourism that informed their language teaching. These findings indicate that these teachers teach English in radically different ways. Constructivism claims that students are required to construct their own knowledge individually and collectively, whereas behaviourism considers that teachers are mainly responsible for students’ learning (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002).

The final category consists of teachers’ idiosyncratic responses (n = 11) that did not fit into any of the above categories. The reported terms mentioned quantitative, executive, elementary level, instrumental, normal, high scope, everyday English, and intensive English. None of these “approaches” was described further.

The categorisation of the findings indicates that teachers named or described varied “ways” to teaching English. These variations may be considered a major barrier to the effective promotion of oral interaction. CLT is the approach that considers oral interaction a fundamental element to achieving language learning. However, as the findings have shown, 46.1% of the teachers reported approaches that did not include teaching English for oral interaction purposes while another 15.4% of the teachers explicitly reported that they did not follow any specific approach to teaching English. Although these teachers were not asked why they did not follow any specific approach, they reported that it was because of pedagogical and institutional constraints such as students’ limited knowledge of English and only a few hours of English per week.

Variation in responses to the question about approaches also may help explain the limited nature of teachers’ understandings of oral interaction. As many teachers’ responses

did not include a reference to teaching for communicative purposes, having an understanding of oral interaction may not be foregrounded in their thinking about language teaching.

### **4.3 Teachers' Perceptions About Their Own Teaching Practices**

This section presents the results of the analysis of the second dimension of teacher cognitions investigated in the questionnaire that is, teachers' perceptions. The study, specifically, examines teachers' perceptions about their own practices regarding the importance of the four language skills in a typical week of teaching, their confidence to teach these skills and the reported use of L2. A set of statements requiring ratings (Likert scale) and closed questions were used to investigate teachers' perceptions. This section is divided into two subsections: the first subsection presents the findings from the teachers' ratings of the importance of the four language skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading) in their lessons and their confidence they reported to teach them. The second subsection presents the results of the closed questions that investigated the language that teachers reported to use the most in their lessons.

#### **4.3.1 Teachers' perceptions about the importance of the language skills and confidence to teach them.**

This part of the questionnaire focused on teachers' perceptions of the importance of the language skills in their classroom activities in a typical week of teaching. The purpose behind examining this was to identify the importance given to a balanced approach to developing language skills as expected in CLT and in particular the emphasis on oral skills required for interaction. Teachers were asked to rate the teaching of listening, reading, speaking, and writing on a scale of 1 (unimportant) to 5 (crucial), according to the importance they gave them. Descriptive statistics were used to provide the mean, standard deviation and the percentage of teachers rating each level of importance for each skill (see Table 15).

Table 15

*Mean and Percentage of the Importance of the Four Language Skills<sup>3</sup>*

Scale of agreement/ Activity focus	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	(1) Unimportant	(3) Important	(4) Very important
Listening	95	3.84	0.96	5.20%	23.20%	71.60%
Reading	95	3.61	0.891	5.30%	34.70%	60.00%
Speaking	95	3.44	1.089	10.60%	38.90%	50.50%
Writing	95	3.26	0.913	9.50%	48.40%	42.10%

As seen in Table 15, teachers stated that in a typical week of teaching, the receptive skills of listening ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) and reading ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 0.891$ ) were considered more important than the productive skills of speaking ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 1.089$ ) and writing ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 0.913$ ). This suggests that, in general, teachers perceived that it is more important to develop young students' skills that enable them to comprehend L2 rather than produce the language orally and in written form. In addition, the findings suggest that oral language and oral interaction in L2 may not be a priority in teachers' lessons. These findings may reflect teachers' concern about preparing students to sit the Chilean Biennial standard English test that only measures listening and reading skills. The results of this test are important for schools because they provide public empirical evidence of the quality of English as a formal subject in schools in Chile.

Teachers were also asked to report their confidence to teach the four skills of the language as a way of establishing the extent to which they could promote oral interaction and develop communicative skills. Descriptive statistics were used to provide mean, standard deviation and percentage of each confidence level for each skill (see Table 16).

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<sup>3</sup> For the sake of synthesis in reporting, responses were aggregated. So, the category, very important, included ratings of (4) "very important" and (5) "crucial." Similarly, unimportant encompassed ratings of (1) unimportant and (2) slightly important.

Table 16

*Means and Percentage of Teachers' Confidence to Implement Language Skills*<sup>4</sup>

Scale of agreement/ Activity focus	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	(2) Usually unsure	(3) Sometimes optimistic	(4) Usually assured	(5) confident
Reading	95	4.69	0.561	1.10%	4.30%	19.10%	75.50%
Writing	95	4.49	0.702	1.10%	11.70%	24.50%	62.80%
Speaking	95	4.45	0.779	4.30%	9.60%	23.40%	62.80%
Listening	95	4.44	0.811	5.30%	9.50%	21.40%	63.80%

The data suggest that teachers felt most confident implementing reading activities ( $M = 4.69$ ,  $SD = 0.561$ ). Specifically, three-quarters of those teachers who completed the questionnaire (75.50%) indicated that they were confident teaching reading. Teachers were a little less confident when implementing activities that were focused on writing ( $M = 4.49$ ,  $SD = 0.702$ ), speaking ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = 0.779$ ) and listening ( $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 0.811$ ), respectively. The data indicate that these teachers not only perceived reading as an important skill but also they reported they were more confident to teach it than other language skills. The findings also indicate that teachers reported that they were more confident to teach skills that develop written communication competence than oral communication competence. This may have implications for their teaching of these skills.

As seen in Table 15, teachers indicated that listening was the most important skill in a typical week but, in Table 16, listening had the highest percentage of ratings of usually unsure (5.3%) in terms of confidence. Teachers also appeared, relatively, to express a lack of confidence in teaching speaking (in respect to the other skills), which suggests that they may feel less competent to promote oral communication and interaction.

These findings suggest teachers are aware of their relative weaknesses in promoting oral language and interaction, and thus developing students' oral communicative skills in

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<sup>4</sup> (1) unsure category was not included in the table because every language skill had 0%

English. Teachers' lower levels of confidence in their competencies to teach listening and speaking skills in comparison to their confidence in the other skills may hinder teachers from providing students with adequate opportunities to develop skills to interact orally.

#### **4.3.2 Teachers' perceptions about their use of L2.**

The questionnaire also asked teachers to report what language (L1 or L2) they and their students used in different activities in the classroom. This question was based on the assumption that the target language (L2) should be used as much as possible because "foreign language lessons often provide all or most of a child's experience of the language in use; if we want children to develop certain language skills, we need to ensure they have experiences in lessons that will build those skills" (Cameron, 2001, p. 20). As noted in the Review of the Literature, students exposed to broad and rich L2 input and opportunities to participate using the target language, are more likely to develop skills to interact and communicate orally.

Teachers were asked to report what language they and their students used in different activities. Teachers were provided with a list of activities with two possible answers: Spanish (L1) or English (L2). The activities that were chosen for this list were adapted from the expected learning outcomes established by the Chilean language curriculum for oral expression for years five and six (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). Table 17 presents the teachers' perceptions of their use of L1 and L2.



Table 17

*Teachers' Perceptions of Their Use of L2*

<i>Question</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>1 Spanish (L1)</i>	<i>2 English (L2)</i>
What language do you use mostly when you greet students?	95	0.00%	100.00%
What language do you use mostly when you play games with students?	95	15.80%	84.20%
What language do you use mostly when you provide grammar explanations?	95	72.60%	27.40%
What language do you use mostly when you answer students' questions	95	55.80%	44.20%
<i>M</i>		36.05%	63.95%

All teachers reported that they mostly used L2 when they greeted their students (100%), and most teachers used L2 when they played games with them (84.20%). Less than half of teachers (44.2%) indicated that they mostly used L2 to respond to questions from students and only some teachers used mostly English to give grammar explanations (27.40%).

Table 18 illustrates the teachers' perceptions of their students' use of L1 and L2.

Table 18

*Teachers' Perceptions of Their Students' Use of L2*

<i>Question</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>1 Spanish (L1)</i>	<i>2 English (L2)</i>
What language do your students use mostly when they greet you?	95	5.30%	94.70%
What language do your students use mostly when they play games in the English class?	95	48.40%	51.60%
What language do your students use mostly when they ask you questions?	95	82.10%	17.90%
What language do your students use mostly when they group and work in tasks?	95	85.30%	14.70%
<i>M</i>		55.28%	44.72%

In this table, nearly all teachers (94.7%) reported that their students mostly used the target language to greet others and about half (51.6%) said that the students mostly used L2 when

they played games. However, few teachers indicated that their students mostly used L2 to ask questions (17.90% of teachers) or to work on tasks or in groups (14.70% of teachers).

Combined means across activities in language reported in Table 17 and Table 18 indicate that more teachers (63.95%) reported that they mostly used the target language, rather than their L1 Spanish, in a range of situations in the classroom. This was in contrast to their perception of the use of L2 by their students. Only 44.72% of teachers reported that their students mostly used L2 across activities and situations in the classroom.

Overall, teachers reported that when they and their students were involved in activities that promoted teacher–student oral interaction in L2; these included greeting one another and games which are considered important in the literature regarding young students because they encourage students to talk about themselves, rather than about the subject and classroom issues, and enable students to interact with others and to reach collective understanding in a fun way (Pinter, 2011).

#### **4.4 Teachers' Beliefs About Language Learning Regarding Oral Communication**

This section reports teachers' beliefs about language learning. Questions were answered by 74 of a possible 95 respondents. As indicated in the Methodology Chapter, due to the fact that no surveys were found that examined teachers' beliefs about oral interaction, this study used six statements from different sub scales in the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (Horwitz, 1985) in order to investigate teachers' beliefs about language learning that are associated to oral interaction and communication. These statements, however, did not represent a unified construct. The level of internal consistency obtained using a Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .35, below the recommended minimum level of .7 (DeVellis, 2003). The online questionnaire required the teachers to rate each item on a five-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Table 19 shows the frequency (in

percentages) that is, the number of teachers who disagreed, were undecided, or who agreed for each of the six statements.

Table 19

*Percentage Agreement Reported by Teachers (Beliefs)*

<i>Teachers' beliefs about language learning</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Strongly disagree/ Disagree</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly agree/ Agree</i>
1. Chilean people think it is important to speak English	74	21.10%	50.80%	28.10%
2. It's important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.	74	21.90%	43.00%	35.10%
3. You shouldn't say anything in the language until you say it correctly.	74	78.10%	9.60%	12.30%
4. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	74	1.80%	7.00%	91.20%
5. It is easier to speak than understand English.	74	34.20%	51.80%	14.00%
6. It is easier to read and write a foreign language than to speak and understand it.	74	25.40%	43.00%	31.60%

As shown in this table, one of the most interesting findings was that a considerable percentage of teachers were undecided about different aspects of language learning that were connected to promoting oral communication. Firstly, about half of the teachers reported that they were undecided as to whether Chilean people think that it is important to speak English. Contrary to expectations, this finding did not reflect the evidence found in a previous study in the Chilean context (McKay, 2003). McKay's data showed that most in-service teachers considered that Chilean people did not think it was important to speak English. So, for half to

be undecided and 28% to express the view that Chilean people do think it is important may be reflective of a change in thinking. This discrepancy might be related to the latest reform in the language curriculum which has replaced a focus on the receptive skills with an integration of the four skills of the language, and with a statement that the most important goal of learning English in 2012 was to be able to communicate and interact in L2, to “speak” as it were. In the online questionnaire, it was not possible to discern the reasons that could explain why the level of indecision. However, the responses to the same questionnaire, the focus group interview and personal document at the beginning of Phase 2 of the study shed light on some reasons that will be explored later (Chapter 5).

Secondly, a considerable number of teachers were undecided whether speaking English with an excellent accent was important (43%). This finding implies that teachers either lacked awareness of the shift from a focus on native accent to internationally accepted pronunciation (Ur, 2012) or they knew about the shift but they were not sure whether one perspective was better than the other, especially when Chilean universities and private schools still prefer to hire English native speakers rather than non native English teachers.

Thirdly, a rating of the item, “It is easier to speak than to understand English” shows that half of teachers (51.80%) were undecided. These findings suggest that teachers were not aware of the relative difficulty of the different systems that are involved in listening and speaking. Speaking is considered the most difficult skill to acquire (e.g, Hinkel, 2006; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000) because it requires the mastery of different sub skills such as morphosyntax and lexis at the same time (e.g., Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; Tarone, 2005).

Finally, a considerable percentage (43%) of those who answered were undecided as to whether it was easier to read and write a foreign language than to speak and understand it. The data indicate that teachers were not sure whether written communication was easier than

oral communication or vice versa. The finding suggests that teachers may think that oral communication is as complex as written communication or they do not know what skills were the easiest.

Interestingly, this pattern was not found in other studies. Some studies (e.g., Barrios, 2014; Peacock, 2001; Wong, 2010) have found that the highest percentage of teachers agreed with those statements while others (Tercanlioglu, 2005) found that teachers were equally divided between agreeing and disagreeing. So, the level of uncertainty reported in the current study may indicate a state of flux, possible, in part associated with the recent curriculum emphases. Finally, teachers' levels of indecision about the statements may be a factor that explained the low internal consistency of the set of statements.

Another important finding is that there was an inconsistency in the teachers' beliefs regarding proficiency in L2. The majority of those who were surveyed (78.10%) either disagreed strongly or disagreed that people should not say anything in the language until they can say it correctly. The data indicate that teachers were not concerned about accuracy when students perform orally. However, most teachers (91.20%) considered that lessons should consist of repeating and practicing a lot. This consists of the presentation of L2 patterns with the aim of their being memorised and practiced through dialogues and drills (Richards, 2002). These rote-learned patterns are used to complement beginner young students' existing and limited linguistic knowledge in order to enable them to communicate and to reflect that students' current linguistic knowledge is more advanced than it actually is regarding accuracy, fluency and complexity (Myles, 2012). Thus, it seems that teachers do consider accuracy important.

## 4.5 Teachers' Assumptions About Foreign Language Teaching Regarding Oral

### Interaction and Communication

Teachers' assumptions about foreign language teaching was the last dimension explored that represented the umbrella term of teacher cognition in this study. Due to the fact that studies or surveys that examined teachers' assumptions about oral interaction were not found, four statements from the Foreign Language Attitudes Survey were used, in order to examine teachers' assumptions about foreign language teaching associated to oral interaction and communication. The statements were analysed separately, given the low internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) .2 when grouped as a sub-scale.

Table 20 shows the percentage of agreement for the statements concerning teachers' assumptions about foreign language teaching in terms of oral interaction and communication.

Table 20

*Percentage Agreement Reported by Teachers (Assumptions)*

<i>Assumptions About Language Teaching</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Strongly disagree/ Disagree</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly agree/ Agree</i>
1. One problem with emphasising oral communication is that there is no objective means of testing such communication.	74	37.90%	10.80%	51.30%
2. Drills and practice do not provide a meaningful context for learning English.	74	41.90%	18.90%	39.20%
3. English teachers need not be fluent themselves in order to teach effectively for communication.	74	85.10%	5.40%	9.50%
4. Speaking and listening are the skills which we should stress most in our English classes.	74	10.90%	13.50%	75.60%

This table shows that about half (51.3%) of the respondents considered that emphasising oral communication was a problem, because there was no objective means of testing such communication. This answer may reflect the lack of testing of oral communication in Chile. It may also be possible that teachers would like to have robust means of assessing oral communication.

In contrast to the beliefs of the majority of teachers who indicated that repetition and practice were important in the previous subsection, the responses to the assertion that drills and practice does not provide a meaningful context for learning English were fairly evenly split between 41.90% disagreeing and almost the same percentage of teachers (39.20%) either agreeing strongly or agreeing. The data raise a question regarding teachers' beliefs and assumptions about the role that drill and practice plays in L2 development. Why teachers believed that repetition and practice were important if they did not assume that such provide a meaningful context to learn L2 is puzzling. A possible explanation is that teachers believed that learning is enhanced when they are in control of the activities and the learning environment rather than by providing students meaningful activities.

Regarding proficiency in L2, the great majority of the respondents (85.1%) either disagreed strongly or disagreed that English teachers need not be fluent themselves in order to teach effectively for communication. It seems that teachers clearly assumed that the EFL teacher should have "the ability to maintain communication in English that is fluent ... and use English as a medium to teach English" (Richards, 2017, p. 8); the notion that teachers need to be fluent in L2 in order to serve as role models for students.

In addition, three quarters of the respondents (75.60%) either strongly agreed or agreed that listening and speaking should be the most emphasised skills in their lessons. However, this assumption contradicts literature on teaching young students and the CLT literature which both claims that written and oral language should be integrated once young

students had learned how to write and read in their L1 (Cameron, 2001; Shin & Crandall, 2014).

Overall, findings of the assumption section seems to indicate that although most teachers considered that there is no objective means to test oral communication, they think that emphasising oral skills is the most important factor that enables students to be likely to learn L2 and that as teachers need to be fluent in English to teach students to learn how to communicate.

#### **4.6 Summary**

Drawing on data from the online questionnaire, this chapter has presented teachers' reported cognitions about L2 oral interaction and communication. The purpose of the analysis was to examine whether these cognitions could potentially be positively or negatively informing teachers' instructional decisions and teaching practices to enhance communication and interaction in the EFL elementary classrooms.

Answers to the questionnaire suggested that the reported cognitions about oral interaction of over half of the respondents could be negatively influencing teachers' decisions to promote oral interaction.

First, the description of oral interaction provided by 62.7% of the teachers did not align to the definitions of oral interaction established by the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR), the framework used as a referent in the Chilean curriculum for languages. Similarly, the request for descriptions of teachers' approaches to teaching English revealed that more than half of the teachers (61.5%) neither named CLT as an approach used at their schools nor nominated aspects readily identifiable with such an approach.

Second, teachers' perceptions suggest an imbalance in the focus on oral skills, key to oral interaction. In fact, teachers reported to feel least confident teaching these skills.



Third, the findings suggest that teachers do not hold firm beliefs. This was reflected in the high proportion of undecided responses in four statements of the questionnaire with the highest proportions associated with statements about the difficulty to speak and understand L2, and the importance to speak English in Chile. However, teachers' beliefs about the latter were revealed to be more positive in comparison to evidence found in previous studies in the Chilean context.

Finally, findings of teachers' assumptions indicated that 51.30% of teachers considered emphasising oral communication was a problem because there was no objective means available to evaluate such communication. Additionally, 41.9% of the teachers disagreed that drills do not provide meaningful context for learning English while 18.9% were undecided.

An aggregate of the four dimensions of teachers' mental lives corroborates previous studies (Phipps & Borg, 2007, 2009) that have identified tensions among cognitions. Seventy five per cent of the teachers seem to indicate that listening and speaking should be the focus of language lessons. Similarly, 85.10% of the teachers consider that they need to be fluent themselves in order to teach effectively for communication. However, teachers felt less confident to teach oral skills and they reported a prominent focus on listening and reading during a typical week of teaching.

Teachers' understandings of their approach to teaching English were also in tension with their assumptions because although three-quarter of the teachers reported that the oral skills should be the most emphasised in the lessons, only 38.45% of the teachers reported that they followed an approach oriented to developing the oral skills of the language.

Teachers' beliefs may explain the reason teachers' perceptions of what they do in their lesson was inconsistent with their assumptions about what they should do. Most teachers were undecided whether written skills were more difficult than oral skills while the

second highest percentage of teachers reported that learning the oral skills was more difficult than the written skills. Thus, although the teachers appeared to be aware of the importance of promoting oral communicative skills, it seems that they considered them difficult to implement or lacked theoretical and pedagogical knowledge about developing the four skills of the language that could help them inform their beliefs. Furthermore, more than half of the teachers were undecided whether Chileans were interested in communicating orally and other 21.10% thought that they were demotivated. This indicates that teachers' beliefs about Chileans' motivation to communicate orally may be influencing teachers' perceptions, instructional decisions and practice to emphasise only the receptive skills.

Since a limitation of questionnaires resides on the reported nature of data and limitation in confirming respondents' answers, Phase 2 of the study provided the opportunity to gain additional insights into these four dimensions that represented teachers' cognitions in this study. This findings are presented in the following chapter.

## Chapter 5

### Examination of Teachers' Cognitions and their Actual Teaching Practices

#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings of Phase 1 of this study. Chapters 5 and 6 synthesise the findings of Phase 2. This chapter reports additional insights into the teachers' existing understandings about oral interaction and their own approach to teaching English, their perceptions about their own practices, their beliefs about language learning and their assumptions about foreign language teaching regarding promoting oral communication skills. These insights complemented and extended the findings of teachers' cognitions in the first phase of the study (Chapter 4). This chapter also reports teachers' prior learning experiences, their teaching practices and describes contextual factors. Data were gathered from a questionnaire, a focus group interview, classroom observations, fieldnotes and a personal document.

In this phase, eight teachers volunteered to be involved in two forms of professional learning opportunities which consisted of one group of teachers who participated in a small-scale professional learning sessions (called learning sessions group) and another group willingly agreed to share their existing cognitions and teaching practices in a focus group interview (called interview group).

This chapter presents the findings of the first part of the second phase of the study that asked the following research questions:

1. What cognitions do Chilean EFL teachers in public and semi-private elementary schools in Santiago hold about L2 oral interaction?
2. What is the quantity and quality of oral language and oral interaction that occur in the classrooms?
3. To what extent are EFL teachers' cognitions reflected in their actual practices?

### **5.1.1 Teacher-participants.**

As previously mentioned, two groups of teachers were the participants of the second phase of the study. The decision of who would participate in each group was made by the teachers.

The learning sessions group comprised Ignacia, Ingrid, Irma and Isidora. Ignacia taught English students from year 5 to 8 in a semi-private school. She decided to be observed teaching in year 5 because she considered that this large class of students ( $N = 40$ ) were the most challenging at the school, and was concerned that these students were not learning any English. Her objective in participating in the present research was to explore ways in which she could create an enjoyable environment that might encourage her young students to interact in the classroom.

Ingrid had lived in an English speaking country for a year and, at the start of the Project, had one and a half years of teaching experience. She had been working in a semi-private school for eight months as the only English teacher, where she was responsible for teaching English to students from Year 1 to 8. Students in the school started to study English in Year 1 (when they were 6 years old). She reported, however, that the school had neither records of the contents nor lesson plans used by previous teachers to teach English to these students. She said her reason for participating in this research was to extend her knowledge about how to promote oral interaction to young students in EFL contexts. The class she was teaching when observed had 23 students.

Irma worked in a public school that received children whose parents had low income and no high school qualifications. She had 12 years of teaching experience and had been teaching English to students from year 1 to 8 for eight months in the school. She said she decided to be part of the study because she wanted to learn how to motivate young students to participate in her lessons. Irma had 17 students in the class in which she was observed teaching.

Isidora, the only teacher who was not Chilean, was born and raised in a European country where English was not the first language. She had 10 years of teaching experience and taught students from year 5 to 8 English in a public school; at the time of participating in the study she was studying for an MA in educational leadership and management. Isidora wanted to update her knowledge on theories and methodology regarding oral interaction. She had 26 students in the classroom where she was observed.

The interview group consisted of Camilo, Carla, Celeste and Cristina. The teachers were interested in networking with other colleagues, practicing L2 and learning from others. They reported that they would have liked to participate in the learning sessions group but had work commitments (giving private English lessons). Camilo had lived in an English speaking country for a year before he became an English teacher. He worked in a public school where he had been teaching students from year 5 to 8, for eight months, and had eight years of teaching experience. He had 24 students in his classroom when he was observed.

Carla held a Bachelor degree in teaching French as a foreign language, obtained in 1982, and also a Bachelor degree in TEFL obtained in 2002. She worked in a public school where she had been for eight months, and had five years of teaching experience. There were 24 students in her class at the time of observation.

Celeste worked in a semi-private school teaching students from year 5 to 8 where she had been for seven years. Celeste was engaged in an online professional development course when she became involved in the study. She had 28 students in her class when observed.

Finally, Cristina worked in a public school where she had been teaching English to students from year 5 to 8 for six years. The class in which she was observed had 21 students.

### **5.1.2 Teachers' prior language learning experiences.**

Teachers in the current study were asked about their school experiences as students and university experience as student teachers, as it is argued that teachers' prior language learning

experiences inform cognitions about teaching and learning and may be influential throughout their professional lives (Borg, 2006). Data were gathered from the focus group interview (interview group) and personal document (learning session group). The eight teachers reported that their English lessons as school students involved grammar instruction. For example, Ignacia reported *“at school, my teacher always asked me to translate and then memorise irregular verbs and grammatical structures. I remember that we studied the present simple of the verb to be every year.”* Celeste added: *“I do not remember that my teacher had encouraged us to develop any language skill. The classes were exclusively grammar-oriented.”* In addition, they all agreed that their teachers rarely, or in some cases never, spoke English in the lessons and all of them reported that they were not able to communicate in English when they finished secondary school. These teachers’ experiences of learning about teaching (apprenticeship of observation) may frame teachers’ cognitions about how schooling should be (Lortie, 1975).

Teachers’ responses in regard to their university learning experiences varied. Ignacia, Ingrid, Isidora and Camilo, who were the youngest teachers, reported that they had positive experiences learning how to become teachers of English. By way of illustration, Ingrid stated: *“At university, my language skills developed greatly. It was here where I learnt how to communicate in English orally and in written form.”* Camilo, reported that while his language skills developed considerably, his oral language skills did not develop as much his written language skills. As he said:

*Although I improved my oral skills at university, I was not able to communicate orally accurately and fluently as I should. I think that is not possible to be able to develop the oral skills properly in a country in which we are not obliged to use it everyday. English teachers should spend some time living in an English speaking country in order to be able to develop oral skills.*

Irma, Carla and Cristina stated that they felt they were able to develop competence in English at university, although over the years had lost oral competence. By way of illustration, Carla said: “*although I was able to speak English when I finished university, currently, I am not able to do it as good as I did at that time because I do not have opportunities to practice the language.*” In contrast, Celeste, who had finished university more than 15 years ago, stated that she was still able to communicate orally and in written form because she had always managed to engage in continuous professional learning activities.

## **5.2 Teachers’ Cognitions About Oral Interaction**

This section presents data that complement and extend the insights into teachers’ cognitions about oral interaction reported in the first phase of the study (Chapter 4) and follows the same structure of Chapter 4, namely, the four dimensions of teacher cognition (Borg, 2003b): (i) teachers’ understandings about oral interaction and their own approach to teaching English, (ii) teachers’ perceptions about the importance of the four language skills, their confidence to teach these skills and about the use of L2, (iii) beliefs about language learning and (iv) assumptions about foreign language teaching associated with developing oral communication skills. Contextual constraints on promoting oral interaction and communication were also examined and were included within the factors that affect the four dimensions studied.

### **5.2.1 Teachers’ Understandings.**

To supplement and to extend the data from the questionnaire in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the study, the eight teachers who were part of the second phase of the study were asked to clarify and elaborate on some issues related to the definitions of oral interaction and the descriptions of their own approaches to teaching English reported in the questionnaire during the first session of the professional learning initiative (LS group) and focus group interview (I group). In addition, teachers who were engaged in the learning sessions group were invited to write their responses in a personal document because the session was not audio or video recorded.

As explained in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 3), personal documents in this study refer to first-person statements that describe an individual's actions, experiences, and beliefs (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). With the interview group, the participating teachers were asked to explain their understandings in an audiorecorded focus group interview.

**5.2.1.1 Teachers' understandings about oral interaction.** As discussed in the previous chapter, the findings from the questionnaire (n = 75/95) showed that teachers' understandings of oral interaction were varied. The definitions of 62.7% of the teachers did not align with those of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001).

In the focus group interview (I group) and personal document (LS group), these understandings were revisited with similar findings emerging. When answering the questionnaire, Ingrid and Carla indicated that oral interaction implies transmission and stimulation of meaning on the part of the speaker, and reception of a message on the part of the listener. For instance, Ingrid stated: "*Oral interaction means expressing ideas.*" These two teachers seemed to consider that oral interaction primarily involves developing students' ability to produce individual performances. Walsh (2011), however, argues that individual performances only direct attention towards developing abilities to produce accurate, appropriate and fluent sentences, and are unlikely to enhance critical thinking. Although fluency and accuracy are important, they are not sufficient to ensure that students will be effective communicators.

In contrast, Ignacia, Camilo, Celeste and Cristina stated that oral interaction in the classroom not only requires that a classroom member gives a message and the member receiving the message is able to interpret it, but the recipient is also able to react and respond to the message. By way of illustration, Celeste explained that "*oral interaction is holding conversations and asking and answering questions.*" These definitions of oral interaction



seem closer to those established by the CEFR because they include students' ability to negotiate meaning, clarify information and collectively reach understanding.

Irma and Isidora agreed with the idea that oral interaction equated to communication. As an example, Irma stated that "*Oral interaction is having a direct communication with students.*" Neither of them, however, articulated what communication meant or whether they considered communication as a one way process in which an individual produces oral language to be received by another or a two way process in which two or more people exchange ideas.

In the focus group interview (I group) and personal documents (LS group), teachers were asked to explain further their definitions of oral interaction. Irma and Isidora were asked to elaborate how their definition of oral interaction equated to communication as they did not explain what communication meant in the questionnaire. Both responses indicated that for them communication involved a one-way process of communication. For instance, Isidora explained "*communication is expressing ideas and saying things.*"

Celeste's definition of oral interaction in the questionnaire was expanded in the focus group interview as follows: "*oral interaction for young students involved giving them [students] the opportunity to exchange, let's say experiential or daily life activities in a rather simple way and that they have to be able to communicate with other people.*" In this explanation, Celeste not only reiterates that oral interaction involves reception and production of information in a reciprocal way but also identifies the aspects of oral interaction that teachers should promote in young students' classrooms.

Although Ingrid did not include further information about her understanding of oral interaction, she stated that she tried to promote it. She indicated: "*I always speak English to my students and try to make them participate. However, I have to admit that I am the one who speaks most of the time.*" In contrast, the remainder of teachers, except Celeste,

expressed that they rarely promoted oral interaction because they faced pedagogical and institutional constraints. The first constraint reported concerned behaviour management. Ignacia stated: *“I do not dare to promote oral interaction because my students are problematic.”* Students’ reticence to speak and the low status of the English language as a school subject were other constraining factors reported. By way of illustration Cristina reported:

*I know that oral interaction is important in order to achieve L2 learning. However, the few times that I tried to promote it in my lessons, my students did not engage mainly because they do not like to speak English. In general, my students are not interested in learning English because they considered it is an unimportant subject.*

Finally, students’ lack of a foundation knowledge of the English language was stated as discouraging oral interaction. Carla indicated, *“I do not interact orally with my students because, when I tried to do it, they understood nothing.”*

These findings from the focus group interview and personal documents corroborate the conclusions from the questionnaire in the first phase of the study that a considerable number of teachers do not consider that oral interaction involved negotiating meaning, clarifying information and collectively reaching understanding. Furthermore, the findings from the focus group interview and personal documents complemented this information. Although the definition of oral interaction reported by Ignacia, Camilo, and Cristina aligned to the one established by CEFR, they reported that they do not promote it in their lessons. Carla and Irma reported that they did not promote oral interaction and their understandings of oral interaction did not involve negotiation of meaning as the literature suggests. It is inferred that as these two teachers did not promote oral interaction, having an understanding of its meaning may not have been foregrounded in their thinking about how to teach their students.

Celeste was the only teacher who demonstrated understanding of oral interaction and she reported that she promoted it.

**5.2.1.2 Teachers' understandings of their own approach to teaching English.** In the previous chapter, the 95 teachers who responded to the online questionnaire were asked in their L1 to *indicate* and *describe* their approach to teaching English. The responses of 91 of the 95 teachers who responded to this questions suggested that they have varied “ways” for teaching English.

Similarly, the responses to the questionnaire of the eight teachers, who were part of the second phase of the study, suggested that they did not use the same “way” in teaching English to young students. Ignacia stated that she used a grammar-based approach while, in contrast, Ingrid and Isidora indicated that their approach was designed to foster students' communication in English. Irma noted that she had a constructivist approach to teaching in the classroom and Carla and Cristina reported that their approach to teaching English was aligned to the language curriculum established by the Ministry of Education, but neither described what approach the curriculum required. Camilo stated explicitly that he did not have an approach as “*It is complicated [to follow an approach to teaching English] with these students [Year 5] because English as a subject has been formally introduced to them this year so they do not come with any language skill.*” Celeste, in contrast, was very clear about her approach to teaching English, explaining that, “*My school has its own language curriculum that gives emphasis to teaching speaking, reading, writing and listening equally every class. The curriculum involves a communicative approach from pre school to secondary school.*”

To gain additional insights into teachers' understandings of their approach to teaching English, teachers were asked to further explain their approaches; they were requested explicitly to give a theoretical justification. The request was intended to establish whether the

teachers could actually define their approaches, despite their not having done so in the questionnaire, or whether they were simply unable to define or explain their approaches (so they could not do such in the questionnaire). The grammar-based approach that Ignacia reported using in the questionnaire was consistent with the limited explanation of her practical understanding in her personal document; she wrote that a grammar-based approach involved “*teaching grammatical rules and vocabulary.*” Ignacia was also asked if she knew information about CLT but she reported that she did not know anything about this approach. The communicative approach reported by both Ingrid and Celeste in the questionnaire was consistent, to some extent, with the theoretical understandings reported in the personal document and focus group interview, respectively. Ingrid wrote in her personal document: “*My approach to teaching English consists of giving my students strategies to understand and produce English.*” Celeste added to her previous definition of the approach in the focus group interview by saying that “*CLT emphasises that the teachers should provide students activities that involve real topics in real situations.*” Isidora defined the communicative approach in her personal document as “*teaching all the contents from the book and guide students through the exercises with clear and short instructions.*” Here she was referring to the Ministry of Education textbook in which the language curriculum was aligned to CLT. Isidora appeared to think that by using the textbook, she was employing CLT. Isidora’s understanding, however, was not consistent with the CLT literature. As Savignon (2007) stated “CLT cannot be found in any one textbook or set of curricular materials inasmuch as strict adherence to a given text is not likely to be true to the processes and goals of CLT” (p. 213).

Irma’s understanding of a constructivist approach as reported in the questionnaire was explained in her personal document. She stated “*Constructivism implies that all students are active participants of the lessons. My students, for example, are active participants when I*

*asked them to work in worksheets and they have to hand them in at the end of the class.”*

When asked to explain further the way she taught, she said: *“I generally teach grammar using the textbook, worksheets and other resources.”* Irma’s understandings of her approach to teaching English recorded in her personal document implied that “active participation” for her involved keeping students busy in the lessons such as by completing sentences in a grammar worksheet, rather than asking them to express their ideas and interact with others to co-construct knowledge. When Irma was asked about what she knew about CLT, she explicitly responded that she did not know.

Camilo’s inability to articulate and carry out an approach to teaching English appeared to be the outcome not only of contextual constraints as he reported in the questionnaire, but also of a lack of theoretical understanding of what an approach was. This was apparent in the focus group interview when he stated: *“To be honest, I do not remember the approaches to language teaching.”* Similarly, Carla and Cristina reported in the questionnaire that they followed the approach established by the Ministry. In the focus group interview, however, these teachers acknowledged that they did not know what such an approach was when they were asked to describe what they knew about CLT.

Camilo, Carla and Cristina were not able to name or describe their approach to teaching English in the questionnaire and so they were asked in the focus group interview to describe typical activities that they used in the classroom. From the descriptions given by Camilo and Carla it seems that they followed a traditional grammar-based approach. By way of illustration, Carla responded:

*Generally, the most successful lesson with that group of students involves grammar exercises and written work. There is a group of students who do not remember anything. It is difficult to be constant. For example, if you are teaching the verb “to have,” you have to revisit it again the next class because they do not remember.*

In contrast, Cristina's description of her approach appeared aligned to CLT as she pointed out that "*Oral and written communication between the teacher and the students is the main objective of my lessons.*" Cristina at the beginning of the focus group interview, had reported that she knew neither what was meant by an approach, nor what CLT was. After listening to Celeste's explanations of her approach, however, she stated that she had identified her approach as CLT. Overall, the data indicate that only Ingrid and Celeste reported implementing CLT while demonstrating a partial theoretical understanding of the approach. It would appear that only these two teachers were providing students with opportunities to communicate and interact in the lessons at the beginning of the second phase of the study.

Ingrid's and Celeste's understandings of CLT and their reported prior learning experiences at school suggest and corroborate previous studies (e.g., Borg, 2006; Freeman, 1993) that teachers' practices are not always influenced by their prior experiences when teachers' instructional and pedagogical decisions are informed by theories of how to teach English to students.

### **5.2.2 Teachers' perceptions about oral interaction.**

The examination of teachers' perceptions about oral interaction in this study was focused on two specific principles of CLT that may potentially enhance oral interaction and effective communication. The first principle is the development of communicative competence in English, which is characterised by students' ability to interact with others through students' engagement in activities that integrate listening, writing, speaking and reading (Savignon, 1972, 2007). The intention was to identify whether teachers reported important the promotion of oral language and the integration of the four skills in their lessons. The study also examined their confidence to teach these skills.

The second principle is the use of L2. CLT proposes that attempts to use and communicate in L2 should be encouraged from the very beginning of L2 learning (Richards

& Rodgers, 2001). This section therefore is divided into two subsections: (i) Teachers' perceptions about the importance of the four language skills together with their confidence to teach these language skills, and (ii) the reported use of L2.

**5.2.2.1 Teachers' perceptions about the importance of the four language skills and their confidence to teach these skills.** This subsection identifies the extent to which teachers reported integrating the four language skills and using listening and speaking skills in a typical week of teaching. In the questionnaire, teachers had been asked to rate the four skills (writing, speaking, listening and reading) on a scale of 1 (*unimportant*) to 5 (*critical*) according to the importance they gave each in a typical week of teaching. Subsequently during the focus group interview (I group) and personal document (LS group), in order to gain additional insights into the teachers' responses in the questionnaire, the eight teachers were asked to explain their roles in helping students learn English using their reported skills.

The skills reported in the questionnaire in Phase 1 as being the most important were not always consistent with the ones reported in Phase 2. Ignacia and Camilo gave writing and listening the highest ratings (very important), and speaking and reading were rated "slightly important" in the questionnaire. In the personal document and focus group interview, while they stated that these skills were more important, the examples given identified a focus on vocabulary and grammar. By way of illustration, Ignacia explained:

*I think that my role <in helping students learn English using writing and listening as the most important skills in her lessons> involves that my students get engaged in my lessons. In order to achieve that, the only strategy that I have proven successful is focusing on teaching grammatical structures and vocabulary. I asked students to identify vocabulary and grammatical structures in listening activities and also asked them to use the vocabulary and grammatical structures by writing sentences.*

These findings suggest that Ignacia and Camilo considered it more important to develop skills that enable students to understand and to produce grammatical structures in written form.

Ingrid and Irma, in the questionnaire, indicated that all the four skills were equally important. In her personal document, Ingrid further stated: *“My role is to provide my students with opportunities to learn how to communicate in English orally and in written form.”* In contrast, Irma, in her personal document explained that what she reported in the questionnaire was not exactly what she believed about the importance of the language skills in her lessons. She noted: *“I would say that my role is to develop students’ abilities to write accurate sentences. Generally, I bring them worksheets to complete.”* While Irma’s perception about the importance of the four skills of the language in her lesson may seem to have shifted, the apparent difference in focus may also be because in the discussion she was more able to articulate her approach to teaching English.

Isidora reported that speaking was the most important skill, followed by reading, writing and listening respectively. In her personal document, she added: *“My role is to encourage students to speak English correctly to help them communicate with other people.”* Carla stated that listening was the most important skill used in her lessons, followed by reading, writing and speaking which were reported as equally important. In the focus group interview, she explained: *“My role is to help students understand English. This is the first step because they know nothing about the language.”* Celeste stated that speaking, reading and listening were the crucial skills used in her classroom, followed by writing. In the focus group, she further explained:

*At the beginning <beginner students>, you have to give students the possibility to try to speak and to listen, especially in year five and six. In this way, students learn the*



*language in the same way they learn L1. For example, young students learn L1 playing games and talking about topics that they are interested in.*

For Cristina, reading was rated the most important skill, followed with the other skills equally important. Her explanation in the focus group interview was as follows: “*My role is to find the easiest way to teach English to my students, especially for the students who you <the researcher> observed because they are beginner students.*” When asked what was the easiest way to teach English, she replied that “*In the elementary years, reading is the most important language skill to develop because it is the easiest to learn.*”

Seven of the eight teachers who participated in Phase 2 did not appear to consider the integration of the four skills to be important to help young students grow awareness of language and in their own growth in the language, as argued in the literature (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990); neither did they identify the need for young students to use listening and speaking which are considered essential to be able to interact (except Celeste). These data are consistent with the responses of the importance of the four skills given by most teachers in the questionnaire completed in Phase 1 of the study.

In the questionnaire, Ignacia, Ingrid, Irma, Camilo and Celeste stated that they always felt confident to teach the four skills. Isidora however reported that, while she always felt confident to teach speaking, reading and listening, she felt a little less confident to teach writing. Carla stated that she usually felt confident to teach reading and writing but less sure of how to teach speaking, and was always unsure of how to teach listening. Finally, Cristina reported that she usually felt confident to teach reading, listening and writing, but had less confidence in teaching speaking. These data suggest that teachers’ perceptions about the lack of importance of the oral skills was not the result of confidence in teaching them as most of the teachers felt confident in teaching speaking and listening. The only exceptions were Carla and Cristina who reported that they were hesitant to teach these skills. This finding indicates

that the reported level of confidence of most of these teachers is inconsistent with that reported by the teachers in Phase 1 of the study. In Phase 1, most of the teachers stated that they were less confident to teach oral skills.

**5.2.2.2 Teachers' perceptions about the use of L2.** This subsection explores teachers' perceptions of the use of L2 in their lessons, as literature on teaching English to young students has established that students learn L2 through extensive meaningful exposure and practice (Crandall & Shin, 2014).

In the phase two questionnaire, teachers were asked to report what language they and their students used in different activities. The teachers were provided with a list of activities that included greeting students, playing with students, explaining grammar, and answering questions with two possible responses: Spanish (L1) or English (L2). In addition, teachers discussed these perceptions during the first session of the professional learning initiative (LS group) and during the focus group interview (I group); the learning sessions group members were asked to write their main thoughts in the personal document. All teachers reported that they greeted students in English and most of them (except Ignacia) indicated that they played games with students in English. All except Irma and Celeste stated that they explained grammar in Spanish, and all except Ignacia, Irma and Celeste said that they answered students' questions in Spanish. These results were consistent with the responses of the teachers in the first phase of the study.

In the focus group interview (I group) and personal document (LS group), teachers were asked to estimate the amount of time they spent using L2 in general, in a typical lesson, and in what types of activities they used in L2. Irma reported the highest use of L2 (100%), followed by Celeste (90%). Ignacia, Ingrid, Isidora, Camilo and Cristina reported they used English 50% of the time in a typical lesson, while Carla nominated 25%. When asked about the activities in which they used L2, Irma and Celeste reported asking questions, giving

directions, answering questions, and explaining grammar. Celeste explained further that in order to avoid L1 in her activities, she used gestures saying:

*I always try to use L2 in order to help my students understand English. In order to avoid L1, I use a lot of gestures. I am always moving my hands and my body trying to help my students understand me.*

Ignacia, Ingrid, Isidora, Camilo, Carla and Cristina reported that they asked questions and gave directions in L2. Cristina was the only teacher who included greetings in English:

*“Generally, I greet them in English. We have a special greeting ritual.”*

Although most teachers had initially reported that they used L2 when they played games with students in the questionnaire, in the focus group interview and personal document, they all stated that they rarely played games with students. The focus group interview and personal document, generally, was inconsistent with the findings of the questionnaire. The teachers explained that their use of L2 was focused on instruction and classroom issues rather than on games. This seems like a missed opportunity because games encourage students to talk about themselves and enable students to interact with others and to reach collective understanding in a fun way (Pinter, 2011).

In the questionnaire in Phase 2, teachers were also asked to comment on their perceptions about their students' use of L2 in different activities. All teachers indicated that their students greeted others in L2, and most of them (except Ignacia, Irma and Carla) stated that their students played games in L2. Celeste was the only teacher who reported that her students asked questions in English, but she and Irma stated that their students used L2 when working in groups. These data were consistent with those from the questionnaire in Phase 1 of the study.

Data from the focus group interview and personal documents, indicated that Celeste reported that her students were frequent users of L2 (90%). Ingrid, Irma, Isidora, Camilo and

Cristina all reported that their students used L2 about half the time (50%) while Ignacia and Carla that their students engaged in L2 for about a quarter of the time (25%).

All teachers agreed that responding to questions was the activity in which students used L2. By way of illustration, Ingrid stated:

*My students are not able to start a conversation in English and less to maintain it because their knowledge of the English language is limited. However, I promote opportunities to speak English when I ask students questions regarding topics that we are studying in the lessons.*

Celeste said that expressing ideas was also an opportunity for students to use L2 as follows:

*“In year 5, students are not going to be able to talk about life, but they can express ideas and needs.”* Finally, Cristina reported that: *“My students speak English when they make dialogues between two or three students. They memorise dialogues.”*

In summary, it seems that the students’ reported use of L2 is controlled by the teachers mainly by requesting answers in English with the exception of Celeste who included students’ feelings and ideas.

### **5.2.3 Teachers’ beliefs about language learning concerning oral interaction and communication.**

As previously noted in the Review of the Literature, it is now widely accepted that young students require meaningful and comprehensible input with plenty of opportunities to practice the language and interact with others in L2 to learn a language (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2011). Oral language thus should be central to language teaching. This section explores teachers’ beliefs about the promotion of oral communication skills and examines how their beliefs may affect the use of oral interaction in L2. From the analysis of the Phase 1 questionnaire, a high proportion of teachers appeared to be undecided in their responses to four out of the six statements that they were asked about. Although the teachers in the second

phase were asked their beliefs about the six statements, this subsection presents only the findings of the four statements that were problematic for the teachers in Phase 1 so as to explore the reasons for their indecision. During the first session of the professional learning initiative, teachers discussed their responses to the statement and then wrote their thoughts in the personal document (LS group) or commented on them during the focus group interview (I group).

The first statement from the questionnaire stated that “Chilean people think it is important to speak English.” Ignacia, Ingrid and Cristina disagreed with the statement, while Camilo, Carla and Celeste agreed with it, and Irma and Isidora were undecided. When teachers were asked about this issue during the focus group interview (I group) and asked to write their thoughts in the personal document at the first session of the professional learning initiative (LS group), the teachers who had disagreed or were undecided about people’s beliefs of the importance of speaking English stated that institutional constraints such as the government and people’s socioeconomic status play crucial roles in their view of the importance of speaking English. Cristina explained this as

*I think that the government has not given English the importance it deserves in the public sector and this issue affects students’ and parents’ views of English as a subject language. I believe that rich people know the importance of speaking English and enrol their children in bilingual schools or schools that have a great amount of hours of English and also qualified teachers.*

This comment may reflect a wider contextual socio-economic issue described in Chapter 1 Introduction that Chile is characterised by a wide divide between rich and poor people. Although efforts have been made to eradicate poverty by providing greater access to education for the people who belong to the lowest socio-economic sectors, the quality of

education that private schools offer to students is considerably higher than that provided in public and semi-private schools (British Council, 2015).

Teachers who had agreed that Chilean people think it is important to speak English differed in their explanations. Although Carla agreed in the questionnaire, she concurred with the other teachers' views that rich people were the one who really think that it is important to speak English. She said:

*In the private sector, it is different. I give private English lessons to a boy who studies in a private school and he knows that he needs to be good at English. He has eight hours of English per week. If my students had that number of hours of English, things would be different.*

In contrast, Celeste disagreed with the teachers who claimed that socioeconomic status plays a role in people's view. According to her, the problem lies on the perception that English is difficult. She stated:

*I teach poor children and I would say that most of them know that speaking English is important and useful for everything they want to do. I think that the problem does not lie in people's socioeconomic status, but in their perceptions that speaking and interacting in English are difficult. I think that it is easier to say that speaking English is not important than acknowledging that maybe it is a little bit difficult.*

Similarly, Camilo reported that young students are not interested in learning English by saying:

*For me, it would be ideal that my students like the language and that they could use it. I compare teaching children and university students. Working with university students is excellent. They go to the classes because they want to learn. It is different when students are willing to learn. For example, I have done different things with those students and they have felt happy with the activities and have thanked me. But with*

*children, they come to school because it is an obligation and I do not know if they are really interested in the class.*

Camilo, it seems, has not accepted that it is the responsibility of teachers of young students to plan and implement activities that are meaningful, engaging, and also fun (Shin, 2014).

It appears most teachers believed that students who attend classes in public and semi-private schools do not think that it is important to speak English because the government has not promoted it sufficiently and that students are not motivated to learn at their stage of development, as well as because of the perceived difficulty of learning the language. Such explanations may account for teachers' indecision as to whether Chilean people think it is important to speak English in the questionnaire in Phase 1. A further factor may be that "Chilean people" as a category is too broad when investigating motivation to learning to speak English.

In the questionnaire in Phase 1 nearly half the teachers responded to the second statement on beliefs "It's important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent," as undecided. All teachers but Carla in the second phase, however, agreed with the statement. They gave as an explanation that students need to speak English with an excellent accent similar to English native speakers to be able to understand, and be understood. Most of them favoured American English. The data indicate that teachers were not aware that the focus to teach English at present is to prepare them to communicate with an internationally accepted pronunciation (Ur, 2012).

The third statement that was examined asked whether "it is easier to speak than to understand English." In the questionnaire in Phase 1, over half the teachers were undecided and only a third agreed. In Phase 2, most teachers disagreed giving different explanations. Ignacia and Cristina stated that listening is easier than speaking because students do not need to understand every word to understand a message whereas they need to be aware of every

word they produce when giving information. Irma, Camilo and Carla explained that they disagreed because students are unwilling to speak whereas they are more keen on participating in listening activities. Ingrid stated that she disagreed because “*speaking requires students to think of the information they want to give while using their knowledge of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary at the same time.*” Isidora and Celeste were the exceptions reporting they were undecided because they considered that both skills were equally complex. For instance, Celeste reported in the focus group interview: “*In my case, I would say that understanding English is as difficult as speaking English. Both skills involve complex processes.*” These findings suggest that most teachers believed that understanding English was easier than producing it orally.

The last statement “it is easier to read and write a foreign language than to speak and understand” was investigated in order to understand whether teachers consider oral communication or written communication easier. Nearly half the teachers responded as being undecided in Phase 1. In Phase 2, the beliefs of the eight teachers varied. Irma, Ignacia and Camilo responding to the questionnaire had disagreed with the statement while Ingrid had recorded undecided. In the personal document and focus group interview, the four teachers explained they believed that developing both oral and written skills were difficult. Isidora, Carla, Celeste and Cristina, however, agreed with the statement in the questionnaire. In the focus group, Celeste and Isidora explained that written skills were easier because reading and writing enable students to go at their own pace. However, when listening and speaking, students depend on another person or other people to understand and be understood in short periods of time. Celeste, for instance stated “*reading and writing are easier because students can revise and undo while listening and speaking are doing live and if students do not understand they simply cannot reply.*” She added, however, that it does not mean that teachers should be concentrating on the written skills exclusively. Carla and Cristina agreed



that oral skills are more difficult because learning English not only involved words but also sounds that students do not need to learn how to read and write.

In summary, these teachers appear to regard oral skills as the most difficult language skills or as difficult as written skills. This could imply that oral skills, which promote oral interaction, are unlikely to be included in the teachers' lessons or that they do not integrate the four skills. Thus, these findings suggest that these teachers are unlikely to enhance communication and oral interaction as prescribed by the Chilean curriculum.

The next subsection addresses teachers' assumptions about the development of oral communication skills as a component of language teaching and learning.

#### **5.2.4 Teachers' assumptions about foreign language teaching concerning oral interaction and communication.**

Although listening and speaking are two different skills, it is not possible to separate them when interacting. Most listening done in real life happens as part of a two-way conversation that requires speaking in response to a conversational turn (Shin, 2014). Examining teachers' assumptions about developing oral communication skills was crucial in order to understand to what extent teachers considered oral skills important in learning English. The eight teachers had the opportunity to elaborate and discuss their ratings of these assumptions from the questionnaire during the first session of the professional learning initiative and the focus group interview. Teachers who were part of the professional learning sessions group were asked to write their main thoughts in the personal document.

The first assumption from the questionnaire, "one problem with emphasising oral communication was that there was no objective means of testing such communication," six of the teachers agreed; Camilo and Cristina were the only teachers who were undecided. In the focus group interview, Camilo and Cristina explained that they were undecided because they did not know if there were standard means of testing oral communication.

Celeste, in the focus group interview and Ingrid, in her personal document, explained that, without an objective means to test oral communication, they had developed ways to monitor students' performance and achievement in their oral skills. For example, Ingrid indicated "*I created my own criteria that help me score students' oral performances. The criteria include class work, preparation and use of visuals that help the audience contextualise students' presentations, fluency and accuracy.*" This comment suggests that these two teachers monitor students' progress in the development of their oral skills and provide feedback for ongoing improvement. In contrast, Ignacia, Irma, Isidora and Carla said that the lack of an objective assessment was a factor, but not the only one, that hindered them from emphasising oral communication. Other factors, included students' knowledge about English and lack of motivation. For example, Carla said that

*although the lack of an objective means to assess oral communication influences the emphasis of oral communication, students' unwillingness to communicate in English and their limited knowledge of the language overweighed its influence. What it is the point of having a means of assessing oral communication if students do not want to and cannot communicate orally.*

These four teachers' responses suggest that it is students' negative attitudes towards communicating in English rather than a lack of objective assessment that inhibits them from promoting oral communication.

When discussing the assumption that "drills and practice do not provide a meaningful context for learning English," Ingrid, Isidora and Cristina had reported they were undecided. Ignacia, Irma, Camilo and Carla disagreed while Celeste was the only teacher who agreed. So, there was not a consensus in this matter. Cristina (the focus group interview) and Ingrid and Isidora (personal document) stated they knew that teachers should provide students plenty of practice, but they were unsure whether this was meaningful for students. Ignacia,

Irma and Camilo said that they believed drills and practice were meaningful because they provided opportunities to produce L2. Ignacia added that “*drills and practice were especially helpful with young students, reducing the chance that they would be laughed at by other students for making mistakes.*” Celeste, however, disagreed with Ignacia, Irma and Camilo, stating that: “*drills and practice do not give students the opportunity to be creative with the language, especially when young students are imaginative.*” These responses suggest that most teachers believe that rote learning is meaningful for young students.

All but one of the eight teachers disagreed with the assumption that “English teachers need not be fluent themselves in order to teach effectively for communication.” In the focus group interview and personal document, teachers explained that they needed to be fluent because they were the students’ role model. By way of illustration, Isidora noted that “*as the communicative approach is the current approach to teaching English in Chile, all English teachers should be able to communicate with ease in order to model students what we expect from them.*” Carla was the only teacher who had reported in the questionnaire to be undecided. In the focus group interview, she argued that it depended on the level of English of the students and type of institution where teachers work. Carla considered that teachers of young students in public schools did not need to be fluent in English because most interaction is in L1 as students did not understand or speak English.

Finally, most of the Phase 2 teachers (again with exception of Carla) in the questionnaire had argued that speaking and listening were the skills which they should stress most in their English classes. In the focus group interview and personal document, however, Ignacia, Irma, Cristina and Camilo noted that, although they considered these skills the most important, they rarely emphasised them in their lessons because of the difficulty of speaking and listening for elementary students. These teachers considered that beginner students need

to build knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation first. For instance, Irma explained that

*no matter how many times I attempt to ask my students to practice their listening and speaking skills, they will not succeed because they do not know grammatical structures that help them understand or build sentences in order to give information.*

The data indicate that these teachers' beliefs about students' competence outweighed their assumptions about the correct thing to do. Carla explained her indecision by saying that she did not remember what the theories about teaching and learning English recommend.

In summary, the teachers' reports of their cognitions about oral interaction suggest that they are unlikely to be as supportive of the implementation of oral interaction in elementary classrooms as the Chilean curriculum requires.

The next section addresses the nature of oral interaction observed in teachers' teaching practices, and the extent to which it is consistent with their reported cognitions.

### **5.3 Teachers' Actual Teaching Practices**

The purpose of observing teachers' practices in the classroom was to investigate the quantity and quality of oral language use in English during the language lessons, and the extent to which it includes oral interaction between teacher and students. Given the minimal instances of interaction that are normally observed in EFL classrooms, the researcher decided to use an observation instrument that could provide a reliable means of analysing oral classroom data. Therefore, as described in Chapter 3, the two parts of the COLT observation scheme were used. Part A examined the nature of the activities and part B the use of L2 by teachers and students. Descriptive statistics (percentages) were used to analyse the data gathered with COLT. Fieldnotes were taken to provide details of the context.

First, a description of the classrooms of the teachers is provided to contextualise the environment where the observations took place. The seating configuration of the classrooms

of all the teachers from both groups consisted of three or four rows of double desks. According to the literature on teaching EFL to young students, this seating configuration prevents the students from seeing and hearing their classmates and the teacher adequately and does not facilitate participation (Cameron, 2001; Shin & Crandall, 2014).

To learn interactional skills, apart from having opportunities that support participation, young students need to build up knowledge and skills for participation. Interestingly, none of the classrooms had, hanging on the walls or on a bulletin board, the classroom rules in English that might govern interactions such as “listen carefully to your classmates’ messages” or “do not interrupt” or common classroom expressions that help the teachers create an English-speaking environment in the classroom (Shin & Crandall, 2014) and enable students to say when they do not understand or need something, especially because young students are not skilful in planning their talk and may not ask for information if they do not know how to do it (Cameron, 2001). The purpose and content of the observed lesson of each teacher is summarised in Table 21.

Table 21

*Summary of the Lessons*

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Title of the lesson</i>	<i>Name of the unit</i>	<i>Structure of the lesson</i>	<i>Objective of the lesson</i>	<i>Extra activity</i>	<i>Objective of the extra activity</i>
Ignacia	5	Lesson 2: Starting a herb garden	Unit 5: Nature	-Introduction to vocabulary -Practice vocabulary -Listening activity -Writing activity	Identifying vocabulary related to a garden	-	-
Ingrid	5	Lesson 1: What's the weather like?	Unit 4: No matter the weather	-Review of vocabulary -Practice vocabulary -Listening activity -Reviewing numbers	Identifying and using vocabulary related to the weather	Talking about the weather	Developing oral language skills
Irma	6	-	-	-Introduction countable and uncountable nouns -Worksheet	Learning countable and uncountable nouns	-	-
Isidora	5	Lesson 1: The weekly menu	Unit 3: Food and Health	-Introduction of vocabulary -Practice vocabulary	Identifying and using vocabulary related to food	-	-
Camilo	5	-	-	-Introduction of false cognates -Worksheet	Identifying and applying false cognates	-	-
Carla	6	-	-	-Grammatical exercises in the whiteboard	Identifying verb to be	-	-
Celeste	5	Lesson 3: Families	Unit 2: At home	-Review of vocabulary -Practice vocabulary -Introduction of new vocabulary - Practice new vocabulary -Reading activity -Listening activity	Identifying and using vocabulary related to the family	-	-
Cristina	6	Lesson 3: Come to our party	Unit 2: Extra-curricular activities	-Writing invitation. -Review of simple present tense -Grammar practice	Making an invitation; reviewing simple present tense	-	-

Table 21 records that five teachers chose a theme from the text so that language learning was relevant for the students and to provide a purpose for communicating and interacting (Shin & Crandall, 2014). In contrast, three teachers focused their lessons on grammar and vocabulary in isolation. Only Ingrid included developing oral language skills as an objective (with a specific activity designed to achieve this objective) in her lesson.

The following two subsections describe the organisation of students in the classroom and the relative emphasis on the four language skills as these can have implications for oral communication and interaction in the classroom.

### 5.3.1 Students' organisation in the classroom.

As it has been argued that the organisation of students in the classroom has implication for students' opportunities to interact orally (Spada & Frohlich, 1995), the percentage of time that students were engaged in teacher-centred and group work activities is reported. The data were gathered using the feature *participant organisation* of Part A of the COLT scheme.

Table 22 summarises the patterns of organisation of the lessons of the eight teachers.

Table 22

*Percentage of Time Lessons Were Focused on Teacher-Centred or Group-Work*

Teacher	Exclusive Focus Whole Class			Exclusive Focus Group	Exclusive Focus Individual	Primary Focus T↔S/C	Combination T↔S/C and Choral
	T↔S/C	S↔S/C	Choral				
Ignacia	53.68%	2.07%	0.00%	2.31%	35.79%	0.00%	6.16%
Ingrid	41.79%	0.00%	0.00%	25.18%	23.95%	0.00%	9.08%
Irma	36.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	34.74%	28.74%	0.00%
Isidora	68.07%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	31.93%	0.00%	0.00%
Camilo	67.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.93%	13.32%	6.56%
Carla	62.75%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	37.25%	0.00%	0.00%
Celeste	67.32%	0.00%	1.08%	0.00%	21.57%	5.38%	4.65%
Cristina	38.44%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	58.11%	0.00%	3.44%

As can be seen in this table, for all teachers the highest percentage of time in their lessons was exclusively in teacher-centred activities that involved whole class and/or an individual student (T↔S/C). The fieldnotes showed that the activities that were exclusively focused on the whole class and/or an individual student (T↔S/C) (with exception of Ingrid and Celeste) restricted opportunities for students to develop social and linguistic skills and competencies to interact orally, that is, “initiating; reacting; and responding; turn taking; opening up spaces for others; listening carefully to express message and meanings; and collaborating” (van Hees, 2007, p. 107). Examples of the use of oral language in L2 of the teachers and students are presented in section 5.3.3.

Only in Ingrid's lesson were students observed to be working in groups for some of the time (25.18%). Ingrid's lesson included an activity in which students had to sit with

different classmates and ask them questions about the weather. The interaction consisted of a student showing a flashcard that represented specific weather (e.g., cloudy, rainy) and asking his/her pair: “What’s the weather like?” The pair saw the flashcard and answered the questions according to it, saying, for example, “It is windy.” Group work, according to the literature on interaction, is likely to provide more opportunities to negotiate meaning, use a more substantial diversity of linguistic forms and functions and to develop fluency skills (Spada & Frohlich, 1995).

### **5.3.2 Emphasis on language skills in the actual teaching practices.**

The teachers’ relative emphasis on the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) was observed to investigate the extent to which the skills promoted oral interaction. The purpose was also to observe whether the teachers motivated students to integrate the four language skills, as advocated by CLT and language teaching literature, to foster a “growing awareness of language and their own growth in the language” (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990, p. 5). The use of the language skills was assessed using the category *student modality* of Part A of the COLT scheme. Table 23 presents a summary of the time students were observed to be engaged in the different language skills.



Table 23

*Percentage of Time Students Worked in Activities Focused on the Language Skills Observation 1*

Teacher	<i>Exclusive focus</i>				<i>Primary focus</i>				<i>Combination</i>											
	Listening	Writing	Reading	other	Listening	Writing	Other	Listening and speaking	Listening and other	Listening and writing	Listening and reading	Writing and other	Writing and grammar	Listening and grammar	Reading and other	Listening, speaking and writing	Listening, reading and writing	Listening, grammar and other	Listening, speaking and grammar	
Ignacia	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	60.66%	0.00%	0.00%	6.16%	2.63%	3.49%	0.00%	24.76%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.31%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Ingrid	0.00%	11.84%	0.00%	0.00%	53.90%	0.00%	0.00%	34.26%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Irma	1.71%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	34.14%	64.14%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Isidora	0.00%	0.00%	8.26%	0.00%	60.79%	0.00%	18.19%	0.00%	0.00%	7.29%	0.00%	5.48%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Camilo	0.00%	12.93%	0.00%	0.00%	80.51%	0.00%	0.00%	6.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Carla	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	41.11%	16.94%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	35.39%	6.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
Celeste	1.04%	0.00%	1.49%	0.00%	38.43%	13.88%	3.00%	5.73%	3.80%	15.26%	1.95%	0.00%	0.00%	5.43%	5.17%	0.00%	4.82%	0.00%	0.00%	
Cristina	3.06%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	24.50%	55.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.66%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	13.46%	1.27%	

As shown in Table 23, students in six of the eight teachers' classes spent 25% or more of their lesson time in activities with listening as a primary focus. For the students in the classes of four of these teachers, this time exceeded 50%. Students were observed listening to teachers' instructions, explanations, questions, feedback, and corrections, with L2 being used mainly for instructions and questions (see Chapter 5, subsection 5.3.3). Speaking by students was the secondary focus of these activities. Here students responded to the teachers' questions in both L1 and L2. Lower levels of speaking in comparison with the predominant time spent listening suggests students were largely passive participants in lessons. This finding suggests that these students may be less likely to develop L2 because they did not take over control of the language used (Cameron, 2011, van Hees, 2007). The data also indicate that language was not the only reason why students were not encourage to participate because a great percentage of the activities were conducted in L1 (see Table 24 for percentage of L2 use).

Students in classes taught by Irma, Carla and Cristina were not engaged in listening as a primary focus as much as the students in other teachers' classes. Irma's students were observed in activities that focused on an equal combination of listening and grammar work (64.14%). An example of an activity given by Irma was a worksheet with 20 incomplete questions in which students had to fill in responses to "how many" or "how much." This activity was designed to check whether students had learnt how to use these types of questions. Students appeared to not understand what they had to do. Consequently, Irma decided to explain the rules about how to use "how many" and "how much" in L1 once again, and then completed the first three questions of the activity together with students. Carla's students spent the highest percentage of their time of the lesson (41.12%) waiting for their teacher to finish checking the activities in the notebook of each student. For Cristina's students, the primary focus was writing (55.05% of their lesson) with the students

individually writing an invitation for a special occasion to a friend. Ingrid's students were observed spending a significant amount of time (34.26%) in an activity that involved an equal combination of listening and speaking. Ingrid, as noted before, asked students to create a set of small flashcards with weather words, then use them to interact (as explained above).

In summary, the findings indicate that none of the teachers integrated the four skills of the language, in equal measure, which is considered important to encourage students' own growth in the language (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990). Additionally, most teachers did not promote listening as integrated with speaking skills in a manner that allowed young students to interact with others.

The next subsection reports the quantity and quality of oral language and of oral interaction in L2 observed in the teachers' lessons.

### **5.3.3 Communicative features of oral language and interaction in L2.**

To investigate the nature of the oral language and the extent to which it involved oral interaction between teacher-student in L2 in the classrooms of these eight teachers, Part B of the COLT scheme was used. This part of the scheme assesses a set of communicative features that may facilitate or hinder oral interaction in the classroom, with a focus on the purpose of the communication and number of the teachers' oral utterances. Table 24 shows the percentage and number of all the teachers' turns in L2 and the most frequently used communicative features in the teachers' turns.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix K presents all the observed communicative features in the teachers' turns. The communicative features in L2 that were used less than 10% in teachers' turns were not reported in the results because they did not reflect the common oral language used in L2.

Table 24

*Percentage of Turns of the Most Used Communicative Features in Teachers' Turns Observation 1*

Participant	Turns in L2		Unpredictable information		Pseudo request		Form-Repetition		Form-Comment		Correction-Repetition		Message-Repetition		Genuine request		Correction-Paraphrase	
	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%
Ignacia	119	47.22%	25	21.01%	30	25.21%	18	15.13%	8	6.72%	7	5.88%	9	7.56%	0	0.00%	12	10.08%
Ingrid	203	53.14%	33	16.26%	44	21.67%	38	18.72%	26	12.81%	8	3.94%	12	5.91%	5	2.46%	13	6.40%
Irma	156	49.84%	40	25.64%	16	10.26%	27	17.95%	19	12.18%	25	15.38%	1	0.64%	3	1.92%	15	9.62%
Isidora	246	63.08%	44	17.89%	28	11.38%	49	19.92%	27	10.98%	5	2.03%	20	8.13%	24	9.76%	17	6.91%
Camilo	71	11.41%	10	14.08%	8	11.27%	28	39.44%	5	7.04%	6	8.45%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	7	9.86%
Carla	10	7.87%	4	40.00%	1	10.00%	3	30.00%	0	0.00%	1	10.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Celeste	196	44.24%	35	17.86%	28	14.29%	30	15.31%	19	9.69%	2	1.02%	20	10.20%	28	14.29%	6	3.06%
Cristina	105	37.37%	19	18.10%	27	25.71%	12	11.43%	9	8.57%	2	1.90%	14	13.33%	10	9.52%	6	5.71%
<i>M LS group</i>	181	53.32%	36	20.20%	30	17.13%	33	17.93%	20	10.67%	11	6.81%	11	5.56%	8	3.54%	14	8.25%
<i>M I group</i>	96	25.22%	17	22.51%	16	15.32%	18	24.04%	8	6.33%	3	5.34%	9	5.88%	10	5.95%	5	4.66%
<i>M both groups</i>	138	39.27%	26	21.36%	23	16.22%	26	20.99%	14	8.50%	7	6.08%	10	5.72%	9	4.74%	10	6.46%

As seen from this table, although teachers varied in their use of L2 with students, the same three communicative features were most frequently used but the frequency with which each of these communicative features was used by each teacher, varied.

The highest percentage of the use of the communicative features in the teachers' turns in L2 was giving unpredictable information (21.36% across both groups, on average). According to the COLT scheme, unpredictable information includes teachers providing students with input that is not easily anticipated in that there is a wide range of information that could be offered (Spada & Frohlich, 1995). An example would be students' answers to genuine questions, that is, questions for which the teacher does not know the answer in advance. It also includes managerial directives such as "repeat after me" or "open your books to page 81" as well as discipline directives such as "be quiet." All eight teachers were observed giving managerial directives. By way of illustration, in Extract 1, Celeste asks her students in L2 to listen to an audio track in L2 and identify which words were related to family.

Extract 1 – *Giving Unpredictable Information (Celeste) Observation 1*

1. T: *Circle, circle the words related to family* (Students listen to the track)

*Finished? OK. Let's check. Listen to me. You are going to say yes* (teacher asked students to give a thumbs up when they listen to a word that is associated to family) *or no* (Teacher asked students to give a thumbs down when the word they listen to is not related to family) *Okay? I am going to say the words...*

*Let's begin, Okay. Father*

2. STS: *Yes*

3. T: *Family*

4. STS: *Yes*

As seen in this extract, Celeste provided her students with input in L2 related to instructions that seemed to be understood by her students according to their choral responses.

Isidora and Cristina not only gave unpredictable information to students through managerial directives, but also answered students' questions. Extract 2 illustrates this feature. Here Isidora asked her students to look at a picture, and tell her what kind of food they saw there.

Extract 2 – *Giving Unpredictable Information (Isidora) Observation 1*

1. T: *¿Qué comida pueden ver acá?* [What food can you see here?]
2. S1: *Fish*
3. T: *What else?*
4. S2: *¿Cómo se dice bebida?* [How do you say soft drink (in English)?]
5. T: *Soft drink* (unpredictable information)

Encouraging students to participate is central to young students developing oral language skills and, in this extract, it can be seen that Isidora did so when she asked students to express orally their knowledge about vocabulary related to food. However, she asked the question in L1 which did not enable students to be exposed to and understand L2. S2 did not know the word in English and so he asked her in Spanish how to say it in English. Isidora could have introduced L2 classroom expressions such as “how do you say in English...?” to encourage students to ask her questions in English but was not observed to do so.

Another way of giving unpredictable information was reading unknown information, as recorded in observation of Camilo and Celeste. In this example, Celeste reads a letter that was part of an activity from the textbook.

Extract 3 – *Giving Unpredictable Information (Celeste) Observation 1*

1. T: *My father's name is Juan. He is a big man, nice and gentle. My mother's name is Francisca. She is beautiful and friendly. I am in the middle there. The boy is my*

*brother Miguel. He is eight years old and the little girl is my sister Margarita. She is five years old. In the picture you can see a special member of my family, my dog Tito. He is three years old and I am 12 years old. Greetings, Lucía.*

Celeste enabled her students to be exposed to richer input than managerial directives providing a model of language which, it is argued, is essential for young beginner students (Cameron, 2001; van Hees, 2007).

Finally, another way in which some teachers were observed giving unpredictable information was through discipline directives. Ignacia and Ingrid were the only teachers observed giving discipline directives in L2. For instance, Ignacia had a strategy she used to ask students to be quiet during the observed lesson. When the classroom was noisy, she said to her students “*one, two, three, eyes on me*” and students were expected to respond “*one and two, eyes on you*” to show that they were paying attention to her. However, not all the students replied to her.

On the whole, all teachers but Celeste and Camilo provided students with input in L2 predominantly focused on instructions. Ignacia, Ingrid and Celeste, however, included at least one listening comprehension activity that allowed students to be exposed to a more meaningful and richer L2 language input.

The communicative feature observed with the second highest frequency across both groups ( $M = 20.99\%$ ) was the teachers’ repetition of the students’ utterances. The teachers repeated a student’s contribution to the end without using a rising intonation, thus reinforcing the students’ use of language, amplifying the contribution of students who have spoken quietly, or providing students with intelligible versions of poorly pronounced contributions. While considered beneficial (Lindstromberg, 1988), it does not allow students to continue the interaction. Extract 4 in which Ignacia asks students to name examples of cooking herbs that they had heard as they listened to an audio track, illustrates this feature.

Extract 4 – *Reaction to the Students’ Turns Through Repetition (Ignacia) Observation 1*

1. T: *¿Algún ejemplo de cooking herb? [Any example of cooking herbs?]*
2. S: *Basil*
3. T: *Basil*

The pedagogical function of Ignacia’s feedback was to confirm that the student’s response was correct. As noted above, if there is subsequently not a response from the student to follow the IRF exchanges, as in this example, the function of repetition may not facilitate communication and learning (Park, 2014).

Asking pseudo-questions was the third most commonly used communicative feature ( $M = 16.22\%$ ). The COLT scheme defines this feature as questions to which the speaker already knows the answer requested (Spada & Frohlich, 1995) and an approach by which teachers keep control over the classroom oral language. It suggests that teachers were concerned to give students opportunities to produce L2, although this type of question is generally predetermined by lesson content and unlikely to elicit long and authentic responses (Long & Sato, 1983).

Extract 5 shows an example of the use of pseudo-questions focused on vocabulary. In this extract, Camilo gave students a worksheet and asked them to complete a set of utterances with the corresponding false cognates. Subsequently, he checked the activity with the students orally.

Extract 5 – *Requesting Pseudo-Questions (Camilo) Observation 1*

1. T: *The girl was in the jungle and she was very?*
2. S: *Brave*
3. T: *Brave*

The data show that Camilo asked a pseudo-question to check students understanding of the target vocabulary in context, a positive approach as students are likely to be exposed to richer



input than gained from flashcards. Only two students, however, were engaged in the activity with the remaining students disengaged, playing cards, games or on their mobile phones. After the lesson, Camilo commented to the researcher that the observed lesson was an example of any typical English lesson with his students, adding that although he tried to encourage students to interact and engaged in L2, “*they simply do not care.*”

Extract 6 illustrates this occurrence focused on grammar in which Cristina asked her students to look at some pictures of people and describe actions to practice how to form the structure of the present continuous tense.

Extract 6 – *Asking Pseudo-Questions (Cristina) Observation 1*

1. T: *What are they doing? They are acting?, they are reading? Or they are dancing?*
2. STS: (inaudible)
3. S: *They are reading*
4. T: *Ya [Okay]*

In this extract, the teacher’s objective was to ascertain the extent to which her students understood the meaning of the verbs that each picture represented. The interaction between the teacher and the student only involved the student choosing one of the three possible answers. Cristina did not let the student try to answer the question by herself and her feedback to the student’s turn was in L1.

Pronunciation was also a focus of her questions. In Extract 7, Cristina was greeting students at the beginning of the class and asking them what the weather was like that day.

Extract 7 – *Asking Pseudo-Questions (Cristina) Observation 1*

1. T (To all students): *What’s the weather like?*
2. STS: *Sunny /sɔni/*
3. S: *Sunny /sɔni/*
4. T: *Sunny /sɔni/ or sunny /sɔni/?*

5. S: *Sunny* /sʌni/

In this extract, Cristina used a question to ensure students knew how to pronounce a word instead of encouraging students to negotiate and co-construct meaning. When Cristina asked students to give the correct pronunciation of the word “sunny”, the same student, who had said the word correctly previously, answered the question. The remaining students did not answer and Cristina continued the class with another activity. This instance illustrates that in selecting the same individual to answer again, Cristina was not able to ensure that all students knew how to pronounce the word.

Celeste was the only teacher observed asking pseudo-questions to check comprehension of a reading text, as illustrated in the following extract about a family:

Extract 8 – *Asking Pseudo-Questions (Celeste) Observation 1*

1. T: *How old is Lucía?* (Celeste chose individual students to respond to the question)
2. S1: *Doce* [Twelve]
3. S2: *Tiene doce años* [She is twelve years old]
4. T: *Very good*

This was one of the few occasions in which pseudo-questions were used to focus on meaning. In this example, two students participated in the interaction, but in L1. The teacher accepted the answers as correct, presumably because she was evaluating reading comprehension and not oral interaction in L2. In this extract, Celeste asked students to wait for their turn to respond to the question instead of asking them to answer it at the same time. In a limited way, students appeared to be trying out and using interactional skills such as listening carefully to other’s messages and questions and responding to them.

The fieldnotes indicate that these interactions were strictly controlled by the teachers who decided who participated and when. Teachers predominantly asked students who raised

their hands to respond to the questions. They also asked students to respond to the questions simultaneously.

Five other communicative features were observed relatively frequently in the oral language of some teachers. Reaction to the students' turns concerning grammar and vocabulary, by means of comments, was frequently used in Ingrid's, Irma's and Isidora's turns. The COLT scheme defines comments as any positive or negative response (not correction) to previous turns (Spada & Frohlich, 1995). To illustrate, Extract 9 of Ingrid's lesson is presented in which students had to answer the question: "What's the weather like?," according to the flashcard that Ingrid showed them.

Extract 9 – *Reacting to the Students' Turns Through Comments (Ingrid) Observation 1*

1. T: *What's the weather like?*
2. S: *Rainy*
3. T: *Very good* (comment-vocabulary)

Ingrid seemed to use this type of comment to let the student know that his answer was correct. Ellis (2012) advises that in EFL contexts, confirmation and understanding through backchannels such as "yes" and "very good" are important in interactions because they help students feel safe and included and, consequently, more confident to participate in the interactions.

Irma and Isidora commented on students' previous turns related to grammar. In Isidora's lesson, an example was found in which she asked students to view some flashcards related to fruits and vegetables and say the names of the words. An example is shown in Extract 10.

Extract 10 – *Reacting to the Students' Turns Through Comments (Isidora) Observation 1*

1. T: *Oranges, orange* (Isidora shows a flashcard). *One orange, two oranges.*

*¿Quién se dio cuenta cuál es la diferencia en pronunciar orange, oranges?* [Who realises the difference in pronouncing orange and oranges?]

2. S: *Se le agrega una S* [Letter S has to be added]

3. T: *Very good* (comment-grammar)

Isidora's comment was used in this extract to congratulate a student on a correct answer focused on grammar. As can be appreciated in this extract, the student answered the question in L1 and the teacher accepted the answer as correct. The purpose of the question was to ensure that the student understood the difference between singular and plural, and not whether the student was able to make a response or interact in L2.

Correcting students through repetitions was another communicative feature frequently used by Irma and Carla. Extract 11 illustrates this feature in which Irma was modelling to students how to pronounce countable and uncountable in English.

Extract 11 – *Correcting Students Through Repetition (Irma) Observation 1*

1. T: *Repeat after me, countable /kɑʊntəbəl/*

2. STS: *Countable /kɒntəbəl/*

3. T: *Countable /kɑʊntəbəl/*

Irma used the strategy of repetition to give corrective feedback, which consists of repeating the incorrect utterance with the correct pronunciation to make aware students of the error (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Although corrective feedback gives students opportunities to use and receive feedback on oral L2 utterances (Aranguiz & Quintanilla, 2016), this extract shows that the students' oral language produced was limited and controlled by Irma. Repetition as a corrective feedback strategy is considered effective as it draws attention to students' linguistic problems in their utterances (Aranguiz & Quintanilla, 2016; Lyster & Ranta, 1997); Irma's students, however, neither appeared to react to her feedback nor did she make sure that students noticed the linguistic problem evident in their utterance.

Responding to students' messages through repetition was a communicative feature frequently used by Celeste and Cristina. Cristina used it to get students to practice how to give short answers in the present tense (yes, I do/ no, I don't) when asking about their personal interests.

Extract 12 – *Reacting to the Students' Messages Through Repetition (Cristina) Observation 1*

1. T: *Do you like to sing English songs?*
2. S: *Song Justin Bieber*
3. T: *Song Justin Bieber*

This extract illustrates that although Cristina may have been expecting the student to respond 'Yes, I do' or 'No, I don't', the student appeared to want to go beyond the correct structure and express her likes. She did so in English using her limited linguistic knowledge in L2. As Cameron (2003) pointed out "children see the foreign language "from the inside" and try to find meaning in how the language is used in action, in interaction, and with intention, rather than "from the outside" as a system and form" (p. 107).

Celeste used 28 turns in L2 in order to ask genuine questions. This communicative feature in L2 had been observed in less than 10% of the L2 turns of the other teachers. Celeste used this type of questions to ask students information about their houses as in the following example

Extract 13 – *Asking Genuine Questions (Celeste) Observation 1*

1. T: *Ana, How many bedrooms do you have in your house?*
2. S: *Two*
3. T: *And how many bathrooms?*
4. S: *One*

Celeste asked the students information about their houses as a way of engaging them in the activity. This interaction between Celeste and the student created an opportunity for the

student to use English for a meaningful purpose, thus linking the lesson to home and personal knowledge.

The last communicative feature that was frequently observed in one of the teachers' practices was correcting students' turns through paraphrasing. The data indicate that Ignacia gave students corrective feedback, which is considered central to the learning process as it facilitates students' improvement of oral production (Aranguiz & Quintanilla, 2016). Extract 14 illustrates an example in which Ignacia and her students were discussing the order of a number of actions that were about how to start a garden.

Extract 14 – *Correcting Students Through Paraphrasing (Ignacia) Observation 1*

1. T: *¿Qué es lo último que creen ustedes que hay que hacer para comenzar un jardín? [What is the last thing that you have to do in order to start a garden?]*
2. S: *cultivate the herbs*
3. T: *To cultivate the herbs*

As seen in this extract, Ignacia in her second turn of the interaction reacted to the student's error by paraphrasing his turn in a way which provided the correct form. In this interaction, Ignacia did not give students an opportunity to understand the question in L2 nor did she make sure that her student noticed the change that she made; the student did not react to Ignacia's feedback, so it appears there was no uptake (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

On the whole, the data indicate that the teachers from both groups, especially the data from the learning sessions group whose use of oral L2 is higher, use oral L2 in their turns. Nonetheless, the input presented in L2 and the attempts of interaction with their students were not likely to be sufficient to facilitate students' development of skills to interact in English. As most of the students in the study were beginners, it is understandable that teachers provided input in L2 focused on instructions and vocabulary, as there is ample evidence to show that the early stages of L2 acquisition are lexical in nature (Shintani, 2016).

Most teachers, however, asked students to comprehend and produce new words in isolation, and not in context, as literature suggests (Jiang, 2000).

The observed oral language in L2 and interactions between the teachers and the students were predominantly focused on repeating or correcting vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation problems, and on questions to which the teachers already knew the answer, which may interfere with the process of “natural” development. The data also indicate that the teachers may not have optimally facilitated students’ development in L2 because they rarely built on the students’ previous utterances (Pinter, 2011). Instead, they repeated students’ responses to confirm their answers or commented on them to acknowledge participation.

In the following section, the communicative features observed in students’ turns are reported. Table 25 shows the percentage and number of all students’ turns in L2 and the most used communicative features in the students’ turns of both groups.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix L presents all the observed communicative features in the students’ turns. The communicative features in L2 that were used less than 10% in students’ turns were not reported in the results because they did not reflect the common oral language used in L2.

Table 25

*Percentage of the Most Used Communicative Features in Students' Turns Observation 1*

<i>Students</i>	<i>Turns in L2</i>		<i>Predictable</i>		<i>Form-Repetition</i>		<i>Unpredictable</i>	
	<i>Number of turns</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of turns</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of turns</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of turns</i>	<i>%</i>
Ignacia's students	77	50.00%	55	72.37%	20	26.32%	1	1.32%
Ingrid's students	154	66.38%	126	81.82%	22	14.29%	4	2.60%
Irma's students	124	52.32%	46	37.10%	66	53.23%	3	2.42%
Isidora's students	119	40.07%	68	57.14%	13	10.92%	22	18.49%
Camilo's students	90	23.14%	41	45.56%	40	44.44%	7	7.78%
Carla's students	14	17.72%	7	50.00%	6	42.86%	0	0.00%
Celeste's students	120	48.98%	80	66.67%	5	4.17%	23	19.17%
Cristina's students	81	38.39%	40	49.38%	9	11.11%	21	25.93%
<i>M LS group</i>	119	52.19%	74	62.11%	30	26.19%	8	6.20%
<i>M I group</i>	76	32.06%	42	52.90%	15	25.64%	13	13.22%
<i>M both groups</i>	97	42.13%	58	57.50%	23	25.92%	10	9.71%

As seen from this table, there was considerable variability in the number of turns that students used L2 in the classes observed. Ingrid's students used L2 in 154 turns, while Carla's students in only 14. Although the percentage of turns in which students used L2 varied, the communicative features characterising the turns of the students of the eight teachers were similar.

Most students (with exception of Irma's students) spent the highest percentage of their turns giving predictable information ( $M = 57.50\%$  across all teachers). The COLT scheme states that predictable information corresponds to information that generally follows a request, is easily anticipated and it is known to the questioner. Most teachers' questions



asked students to identify vocabulary or grammatical structures in isolation. In Extract 15 Carla was correcting a student's error regarding the use of the verb to be in present tense.

Extract 15 – *Giving Predictable Information (Carla's Students) Observation 1*

1. T: (Carla walks towards the whiteboard). *Lo voy a repetir en la pizarra [I will explain again on the whiteboard]* (Looking at the student who made the error in his sentence) *Chicos, miren acá [Students, look at me]. Por décima vez le estoy diciendo que este es el verbo [This is the tenth time that I tell you that this is the verb]* (underlining the verbs in the sentences that Carla wrote in the whiteboard). *“Is” para singulares y “are” para plurales [“Is” is used with singular personal nouns and “are” with plural personal nouns. ¿Qué uso para “yo”?* [*What verb do you use with “I”]*
2. S: *Am*

This extract shows that Carla was restricting students' use of L2 to verb conjugation as the lesson was focused on the use of simple present tense. Although the lesson was focused on a specific grammar pattern, research suggests that such lessons should not involve the direct teaching of grammatical rules (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2006; Shin, 2014) because young students learn the language through exposure rather than explicit grammatical explanations (Shin & Crandall, 2014).

In contrast, Celeste's students gave predictable information focused on meaning. This feature is illustrated in Extract 16 in which Celeste checked a reading comprehension activity. Students had to read a passage and then complete a family tree according to the information provided in the text.

Extract 16 – *Giving Predictable Information (Celeste's Students) Observation 1*

1. T: *¿Quién es el hermano? [Who is the brother?]*
2. S: *Fernando, brother*

3. T: *Good, Emilia*

Celeste asked a student to respond to a question in order to show comprehension of a text. Celeste's student was able to respond to the question that required her to use somewhat higher-order thinking skills rather than identifying vocabulary or grammatical structures in isolation. Unfortunately, although Celeste asked students to read and comprehend a text in English, she asked the student a question in her L1. Therefore, the opportunity to interact in L2 was missed.

Reaction to the teachers' turns by means of repetition was the second communicative feature most used by most of the teachers ( $M = 25.92\%$ ). It occurred when teachers asked students to repeat information that involved isolated vocabulary. For example, Camilo asked his students to repeat a list of false cognates (words in two languages that look or sound similar but differ significantly in meaning) to model the language. Repetition also entailed grammar, such as in Cristina's lesson in which students repeated the short answer of a question in simple present tense "*Yes, I do*" and "*No, I don't.*"

Giving unpredictable information was a communicative feature frequently used by students taught by Isidora, Celeste and Cristina. This occurred when these students answered teachers' genuine questions. Extract 17 provides an example in which Isidora checked whether students had learnt the vocabulary from the lesson by asking students about their favourite food.

Extract 17 – *Giving Unpredictable Information (Isidora's Students) Observation 1*

1. T: *Ana, What is your favourite food?*
2. S: *Spaghetti* (unpredictable information)
3. T: *Ya* [Okay]

As can be seen, the pedagogic purpose of the interaction was to practice the vocabulary related to food. Isidora asked the student the question to allow her to have more choice in the

language used than simply looking at a picture and identifying the word. Furthermore, Isidora connected what students were studying to their own lives to encourage students to personalise the new vocabulary (Shin & Crandall, 2014). However, she did not motivate the student to continue the interaction or give a fuller answer such as “*my favourite food is spaghetti,*” closing the interaction in L1 with *Ya [Okay]*.

Findings from the fieldnotes revealed that the rapport that teachers built with students was a factor in the quality and quantity of oral language, and of interaction, observed in the classrooms. Carla, Camilo, Cristina and Irma did not appear to have an easy rapport with their students. These teachers seemed to become readily irritated; their faces registering displeasure when students did not answer what they expected to hear or when students told them that they did not understand. By contrast, Celeste, Ingrid, Isidora and Ignacia exhibited a sense of humour and were willing to listen to all students’ comments and repeat explanations of content that students did not understand without becoming short.

The extracts presented in this section covered examples of all the most used communicative features in L2 by teachers and students in their turns, as observed in the first observation. The results indicate that although some teachers used L2 more frequently than others, most of them did not use L2 to promote oral interaction.

#### **5.3.4 Relationship between teachers’ cognitions and their teaching practices.**

The relationship between teachers’ cognitions and their practices are reported in this section. The data indicate that the relationship between the cognitions about oral interaction of the eight teachers and their practices varied depending on the teacher and the dimension examined. Table 26 summarised the main consistencies between teachers’ cognitions about oral interaction and their practices. The table also summarised teachers’ explanations of their practices elicited in the stimulated recall interview (LS group) and individual interview (I group).

Table 26

*Summary of the Main Consistencies Between Cognitions and Practices*

Teacher	Cognitions about oral interaction	Consistent practice	Explanation given
Ingrid		-Student-centred activity; activity that develops students' oral and interactional skills	-Students should develop written and oral skills to learn English; teachers are responsible for motivating students to communicate
Celeste	Teachers reported to follow CLT and knew some principles of this approach. They also reported to promote oral interaction	-Lesson focused on instructions and to some extent on meaning; genuine questions	-Meaningful input and interaction are crucial in young students' L2 development; teachers should explain students why communicating in English is important
Cristina	Teacher reported to follow CLT but did not know what it involved. She reported that she rarely promote oral interaction	Writing an invitation	-Students should develop written skills to be able to communicate in English
Ignacia		-Vocabulary was learnt through memorisation; bilingual word list and dictionary.	-Few hours of English per week; large classes; students' language ability.
Irma		-Presentation of countable and uncountable nouns; gap filling exercises to practice countable and uncountable nouns	-Few hours of English per week; students' language ability; students' needs and interests
Camilo	These teachers reported to follow a grammar-based approach. The teachers did not know how to explain this approach theoretically. They reported that they rarely promote oral interaction	-Presentation of false cognates; gap filling exercises to practice false cognates	-Few hours of English per week; students' language ability; students' age; large classes
Carla		-Gap filling exercises to practice the verb to be in simple present tense	-Few hours of English per week; students' language ability; newness of students in the language
Ignacia, Ingrid, Isidora, Camilo, Carla and Cristina	They use oral L2 only to ask questions and give directions	Questions and directions were the most common features of oral language in teachers' turns	-Students' language ability; newness of students in the language

As shown in Table 26, consistency between cognitions and practices was not always positive for facilitating students opportunities to communicate and interact orally. Ingrid's and Celeste's explanations of their practices suggested that their practices were influenced to some extent by theoretical principles of CLT and how to teach English to young students, respectively. In contrast, the explanations of Ignacia, Irma, Camilo and Carla suggested that these teachers' practices were informed by institutional and pedagogical constraints but not by language theories of teaching or learning. These four teachers explained that they taught grammar explicitly and the students were given grammatical exercises or exercises with vocabulary in isolation because they had few hours of English per week. The literature, however, does not recommend teaching grammar explicitly to young students and has argued that students can be only motivated if the activities are meaningful and fun (Crandall & Shin, 2014; Pinter, 2006), characteristics that explicit grammar teaching does not have. Cristina's reported communicative approach, after listening to Celeste's explanation of her approach in the focus group interview, was observed in her lesson that focused on written communication. Regarding Isidora, the data show that the consistency between her cognitions and her practices was that she used the textbook provided by the Ministry of Education to teach her students.

The perceptions of most teachers (except Irma and Celeste) about the activities in which they used L2 were consistent with their actual practices. The findings indicate that the teachers made conscious decisions as to which activities they would provide students opportunities to be exposed to and produce L2.

The amount of L2 that teachers and students use, as reported by the teachers, however, was inconsistent with that observed in their actual practices as presented in the table below.

Table 27

*Percentage of Reported Use of L2 and Actual Use*

Participant	Reported use of L2	Actual use of L2	Students	Reported use of L2	Actual use of L2
Ignacia	50.00%	47.22%	Ignacia's students	25.00%	50.00%
Ingrid	50.00%	53.14%	Ingrid's students	50.00%	66.38%
Irma	100.00%	49.84%	Irma's students	50.00%	52.32%
Isidora	50.00%	63.08%	Isidora's students	50.00%	40.07%
Camilo	50.00%	11.41%	Camilo's students	50.00%	23.14%
Carla	25.00%	7.87%	Carla's students	25.00%	17.72%
Celeste	90.00%	44.24%	Celeste's students	90.00%	48.98%
Cristina	50.00%	37.37%	Cristina's students	50.00%	38.39%

As shown in Table 27, teachers' reported use of L2 in their turns and students' turns did not closely match. It should be acknowledged, however, that the teachers' reported percentage was an estimate of an overall average while the actual was a specific lesson. The use of L2 reported by Irma, Carla, Camilo, Celeste and Cristina was higher than the actual use observed in their lessons. The exceptions were Ignacia and Ingrid whose actual use of L2 47.22% and 53.14%, respectively, was reasonably consistent with their reported use of L2, which was 50% and Isidora whose actual use of L2 (63.33%) was somewhat higher than her perceived use (50%).

The students' use of L2 as reported by Isidora, Camilo, Carla, Celeste and Cristina was higher than the actual use of L2 observed. In contrast, Ignacia's and Ingrid's reported use of L2 in students' turns was lower than that actually observed. Irma's reported use of L2 in her students' turns was reasonably consistent with their actual use of L2. Only three teachers (Ignacia, Camilo and Celeste) had a 25% or more difference between reported estimate and actual observed. Again, the same proviso, noted in relation to teacher use, regarding average estimates versus a specific lesson, holds here. As noted in relation to teachers' use of L2, these findings may indicate that not all the teachers, especially Irma and Celeste, were aware of the quantity of L2 that they and their students used in their lessons. A similar lack of

awareness has been identified in the literature (e.g, Peng & Zhang, 2009) in a context where teachers use L1, L2, or a mixture of both languages with young beginners whose L2 proficiency is very low. This research showed that although some teachers reported using L2 most of the time of their lessons, they were observed using it a limited amount of time.

It seems probable that, if teachers use more L2 in the class, students will do it too, but the quantity of L2 used is not sufficient to enhance language learning. While some teachers did use L2 frequently in class (especially Isidora), analysis of the data suggests that they did not consistently provide students with optimal conditions for oral interaction. L2 used in the lessons observed was predominantly focused on instructions, grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation, infrequently or never including the important role of meaning.

#### **5.4 Summary**

This chapter presented the reported cognitions about oral interaction and actual teaching practices of eight teachers through the examination of the quantity and quality of oral language and interaction in teachers' lessons. An examination of the relationship between teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and their practices was also presented to examine whether teachers' cognitions may have influenced teachers' practices or viceversa.

The findings suggest that the cognitions about oral interaction of most teachers seemed to negatively influence their instructional decisions and practices to promote oral interaction. Six out of the eight teachers, including those whose understandings aligned to the CEFR definition of oral interaction, explicitly reported that they rarely promote oral interaction in their lessons.

The cognitions of four of the eight teachers seemed to be grounded in their experiential knowledge (Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 1999). This knowledge seemed to be gathered through years of an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) in teaching contexts where a grammar-oriented approach was the norm. This was evident because

although these teachers described their practices as grammar-oriented, the teachers were not able to provide theoretical explanations as to why they used such an approach, apart from citing contextual constraints.

Teachers' beliefs indicated that all but one teacher agreed that young students in public and semi-private schools think that speaking English is unimportant. Teachers' explanations were that the government does not give English the importance it deserves in the curriculum for elementary students. Furthermore, four teachers reported that oral communication was more difficult than written communication while the other four teachers reported that both types of communication were difficult.

Six of the eight teachers considered that emphasising oral communication was a problem because there was no objective means available to test such communication. In the focus group interview and personal document, most teachers reported that they rarely tested oral communication.

The findings also indicate that tensions among cognitions existed. Although most of the cognitions about oral interaction of six of the eight teachers seemed to negatively influence the promotion of oral language and interaction, two positive assumptions caused tensions among cognitions. Teachers' assumptions indicated that they needed to be fluent themselves in order to teach effectively for communication and that the oral skills of listening and speaking should be the most emphasised. The cognitions about oral interaction of these six of the eight teachers appeared to be mediated by institutional and pedagogical constraints.

The examination of the quantity and quality of oral language and interaction revealed that the lessons observed could not be characterised as communicative in the sense that teachers did not seek to provide students with ample opportunities for meaningful input, output and interaction in L2. The amount of L2 use varied according to each teacher but the highest percentage of time of the turns of all teachers was spent in teacher led whole-class



activities, followed by an exclusive focus on activities in which students worked on their own. The majority of lessons observed involved students listening to the teacher's questions, but few students had an opportunity to answer those questions, which required minimal and fairly meaningless answers. The highest percentage of turns in which all teachers were observed using L2 involved teachers giving short and simple managerial directives, followed by repeating or commenting on students' preceding turns. In terms of students' turns in the exchanges, they mostly used L2 to identify vocabulary or grammatical structures in isolation.

Teachers afforded students limited opportunities to interact orally; mostly this was through pseudo-questions requiring students' answers that were already known by the teacher. Unfortunately, only a few students participated in these short and simple interactions. Consequently, the low level questions that were asked by the teachers did not help students develop thinking skills, such as being open to other people's ideas (Li, 2014). Finally, it is important to highlight that students never initiated the interactions in L2, which suggests that all the content and, to a lesser extent, topics discussed in the lessons, were chosen only by the teacher.

Regarding the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their practices, the data show that this varied, according to the teacher and the dimension being examined. The reported cognitions of four of the eight teachers about what they do in their lessons (two in each group) suggested that they followed a grammar-oriented approach. These cognitions, it appears, were consistent with the teachers' actual practices as vocabulary and grammar gap-fill exercises were predominantly observed in their lessons. Similarly, the cognitions of other three teachers, who reported to follow a communicative approach were reflected, to a limited extent, in their practices (two teachers focusing on oral communication and the other on written communication).

Teachers' perceptions about their use and students' use of L2 were greater than that observed in the lessons, which suggest that teachers did not have a real sense of the quantity of L2 that it was used in their lessons.

From the examination of the teachers' assumptions, in Phase 1, 75.60% of the teachers indicated that speaking and listening were the skills they felt they should emphasise the most. Similarly, in Phase 2, all but one teacher reported that oral skills should be the most emphasised. These assumptions, however, were not evident in the practices of all but two teachers, according to the lessons observed. It appears that most teachers, did not promote oral skills that may facilitate opportunities for oral interaction.

Although teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and use of L2 varied across teachers, all teachers emphasised the same communicative features in their lessons. Six of the teachers also reported that there were constraints that hindered them from promoting oral interaction, such as large classes and students' unwillingness to communicate and interact in English. How these constraints might operate, however, was not able to be observed since the teachers rarely gave students opportunities to interact orally.

Overall, the data presented in this chapter suggest that the teachers' cognitions about oral interaction need to be made explicit, questioned and challenged by theoretical and pedagogical principles both of CLT and how to promote oral interaction in elementary school contexts. It seems that they also need to put their emerging cognitions into practice through concrete practical activities and in their own classrooms to actually realise whether or not oral interaction is feasible in EFL elementary school contexts in Chile.

The next chapter presents data that investigate the influence of professional learning opportunities on the cognitions and teaching practices of the eight teachers.

## Chapter 6

# Interplay Between Teachers' Cognitions, Teaching Practices and Teacher Learning

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter and the one preceding it present findings from Phase 2 of the study drawing on data from eight volunteer teachers from different elementary schools in Santiago. Chapter 5 presented the existing cognitions about oral interaction reported by the eight teachers, their observed teaching practices and the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their practices.

The findings revealed that the cognitions about oral interaction of six of the eight teachers, in general, had a negative influence on their decisions and practices towards the promotion of oral interaction. Evidence from teachers' observed teaching practices showed the quality of teachers' use of oral L2 (and quantity in the case of some teachers) to be limited and generally focused on instructions, grammar, vocabulary and/or pronunciation. Ingrid and Celeste were the only two teachers who were observed promoting activities that may be likely to support oral interaction. Students' oral use of L2 mostly consisted of repeating isolated words in chorus and answering teachers' questions that they already knew the answer (pseudo-questions), intended to check students' understandings, in isolation, of vocabulary and of grammatical structures. The relationship between teachers' cognitions and their practices varied depending of the teacher and dimension examined. The cognitions and teaching practices of Ignacia, Irma, Camilo and Carla consistently indicated that they promoted a traditional grammar-based approach, although their assumptions about what should be done in their lessons suggest that they were aware that oral communication was central. The cognitions and practices of Ingrid and Celeste indicated that they followed "a fragmented version" of CLT informed by their existing theoretical understandings of CLT

and oral interaction. Cristina was observed promoting written communication which was consistent with her reported communicative approach, although she did not know what CLT was. Isidora's understanding that she used a communicative approach was, in a very limited way, consistent with their practices especially because she did not know what CLT involved.

The present chapter examines the teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and their teaching practices at the end of the study. It also investigates the extent to which two different forms of teacher learning opportunities influenced the cognitions and actual teaching practices of the teachers. In doing so, the chapter addresses research question 4: What is the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and their actual practices?

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents the influence of the teacher learning opportunities on the teachers' cognitions about oral interaction. The second section reports data from observations of the teachers' practice. Data are analysed in comparison with the reported cognitions and teaching practices established at the beginning of Phase 2 and presented in Chapter 5.

## **6.2 Influence of the Professional Learning Sessions and Focus Group Interview on Teachers' Cognitions**

Following the professional learning sessions and focus group interview, teachers were again asked to report on their cognitions about oral interaction. These findings will be presented following the same structure of the previous two chapters which include: teachers' understandings about oral interaction and their own approach to teaching English; perceptions about the importance of the four skills of the language and their confidence to teach these skills and the use of L2; beliefs about language learning and assumptions about foreign language teaching regarding promoting oral communicative skills. As noted in the

previous two chapters, although the research examined these four dimensions separately, it is acknowledged that, in the mind of the teacher, they are inextricably intertwined (Borg, 2006).

### **6.2.1 Teachers' understandings of oral interaction and their approach to teaching English.**

Teachers' understandings about oral interaction and their own approaches to teaching English were examined at the end of Phase 2 to investigate the influence of the professional learning sessions and the focus group interview. The eight teachers were asked to respond to the same questionnaire they completed at the beginning of the second phase. Teachers in the focus interview group also participated in a final individual interview, while teachers who were part of the learning sessions group discussed the same questions that were asked in the individual interview during the last session of the professional learning sessions and were also asked to provide feedback and synthesise their concluding thoughts in writing (personal documents). Responses to the questions to the second questionnaire that needed further elaboration were discussed in a stimulated recall session with the learning sessions group.

The definition of oral interaction offered in the final questionnaire suggested shifts in the understandings of three of the four teachers (Ingrid, Irma and Isidora) who participated in the learning sessions. Initially they had defined oral interaction as a one-way process of communication; at the conclusion of the learning sessions, they defined oral interaction as entailing a conversation in which two or more people react to one another's messages and also negotiate meaning. For example, Ingrid stated that "*Oral interaction is an exchange of information in English between two or more people in different situations.*" It appeared that, as a result of the professional learning sessions, the understandings of these three teachers were more aligned to the definition of oral interaction provided by the CEFR framework.

In contrast to the three teachers above, the understandings of oral interaction of the teachers who participated in the focus group interview appeared to be unaltered. In the case

of the three teachers who had initially defined oral interaction in similar terms to the CEFR framework (Camilo, Celeste and Cristina), no change of cognitions is affirming. However, no change in Carla’s limited understanding of oral interaction as one-way interaction suggests that those teachers who are not engaged in learning opportunities might perpetuate erroneous understandings of concepts key to their practices.

When asked to describe their approach to teaching English in the final questionnaire, all four of the teachers who had been in the professional learning sessions reported CLT, for two of these this represented a change. For the teachers who did not engage in the professional learning sessions, two identified CLT although Celeste had already reported it at the beginning of Phase 2.

Table 28

*Shifts in Teachers’ Understandings About their Approach to Teaching English*

Teacher	Initial Questionnaire	Final Questionnaire
Ignacia	Grammar-oriented	CLT
Ingrid	CLT	CLT
Irma	Grammar-oriented	CLT
Isidora	CLT	CLT
Camilo	could not identify his approach	Grammar-oriented
Carla	could not identify her approach	Grammar-oriented
Celeste	CLT	CLT
Cristina	Could not identify her approach	CLT

Ingrid’s understanding of the approach she used to teaching English remained consistent with the principles of CLT. Isidora’ explanation of CLT was aligned to the principles of CLT at the end of the study as follows, “*My approach is communication. Encouraging students to write, speak, listen, read and interact with others in English.*” The data suggest that Isidora not only became aware of some principles of CLT but also of the important role that oral interaction plays in CLT.

Ignacia's and Irma's understandings of the approach they used to teaching English changed in a positive way. Both teachers reported that their approaches were more communicative oriented. By way of illustration, Ignacia reported: "*I decided to change my approach to teaching my students. I started to implement activities that focused on communication, such as asking students to work in groups.*" At the end of Phase 2, all the teachers who had participated in the learning sessions group reported using principles aligned to CLT.

There was also evidence for some of the teachers who did not participate in the professional learning sessions that their understandings of approaches to teaching English had changed. In the final questionnaire, Camilo and Carla, who, at the beginning of Phase 2, had said they did not know what an approach to teaching English was, stated they followed a grammar-based approach. Camilo, for instance explained: "*I follow a grammar-based approach. I give students examples of grammar structures together with vocabulary, then I translate the sentences and finally ask them to put them into practice orally.*" In the individual interview, Camilo and Carla reported that institutional and pedagogical constraints prevented them implementing communication and interaction, despite knowing they were important. Camilo reported that his classes were too big, the ideal number of students to promote a communicative approach being from 20 to 25 students and that his students were not motivated to participate. In the two lessons that Camilo was observed, however, he had less than 25 students. His existing beliefs about teaching young students in a public school appeared to be such that he did not implement communication and interaction despite class numbers, at his own admission, being low enough. Carla, in her individual interview, asserted that her students' low level of competence in English stopped her from promoting communication or encouraging them to interact stating, "*It would be different if students started learning English from preschool. They would already know greetings, the days of the*

*weeks and typical vocabulary. However, they know nothing.*” Similarly, Cristina, in the final questionnaire, identified she followed CLT whereas at the focus group interview, at the beginning of Phase 2 the study, she had explicitly said that she did not know what CLT or an approach was. Celeste reported that CLT was still the approach she used.

The findings indicate that the focus group interview may have enabled these teachers, in collaboration with their peers, to make their teaching practice explicit and identify their approaches to teaching English.

### **6.2.2 Teachers’ perceptions about the importance of the language skills and their confidence to teach these skills.**

In the professional learning sessions, teachers studied CLT and its principle of integrating the four language skills. At the end of the professional learning sessions, teachers were asked, in the final questionnaire, to rate in the final questionnaire the four skills (writing, speaking, listening and reading) on a scale of 1 (*unimportant*) to 5 (*critical*) according to the importance they gave each in a typical week of teaching.

Table 29

*Teachers’ Reported Perceptions About the Importance of the Four Language Skills (LS group)*

Teacher	Initial Questionnaire	Final Questionnaire
Ignacia	Listening and writing the most important. Speaking and reading slightly important	Listening and reading the most important followed by an equal use of speaking and writing
Ingrid	Equal integration of the four skills	Writing is the most important, followed by an equal use of speaking, reading and listening
Irma	Only writing	Equal integration of the four skills
Isidora	Speaking the most important followed by reading, writing and listening respectively	Equal integration of speaking, listening and reading. Writing less important



The data indicate that only Irma's perception of the importance of the integration of the four language skills in her lessons was influenced by studying literature on CLT. Furthermore, Irma and Isidora reported they had begun to emphasise listening and speaking, skills that are crucial to interact. In the stimulated recall session, however, all teachers explained that they were making efforts to integrate more skills within a lesson but that it was a difficult and slow process. Ignacia, for example, argued that through listening and reading activities, she could encourage oral interaction and teach the language in context, and that a focus on listening and reading would, in turn, prepare her students to write and speak.

Ingrid, in the stimulated recall session, said that her perception of the importance of integrating the four skills had changed as a result of reflecting on her practices during the learning sessions. Ingrid reported that she still considered that the four skills should be integrated in the lessons but that she realised that this ideal way of teaching was not fully occurring in her lessons. She also reported that now she was more aware of trying to integrate the four skills.

Teachers' reported confidence about teaching the language skills remained the same as reported in the first questionnaire. Since the professional learning sessions did not focus on the development of L2 skills, this finding does not come as a surprise.

The perceptions of the teachers who were part of the interview group also showed some changes. Table 30 presents comparative data between the initial and final questionnaire completed by teachers in the interview group on the perceptions about the importance of the four language skills.

Table 30

*Teachers' Reported Perceptions About the Importance of the Four Language Skills (I group)*

Teacher	Initial Questionnaire	Final Questionnaire
Camilo	Writing and listening the most important. Speaking and reading slightly important	Speaking the most important followed by an equal use of writing and listening. Reading the least important
Carla	Listening the most important followed by speaking, reading and writing equally	Equal integration of the four skills
Celeste	Speaking, reading and listening the most important followed by writing	Speaking, reading and listening the most important followed by writing
Cristina	Reading followed by an equal use of speaking, writing and listening	Reading and listening the most important followed by writing and speaking

As reflected in the table, only Carla reported the integration of the four skills in the final questionnaire. In the individual interview, Carla reported that Celeste's argument for teaching English for communication in the focus group interview persuaded her to endeavour to teach the same way. However, she reported that she had not integrated the four skills in her lessons yet, and that she still focused her lessons on grammar because her students were not prepared for such a challenge. Although Cristina's and Camilo's perceptions of the importance of the four language skills in a typical week changed, the shift did not seem to facilitate oral interaction. These perceptions of the two teachers were consistent with the teachers reported comments in the individual interview. They stated that they did not promote oral interaction because students were not interested in interacting in L2.

### **6.2.3 Teachers' perceptions about the use of L2.**

A focus in the professional learning sessions was that an optimum English language learning environment should allow for students to be exposed to meaningful L2 input as much as possible. Although there is no consensus about the amount of time that L2 should be used in

EFL classrooms, some studies have argued that 75% of lesson time should be in L2 (e.g., Shapson, Kaufman, & Durward, 1978), while others claim that if teachers speak L2 less than 25% of the lesson time they would be relying heavily on their L1 (Turnbull, 2000).

To investigate whether the professional learning sessions had an influence on the perceptions of the use of L2 of the teachers who were in the learning sessions group, these teachers were asked to report in their personal document, a percentage estimate of the time they used L2 in lessons. The teachers who were part of the interview group were also asked to report this at the individual interview in order to investigate whether their perceptions changed without discussing studies about the use of L2. Table 31 presents the percentage estimate of the eight teachers

Table 31

*Percentage of Time Teachers Reported Use of L2*

Participant	Beginning of Phase 2	End of Phase 2
Ignacia	50.00%	50.00%
Ingrid	50.00%	50.00%
Irma	100.00%	100.00%
Isidora	50.00%	75.00%
Camilo	50.00%	25.00%
Carla	25.00%	25.00%
Celeste	90.00%	75.00%
Cristina	50.00%	50.00%
<i>M LS group</i>	62.50%	68.75%
<i>M I group</i>	53.75%	43.75%
<i>M both groups</i>	58.13%	56.25%

From this table, it can be seen that Isidora was the only teacher in the learning sessions group who reported increasing L2 input for students at the end of Phase 2. Nonetheless, although Ignacia, Ingrid and Irma said that they considered that their use of L2 had not increased at the end of the session, they reported that the input that they provided to their students at the end of Phase 2 was not only focused on instructions, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation as at the beginning of phase 2 but also on meaning. All four teachers explained that increasing

the use of L2 in the classroom involved an ongoing process. As Ignacia said, *“although I am now aware of the expected amount of L2 that I should use, my students are not currently prepared for that drastic change. It is not that easy. It is an ongoing process.”*

Ignacia’s comment suggests that teachers need considerable time to enact changing cognitions into practice. This implies that to observe the impact of professional learning sessions, a longer period of implementation is needed. As these teachers reported, however, investigating the influence of longitudinal professional learning on the cognitions and practices of Chilean EFL teachers in elementary schools is difficult because teachers, in general, do not remain long in elementary public schools because of low salaries. This assertion of the teachers was reflected in their own experiences because of the eight teachers who participated in this study, only Ignacia and Celeste were working in the same school one year after the collection of data of this research.

The teachers also reported an estimated percentage of time in which their students used L2 following the professional learning sessions and the interview groups’ meeting. As seen in Table 32, the teachers’ estimates remained the same except for an increase estimated by one teacher and a small mean increase for the group. For the interview group, all teachers estimated a decrease in use of L2 with a marked mean decrease for the group.

Table 32

*Percentage of Time Students Use L2 Reported by Teachers*

Participant	Beginning of Phase 2	End of Phase 2
Ignacia's students	25.00%	25.00%
Ingrid's students	50.00%	75.00%
Irma's students	50.00%	50.00%
Isidora's students	50.00%	50.00%
Camilo's students	50.00%	25.00%
Carla's students	25.00%	50.00%
Celeste's students	90.00%	50.00%
Cristina's students	50.00%	25.00%
<i>M</i> LS group	43.75%	50.00%
<i>M</i> I group	53.75%	37.50%
<i>M</i> both groups	48.75%	43.75%

As seen in this table, Ingrid was the only teacher from the learning sessions group who reported an increase in her students' use of L2. In the personal document and subsequent stimulated recall session, however, Ignacia, Ingrid and Irma reported that their students not only answered teachers' questions as they reported in the personal document in the first part of Phase 2, but also they had started to ask simple questions and interact with each other in group work activities. The data indicate that although the amount of oral language did not increase to any great extent, there is some evidence, from the teachers' comments, that they believe the quality of the oral language in L2 improved. This will be discussed further in relation to observation of teachers' actual practice in section 6.3.

#### **6.2.4 Teachers' beliefs about learning L2 concerning oral interaction and communication.**

The same four statements from the BALLI survey that were investigated in the questionnaire in the first part of Phase 2 (Chapter 5) were examined in the final questionnaire again at the end of Phase 2. The purpose was to trace any influence of the two forms of teacher learning opportunities on the teachers' beliefs. Teachers rated the beliefs from (1) strongly disagree to

(5) strongly agree. Teachers also discussed these beliefs in the individual interview (interview group) and in the last session of the professional learning sessions group. This latter group then wrote their main thoughts in the personal document.

In the questionnaire, the data indicate that the beliefs of the four teachers who participated in the professional learning sessions about language learning regarding the promotion of communicative skills did not change. Two of the four teachers in the learning sessions group, however, recorded in their personal document that although they still thought that learning oral and written skills was a difficult challenge for students, they now were more willing to promote activities that develop these skills in context because they became aware of the importance of developing these skills to facilitate young students' L2 learning. Irma, for instance, said that

*At the beginning of the study I did not know that young students are unlikely to learn L2 when teaching them explicit grammar. Now I understand why my students were not engaged in my lessons and forgot everything that I taught them. Although I still consider that L2 oral and written skills are difficult to learn and to teach in Year 6, I am trying to use and integrate these skills in context to help my students learn English. For example, in a single lesson I included an activity that allowed students to listen to meaningful input, to read a text about a topic that was familiar to them, to ask questions regarding to the text and write the answers of these questions in groups. Students were voluntarily participating, trying out L2, and most importantly, my students and I were enjoying the lesson.*

Of the four teachers in the interview group, Celeste was the only one to record a change in beliefs. At the beginning of the study she recorded undecided as to whether “speaking was easier than understanding English,” because she believed that “*understanding English is as difficult as speaking English. Both skills involve complex processes.*” Furthermore, Celeste

had agreed initially that “*it was easier to read and write a foreign language than to speak and understand it*” because reading and writing enable students to understand and convey information at their own pace. By the end of Phase 2, however, she disagreed with both statements. She said that the answer to these statements depended on each student and his or her own learning style. Celeste reported that she had learned about learning styles in the online professional development that she was doing, sponsored by the Ministry of Education of Chile.

The data indicate that the beliefs of seven of the eight teachers did not change by the end of the study. Most teachers still regarded oral skills, particularly speaking, as the most difficult to learn. At the end of the study, however, the learning sessions group of teachers reported to be more willing to teach oral skills and promote oral interaction in their lessons because they now know that it may facilitate students’ learning.

#### **6.2.5 Teachers’ assumptions about language teaching concerning oral interaction and communication.**

As noted in the previous chapter, examining teachers’ assumptions about promoting oral communication skills leads to an understanding of teachers’ views about the role of oral interaction and oral communication in the learning process. The eight teachers rated the four assumptions that were discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 5) from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The teachers discussed these assumptions during the individual interview (I group) and the last session of the professional learning sessions and recorded their main thoughts in the personal document (LS group).

Once again the four teachers in the learning sessions group agreed with the first assumption “one problem with emphasising oral communication was that there was no objective means of testing such communication.” However, in contrast to Ignacia’s and Irma’s explanations recorded in their personal document at the beginning of Phase 1, they

noted that the lack of objective testing was not an excuse to restrict students interacting and communicating in L2. They reported that it was their responsibility as teachers to provide students opportunities to communicate and interact in L2. For example, Irma stated “*as I said in the previous document, the lack of a means of assessing communication is one of many constraints to promote communication, however, I realised that I was the most important constraint*” acknowledging her responsibility for the problem.

The assumptions of the four teachers who were part of the interview group remained the same: Celeste and Carla agreed and Camilo and Cristina disagreed with the statement, thus suggesting no change in their beliefs from those recorded in the first phase of the study.

In response to the second assumption “drills and practice do not provide a meaningful context for learning English,” Ingrid’s and Isidora’s recorded to agree, a change from their previous response of undecided. Ignacia also recorded a change from disagree in the first questionnaire to agree in the second. In the teachers’ personal document, these three teachers explained that in the learning sessions they had become aware that teachers should use a variety of activities that include form and meaning. For instance, Ingrid stated: “*drills and repetitions to practice grammatical structures and vocabulary should be integrated with guided practice and independent activities that allow students to focus on meaning and communication in every lesson.*” Irma was the only teacher from the learning sessions group who maintained her assumption about drills and practice for learning English. Irma’s response suggests her assumptions of how to teach English young students were firmly established and unlikely to change possibly because she had had more years of teaching experience than the other teachers in the learning sessions group.

The assumptions of the teachers who belonged to the interview group did not change; Celeste agreed, Camilo and Carla disagreed and Cristina was undecided. It could be that as these teachers had not been engaged in theoretical discussions on oral interaction and



communication, they had not had opportunities for their assumptions to be challenged. Most teachers continued assuming that English teachers need to be fluent themselves in order to teach effectively for communication (with exception of Carla) as they did in the questionnaire at the beginning of Phase 2.

The four teachers in the learning sessions group still agreed with the statement that, “speaking and listening are the skills which teachers should stress most in their English classes.” In her personal document, Irma this time stated that not only did she believe that these skills were the most important but also that she had started to use them in her own lessons. Irma, it appears, was now more open to using these skills whereas in the first personal document, she had stated that they were not feasible for young students.

Similarly, teachers in the interview group still assumed that speaking and listening should be the skills that they had to stress most in their English lesson with exception of Carla who, once again, reported she was undecided. Their explanations in the individual interview still reflected that although these skills should be the most frequently used in their lessons, they were not. Once again, these teachers claimed this was due to pedagogical constraints such as students’ lack of motivation to speak and learn English as well as institutional constraints such as the lack of support the government gave to English language as a school subject.

In summary, the data suggest that providing teachers with opportunities to discuss and reflect on theoretical and pedagogical theories of oral language teaching in relation to their practice, provides some evidence that teachers’ assumptions can be challenged and their teaching practices changed.

The next subsection addresses the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the actual teaching practices of the teachers.

### **6.3 Influence of the Professional Learning Sessions and Focus Group Interview on Teachers' Practices**

This section reports on classroom observations and fieldnotes recorded after the professional learning sessions and focus group interview. It compares these with classroom observations undertaken at the beginning of Phase 2, reported in the previous chapter (Chapter 5). The purpose of collecting data was to investigate the influence of the small-scale professional learning sessions, and the focus group interview, on the teachers' teaching practices.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data obtained from the COLT scheme and a thematic analysis undertaken of the data from fieldnotes. To contextualise the observations and analysis of the oral language and interactions, a description of the classrooms and a summary of the lessons observed is reported first. Fieldnotes were taken to note the incidence of oral interaction in L2 among students.

Interestingly, the seating configuration of the classrooms of three of the four teachers in the learning sessions group had changed since the first observation at the beginning of Phase 2. Students were now organised into groups of three or four in the classroom of Ignacia, Ingrid and Irma to encourage students to interact. Isidora's classroom was the only one that still consisted of four rows of double desks, a seating configuration which, it has been argued, prevents the students from seeing and hearing their classmates and the teacher adequately and does not facilitate participation (Cameron, 2001; Shin & Crandall, 2014).

Ignacia, Ingrid, and Irma had also built a bulletin board for English materials and information which included classroom rules such as "listen carefully to your classmates' messages" as well as a list of expressions to help students use classroom language in English and to say when they do not understand or that they needed something. An English-speaking classroom environment had been created in which students had multiple opportunities to use English, and which supported young students who are not skilful in planning their utterances,

or reluctant to ask for assistance, as advocated in the literature (Cameron, 2001; Shin & Crandall, 2014).

In the lessons observed, Ignacia, Ingrid and Irma chose a theme from the text to help students become involved in the activities. Teaching focused on a theme is considered beneficial for interaction and communication because it “creates a broader context and allows students to focus more on content and communication than on language structure” (Shin, 2006, p. 4). Isidora, in contrast, reviewed the four lessons included in Unit 3 to prepare students for the final exam of the year. The table below presents a summary of the lessons of each teacher.

Table 33

*Summary of the Observed Lessons (LS group)*

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Title of the lesson</i>	<i>Name of the unit</i>	<i>Structure of the lesson</i>	<i>Objective of the lesson</i>	<i>Extra activity</i>	<i>Objective of the extra activity</i>
Ignacia	5	Lesson 3: National flowers	Unit 5: Nature	Introduction to vocabulary related to flowers. Pattern practice using the textbook. Group work activity	Reading comprehension; show and tell an alternative ending to a story	Power point presentation	Identifying vocabulary
Ingrid	5	Lesson 1: What's the weather like?	Unit 4: No matter the weather	Group work: Writing and rehearsing oral presentation	Applying target vocabulary and target structures of the lesson in an oral performance	-	-
Irma	6	Lesson 3: Special holidays	Unit 3: Holidays and special events	Pre-reading activity. Reading activity. Post-reading activity: answering a series of questions related to the text	Reading comprehension	-	-
Isidora	5	Lesson 1: The weekly menu, Lesson 2: Lunch, Lesson 3: Healthy food/ junk food, Lesson 4: At the English village kiosk	Unit 3: Food and Health	Review of the unit (Four lessons included). Vocabulary and grammar exercises in the whiteboard	Reviewing the content of the unit for the test	Playing bingo	Identifying numbers from 1 to 99

The classrooms of the four teachers in the interview group did not change. They used a layout and seating arrangements which consisted of three or four rows of double desks, a configuration that is not conducive to interaction. Neither did the classrooms walls have any signs to suggest that English was part of the school schedule. As noted previously, students are more likely to use oral L2 or interact in the classroom if they are supported by information such as the classroom rules and classroom expressions to help familiarise them with simple expressions and questions on a bulletin board.

The structure of the lessons taught by Camilo, Carla and Cristina adopted the traditional grammar-oriented teaching approach. While Celested used a theme from the unit of the textbook which could have promoted communicative activities and tasks, the focus was on grammar and vocabulary practice activities. Celeste was preparing students for the last written test of the year that would be focused on unit 3 and 4 of the textbook.

Table 34 presents a summary of the lessons of these four teachers.

Table 34

*Summary of the Observed Lessons (I group)*

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Title of the lesson</i>	<i>Name of the unit</i>	<i>Structure of the lesson</i>	<i>Objective of the lesson</i>	<i>Extra activity</i>	<i>Objective of the extra activity</i>
Camilo	5	-	-	Worksheet (Parts of the house and Emotions)	Identifying and applying target vocabulary	Watching a movie "The Bible"	Objectives of the activity were not provided
Carla	6	-	-	Grammar exercises in the whiteboard	Identifying and applying indefinite articles and there is and there are	-	-
Celeste	5	Lesson 1: The weekly menu, Lesson 2: Lunch, Lesson 3: Healthy food/ junk food, Lesson 4: At the English village kiosk	Unit 3: Food and Health	Vocabulary and grammar exercises in the whiteboard	Reviewing target vocabulary and target structures related to the unit	-	-
Cristina	6	-	-	Grammar exercises in the whiteboard	Identifying and applying present continuous	-	-

This summary of the lessons serves as a background to the analysis of the classroom data using the COLT. The next two subsections report two features on which teachers focused in their activities: students' organisation in the classroom and emphasis of the language skills.

### 6.3.1 Students' organisation in the classroom.

Studying the organisation of students in the classroom provides an opportunity to observe the extent to which teachers promote teacher-centred and/or group-work activities that may promote oral interaction. Teacher-centred lessons are considered to restrict students in the use of L2 and group-work lessons are likely to provide students more opportunities to negotiate meaning, use a more substantial diversity of linguistic forms and functions and to develop fluency skills (Spada & Frohlich, 1995).

Table 35 summarises the patterns of organisation observed in the first and second lesson of the teachers from the learning sessions group.

Table 35

*Percentage of Time Teachers' Lessons (LS Group) were Focused on Teacher-Centred or Group-Work Activities in Both Observations*

Teacher	Observation	Exclusive Focus Whole Class			Exclusive Focus Group	Exclusive Focus Individual	Primary Focus T↔S/C	Combination T↔S/C and choral
		T↔S/C	S↔S/C	Choral				
Ignacia	Ob 1	53.68%	2.07%	0.00%	2.31%	35.79%	0.00%	6.16%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>46.72%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>33.25%</b>	<b>11.81%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>8.23%</b>
Ingrid	Ob 1	41.79%	0.00%	0.00%	25.18%	23.95%	0.00%	9.08%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>7.09%</b>	<b>30.85%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>56.92%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>5.14%</b>
Irma	Ob 1	36.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	34.74%	28.74%	0.00%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>80.04%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>11.25%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>8.71%</b>
Isidora	Ob 1	68.07%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	31.93%	0.00%	0.00%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>86.67%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>13.33%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

Data from Table 35 show that every teacher included more group work during the second observed lessons. Ignacia, who demonstrated the greatest shift, increased the time devoted to group work from 2.31% in the first observation to 33.25% in the second observation. By way of illustration, Ignacia asked students to write a list of names of flowers in English that they

remembered from the previous lesson. Although most student interaction in each group occurred in L1, there is evidence in the fieldnotes that all students in each group contributed at least one name of a flower in English. They also asked their classmates in English, supported by the classroom expressions on the walls, as in this interaction between two students.

Extract 18 – *Student-Student Interaction in Group Work Activities (Ignacia) Observation 2*

1. S1: *How do you say lirio [lily] in English?*
2. S2: *Lily.*
3. S1: *Lily.*
4. S2: *Recuerda que me tienes que decir thank you [Remember that you have to say thank you]. No seas mal educada [do not be rude]*
5. S1: *Oh, se me olvidó [I forgot]. Thank you.*

This extract illustrates how students, when working in groups, were interacting in English using expressions proposed by the teacher, and prompting each other to use expressions of courtesy recently taught in L2. Group work activities appeared to motivate students to take responsibility for their classmates' learning by encouraging them to try out new oral language. The use of simple formulaic language seems like an encouraging start for this teacher and her beginner level students.

Ingrid's use of group work also increased markedly, from 31.74% in the first observation to 56.92% in the second observation. An example of student interaction in a group was when Ingrid asked students to share, with the group, a weather forecast script that they had written in the previous lesson. The group provided feedback to the written script, and then listened to their classmates telling the weather forecast aloud; this was followed by oral feedback to the oral presentation. As with Ignacia's students, many of the conversations among Ingrid's students were in L1, although they were able to provide feedback in English when they corrected their classmates' pronunciation or when asking routine questions such as

how do you say... in English? and How do you spell? Some students were also observed requesting clarification. Extract 19 is an example in which a group of students were listening to the weather forecast of one of the members of the groups.

Extract 19 – *Student-Student Interaction in Group Work Activities (Ingrid) Observation 2*

1. S1: *In concepción the weather is going to be partly cloudy with twenty eight degrees.*
2. S2: *(Interrupting) I did not understand. Could you repeat that again, please?*
3. S3: *No entendiste porque dijo /'degrez/ en vez de /di'gri:z/ [You did not understand because he said /'degrez/ instead of /di'gri:z/]. Para dar feedback primero tienes que esperar que termine de hablar. No seas sin respeto [You have to wait that he finishes his weather forecast before giving him feedback. Do not be disrespectful]*

S2, in her turn requested clarification in L2 because she did not understand the word “degree.” S3 explained that S2 she did not understand the word because S1 mispronounced it. S3 also reminded S2 that she had to wait until the end of her classmate’s weather forecast performance to give feedback. This extract shows that working in groups allows students to be in control of setting the rules of the interactions that occur when providing feedback to one another and to ensure that the rules are followed by all the participants of the group. Group work was a new experience for Irma; no group interaction was observed in the initial observation and, in the stimulation recall session, she reported that this was the first time she had asked students to work in groups. Irma’s class worked in groups for 11.25% of her second observation, during which students were asked to read and answer questions from the text. Students from each group were observed raising their hand to ask Irma in English the meaning of some words such as: *How do you say museo [museum] in English?*, a behaviour they were not observed to do during the first observation, although no use of L2 among students was observed. Irma also checked the activity by asking some students of each group

to read the answers orally while others wrote them on the whiteboard. Irma was observed, on this second occasion, to provide students with opportunities to use L2 oral language when students asked her questions and respond to questions in L2 orally, neither of which occurred in the first observation. Students appeared to be more engaged in the lesson through greater oral participation in meaning based interactions, instead of identifying isolated vocabulary. Isidora promoted group work 13.33% of her lesson time in the second observation, during which, she asked students to share orally the names of food they remembered from the unit. Students listened carefully to one another respecting their turns and were able to write a long list of names related to food. Students' interactions involved vocabulary and simple phrases from the unit, as in this example from one group.

Extract 20 – *Student-Student Interaction in Group Work Activities (Isidora) Observation 2*

1. S1: *Rice, meat, lettuces. They are my favourite food. Tu turno [Your turn]*
2. S2: *Fish, pizza, spaghetti (Looking at S3 as a way of saying it is your turn)*
3. S3: *Banana, hamburger, icecream. ¿Cómo se decía “me gusta” en Inglés? No me acuerdo, y la Miss no nos deja revisar el cuaderno [How do you say “I like” in English? I do not remember and the teacher does not allow us to check in our notebooks]*
4. S1: *Se dice “I like” [It is “I like”]*
5. S3: *I like banana, hamburger, icecream*

In this example, students used oral language to express ideas using simple phrases studied in previous lessons rather than isolated words and are helping each other to speak in L2.

Overall, the opportunity to work in groups also allowed students to try out skills of social interaction such as listening carefully to the messages of others, collaborating, and turn taking.



During the stimulated recall session, teachers discussed how the classroom organisation had helped them improve their lessons, and to introduce, or for Ingrid increase group work. Ignacia acknowledged that using group work in the second observation had made a difference in a number of ways. She stated that: *“Using this new pattern of student organisation, students improved their behaviour,”* and added: *“When I monitored students in their groups, they were talking and working and if they had doubts, they waited their turns, sitting at their desks.”* Whereas in the first observation, when students had questions, she recalled: *“Everyone stood up and while they were waiting their turn to ask a question, they mingled around the classroom instead of working on the activities.”*

Similarly, during the stimulated recall session, Ingrid explained that *“Allowing students to write and practice an oral presentation collaboratively gave them the opportunity to scaffold one another.”* Referring to the first observation, during which she had been the only teacher observed promoting group work, she observed that *“I had not realised the great amount of time I devoted to teacher-centred classes.”* Irma noted that: *“Group work brought more participation”* and added, *“I used to play the leading role in the classroom but now (that they work in groups) students are playing that role.”* Finally, Isidora agreed that organising students in groups was useful stating: *“Working in groups helped me monitor that all students participated and ensure that all students finished the task,”* adding that *“I could not believe that my students were able to express orally in English among themselves without my intervention.”*

These data revealed that although the use of group work was introduced in the professional learning sessions to heighten teachers’ awareness of the importance in providing students with oral interaction opportunities, teachers considered there were other equally beneficial outcomes of group work. Ignacia, for example, claimed group work led to better classroom management, while Irma noted an increase in student participation and motivation.

Nonetheless, the data suggest that the opportunity to work in groups allowed students to try out skills of social interaction such as listening carefully to the messages of others, collaborating, and turn taking.

The lessons of those teachers who were part of the interview group were also analysed. Table 36 presents the summary of percentages of time in which the lessons were focused on teacher-centred or group-work activities in both observations.

Table 36

*Percentage of Time Teachers' Lessons (I Group) were Focused on Teacher-Centred or Group-Work Activities Both Observations*

Teacher	Observation	Exclusive Focus whole Class			Exclusive Focus Group	Exclusive Focus Individual	Primary Focus T↔S/C	Combination T↔S/C and choral
		T↔S/C	S↔S/C	Choral				
Camilo	Ob 1	67.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.93%	13.32%	6.56%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>12.22%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>81.91%</b>	<b>4.34%</b>	<b>1.53%</b>
Carla	Ob 1	62.75%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	37.25%	0.00%	0.00%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>55.79%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>41.32%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>2.89%</b>
Celeste	Ob 1	67.32%	0.00%	1.08%	0.00%	21.57%	5.38%	4.65%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>64.41%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>18.29%</b>	<b>17.30%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Cristina	Ob 1	38.44%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	58.11%	0.00%	3.44%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>78.88%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>12.79%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>8.33%</b>

Data from Table 36 show that only Celeste included a group work activity during the second observed lessons. Celeste was observed promoting group work (18.29%) in an activity in which she gave a set of pictures to each group of students and asked them to discuss what the people were doing in the pictures. Although this activity could have provided students opportunities to interact orally and use oral language, she spent seven minutes out of the ten minutes that the activity lasted explaining to students what they had to do. Students were confused because Celeste asked them to describe what the people were doing using present simple tense. For instance, Celeste showed students what was expected from them in this activity by modelling an example herself. She showed a picture to the students and said aloud: “*what is the girl doing in this picture?*” She answered, “*She plays the guitar.*” Students

did not understand why they had to answer in present simple tense if the question was asked in present continuous. In the stimulated recall session, later Celeste was asked to talk about this activity specifically. She told the researcher that the activity did not work because students did not understand the purpose of the activity. The aim of the activity was to practice the present simple orally but as students were asked in present continuous they became confused. In the individual interview, Celeste stated that she had learned the importance of group work in the online course she was taking.

### **6.3.2 Emphasis on language skills in the actual teaching practices.**

Observing the focus of each student's activity can provide an indication of the extent to which teachers promote oral language and oral interaction. Observation of students' engagement in classroom activities may also provide insights into whether teachers attribute equal importance to the four skills during their lesson, as advocated by CLT and literature on teaching language to young students. Students' engagement in activities that develop language skills was assessed using the category *student modality* of Part A of the COLT scheme. Table 37 presents a summary of the percentages of average time students in the learning sessions group were observed engaging in the different skills in observation 1 and 2.

Table 37

*Percentage of Time Students (LS Group) Worked in Activities Focused on the Language Skills Both Observations*

Teacher	Observation	<i>Exclusive focus</i>				<i>Primary focus</i>		<i>Combination</i>								
		Listening	Writing	Reading	Other	Listening	Other	Listening and speaking	Listening and other	Listening and writing	Writing and other	Writing and grammar	Listening and grammar	Reading and writing	Listening, speaking and writing	Listening, speaking, writing and reading
Ignacia	Ob 1	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	60.66%	0.00%	6.16%	2.63%	3.49%	24.76%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.31%	0.00%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>4.67%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>11.81%</b>	<b>53.41%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>8.23%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>20.81%</b>	<b>1.06%</b>
Ingrid	Ob 1	0.00%	11.84%	0.00%	0.00%	53.90%	0.00%	34.26%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>7.09%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>35.99%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>56.92%</b>
Irma	Ob 1	1.71%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	34.14%	64.14%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>8.16%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>53.81%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>8.71%</b>	<b>18.06%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>11.25%</b>
Isidora	Ob 1	0.00%	0.00%	8.26%	0.00%	60.79%	18.19%	0.00%	0.00%	7.29%	5.48%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>9.32%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>77.35%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>13.33%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

Table 37 shows that Ignacia's and Isidora's students once again were engaged in listening as a primary focus. That is, students in these classes spent more than 50% of the lesson listening to the teachers' instructions, questions and explanations. However, Ignacia's students also spent a considerable amount of time in an activity that integrated listening, speaking and writing. They were asked to create an alternative ending to a story that they read in the lesson, draw it and show it to their classmates in groups. Ingrid, in her second observation, spent 56.92% of the lesson time in an activity that integrated the four skills, consisting of students reading the scripts of the presentation of their classmates, giving them feedback, revising their own scripts according to the feedback given by their classmates, and listening to each member of the group practicing the oral presentation (as explained and exemplified in 6.3.1). The main role of Ignacia and Ingrid in this activity was to keep students on task by reminding them of the goal of the activity, model the task and show them what the expectations were (Cameron, 2001; Shin & Crandall, 2014; van Hees, 2007). These data indicate that these teachers' students were more focused on developing communication skills and oral interaction than in the first observation.

Irma's students, in the second observation, were working on an activity that focused on meaning, whereas in the first observation the focus was only on explicit grammar. Irma's students spent over 50% of the lesson with listening as a primary focus. Students listened to Irma reading a text and asking them questions regarding to the text. Students also spent 18.16% of the lesson reading a text and writing responses related to the text, activity that allowed them to try out the language in context.

To conclude, Ignacia, Ingrid and Irma were able to provide students with at least one activity that integrated two or more skills in their lessons (as they reported in their perceptions) and speaking and listening that allowed some instances of interaction.

The table below presents the percentage of the average of the time that students of teachers in the interview group worked on activities focused on the language skills before and after the focus group interview.

Table 38

*Percentage of Time Students (I Group) Worked in Activities Focused on the Language Skills Both Observations*

Teacher	Observation	<i>Exclusive focus</i>				<i>Primary focus</i>			<i>Combination</i>											
		Listening	Writing	Reading	Other	Listening	Writing	Other	Listening and speaking	Listening and other	Listening and writing	Listening and reading	Writing and grammar	Listening and grammar	Reading and other	Listening, grammar and other	Listening, speaking and grammar	Listening, reading and other	Listening, reading and writing	
Camilo	Ob 1	0.00%	12.93%	0.00%	0.00%	80.51%	0.00%	0.00%	6.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Ob 2	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>16.56%</b>	<b>49.19%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>1.53%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>32.72%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Carla	Ob 1	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	41.11%	16.94%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	35.39%	6.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Ob 2	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>9.54%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>35.07%</b>	<b>2.89%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>41.32%</b>	<b>11.18%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Celeste	Ob 1	1.04%	0.00%	1.49%	0.00%	38.43%	13.88%	3.00%	5.73%	3.80%	15.26%	1.95%	0.00%	5.43%	5.17%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.82%
	Ob 2	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>11.25%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>18.29%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>17.30%</b>	<b>53.15%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Cristina	Ob 1	3.06%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	24.50%	55.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.66%	0.00%	13.46%	1.27%	0.00%	0.00%	
	Ob 2	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>8.33%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>12.79%</b>	<b>78.88%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

As seen in Table 38, most students in observation 2 were focused on activities that combined listening and/or writing with grammar. For instance, Cristina's students listened to grammatical explanations in L1, then copied grammatical structures from the whiteboard into their own notebooks.

Camilo was the only teacher of this group to not use writing to focus on grammar; his students completed blank spaces with the corresponding emotion that some pictures showed. Students also coloured a house, following instructions given in a worksheet. Students also watched part of a movie in L2 with Spanish subtitles; however, they did not appear to be engaged with the activity as they were distracted by cards or mobile phones.

In brief, lessons from these four teachers who did not participate in the learning sessions were characterised by a lack of integration of the four skills, a focus on grammar and decontextualised use of vocabulary.

The next subsection describes the communicative features observed in teachers' and students' oral language in L2 to investigate the quantity and quality of the oral language and oral interaction in both groups at the end of Phase 2.

### **6.3.3 Communicative features of oral language and interaction in L2.**

Analysis of the observations of the interactions between the learning session group of teachers and their students identifies the quantity of L2 used in the teachers' lessons, the most frequently used communicative features used by teachers when using L2, and the interactions between teachers and students in L2. Table 39 presents the percentage and number of all teachers' turns in L2 of the learning sessions group and the most frequently observed communicative features in both observations.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix M presents all the observed communicative features in the teachers' turns. The communicative features in L2 that were used less than 10% in teachers' turns were not reported in the results because they did not reflect the common oral language used in L2.



Table 39

*Percentage of the Most Used Communicative Features in Teachers' Turns (LS Group) Both Observations*

Participant	Observation	L2 Turns		Unpredictable Information		Pseudo request		Form-Repetition		Message-Repetition		Correction-Repetition		Correction-Paraphrase		Genuine request		Form-Comment	
		Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%
Ignacia	Ob 1	119	47.22%	25	21.01%	30	25.21%	18	15.13%	9	7.56%	7	5.88%	12	10.08%	0	0.00%	8	6.72%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>30.99%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25.76%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24.24%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13.64%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.03%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12.12%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6.06%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Ingrid	Ob 1	203	53.14%	33	16.26%	44	21.67%	38	18.72%	12	5.91%	8	3.94%	13	6.40%	5	2.46%	26	12.81%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>66.83%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>39.10%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6.77%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.75%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14.29%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7.52%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9.02%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Irma	Ob 1	156	49.84%	40	25.64%	16	10.26%	27	17.95%	1	0.64%	25	15.38%	15	9.62%	3	1.92%	19	12.18%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>56.13%</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>59.83%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10.48%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2.62%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2.18%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2.62%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3.93%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Isidora	Ob 1	246	63.08%	44	17.89%	28	11.38%	49	19.92%	20	8.13%	5	2.03%	17	6.91%	24	9.76%	27	10.98%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>64.69%</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>37.12%</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>17.90%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>12.23%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.31%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.87%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>14.85%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<i>M Ob 1</i>		181	53.32%	36	20.20%	30	17.13%	33	17.93%	11	5.56%	11	6.81%	14	8.25%	8	3.54%	20	10.67%
<b><i>M Ob 2</i></b>		<b>164</b>	<b>54.66%</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>40.45%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14.85%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7.31%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5.20%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5.78%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8.47%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

Table 39 showed the percentage of the communicative features before and after the sessions. The comparison shows that despite of the fact that teachers varied in the quantity of L2 that they provided students, again, they all spent a considerable number of turns in L2 giving unpredictable information.

In the first observation, unpredictable information given by Ignacia and Ingrid involved only managerial and discipline directives, but in the second observation they also responded to students' genuine questions. The following extract shows Ignacia responding to students' questions about a text.

Extract 21 – *Giving Unpredictable Information (Ignacia) Observation 2*

1. S: *What does Calafate mean, Miss?*
2. T: *Calafate is a flower.*

In this extract, a student asked Ignacia a question in L2 by using a classroom expression studied previously and posted on the walls as support. This confirms the benefits cited (e.g., Shin & Crandall, 2014) of teaching negotiation strategies such as classroom language and expressions to beginner students.

When Irma gave unpredictable information, in both observations, it also reflected her concern for vocabulary and accurate pronunciation. While in the first observation she asked students to repeat words in isolation, in the second observation she contextualised vocabulary by reading a text as the next extract illustrates.

Extract 22 – *Giving Unpredictable Information (Irma) Observation 2*

T: *Do you want the perfect holidays? Then go to San Pedro de Atacama! Make sure you visit all its attractions: the desert, the geysers, the valleys and the pre-Hispanic villages. You can't miss the Museo Arqueológico Padre Le Paige.*

In this extract, Irma provided students with vocabulary in context, language input that was richer than the isolated words provided in the first observation. Irma was also observed to

allow some students to read aloud parts of the text, which enabled them to use oral L2.

Fieldnotes recorded that Irma's students' interest in reading the text aloud appeared to lead them to be more motivated and engaged than during the first observation. This opportunity for students to engage with more authentic language and opportunities to practice the language in context may have influenced students' motivation positively.

Isidora was the only teacher who increased her use of unpredictable information from 44 turns during the first observation to 85 turns in the second observation. This activity, however, did not provide students with opportunities to develop their oral skills as it provided students with isolated words only. Isidora played bingo with her students to check their knowledge of numbers in L2. Unfortunately this activity did not result in meaningful input to the students as a student translated number words to Spanish after Isidora called the numbers.

Requesting pseudo-questions was the communicative feature that Ignacia, Irma and Isidora used with the second highest frequency during the second observation; Ingrid, however, rarely used this feature. For Ignacia and Irma, requesting pseudo-questions in the second observation not only focused on vocabulary and grammar, as in the first observation. They were observed to ask students to make predictions prior to reading a text and to ask questions that led to a summary of the text as a post-reading activity. In this example, Irma used pseudo-questions to make reading text more meaningful as demonstrated in the following extract:

Extract 23 – *Asking Pseudo-Questions (Irma) Observation 2*

1. T: *What attractions does Santiago have, Pedro?*
2. S: *Museos*
3. T: *Museums*
4. S: *Museums*

In this extract, although the student did not know how to say ‘museums’ in English, he answered the question in Spanish. This behaviour was not seen during the first observation because the focus of the whole lesson was asking students whether a list of nouns was countable or uncountable. In this extract, Irma translated the word into English to show the student how it is said in English. The student repeated the word “museums” in English without being promoted by Irma, suggesting he made sense of Irma’s corrective feedback and was trying to reinforce his learning orally.

Isidora’s use of pseudo-questions increased from 28 turns during the first observation to 41 in the second observation, although the nature of the questions was the same, that is, questions about vocabulary in isolation. There was, however, an instance in which a pseudo-question led to a debate between students as illustrated below

Extract 24 – *Asking Pseudo-Questions (Isidora) Observation 2*

1. T: *Is fish healthy or junk food? (Looking at S1)*
2. S1: *Healthy*
3. S2: *No, it is junk food. Si el pescado está frito, no es saludable [if the fish is fried, it is junk food]*
4. T: *Su compañero dice que si fuera pescado frito sería comida no saludable. ¿Por qué creen ustedes? [Your classmate says that fried fish is junk food. Why?]*
5. S3: *Porque la fritura hace mal [Because fried food is unhealthy]*
6. T: *Okay.*

In this extract, the response to the pseudo-question asked by Isidora in the first turn was expected to be that fish is healthy because they already had studied it from this perspective. S2 disagreed with S1’s answer in English but explained her reason in L1. Isidora responded with an elaboration request inviting other students to participate and S3 gave his opinion in

L1. This could have been an opportunity for Isidora to invite students to investigate the topic and prepare an argument using L2 and to interact orally. Isidora after she said okay in her last turn, however, proceeded to the next activity.

In Ingrid's turns, the use of pseudo-questions diminished from 44 in the first observation to 9 turns in the second observation. It suggests that she intended to reduce her control over the interactions and provide students more opportunities to use oral L2 as it was observed in her teaching practices.

Fieldnotes indicate that the interactions were less controlled by the teachers. Teachers encouraged different students to respond to the questions and the emergence of group work in the activities as it was noted allowed students to interact with classmates.

Reacting to the linguistic form of students' turns through repetition was not a communicative feature as commonly used by the four teachers as it was in the first observation. Nonetheless, it was the third most frequently used by Ignacia and Isidora and the data indicate that they were still relying on this feature that does not allow students to expand the interactions. Ingrid and Irma decreased their reaction to the students' turns through repetition from 18.72% to 0.75% and 17.95% to 2.62%, respectively, suggesting that they understood that students may gain knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation more effectively in context (Webb, 2007) rather than through repeating words in isolation. Correcting students through repetition was a communicative feature that was commonly used in Ignacia's turns during the second observation and that was not observed in the first observation. The extract below illustrates this feature

Extract 25 – *Correcting Students Through Repetition (Ignacia)*

1. *T: What do you see in this picture?* (to a student but she does not understand the question) *What do you see in this picture?* (to the same student talking more slowly and doing gestures)

2. S: *Shamrocks* /tʃʌm'rɒks/

3. T: *Shamrocks* /'ʃæmrɒks/

This extract indicates that in the second observation, Ignacia asked questions not only to the students who raised their hands. As the student did not understand, Ignacia repeated the question in English using gestures to help the student understand. Finally, the student understood the question without the need of using L1 and answered the question in English although she was not able to pronounce correctly. Ignacia, as seen in her second turn, was concerned about providing students the correct pronunciation of the word.

A communicative feature used in Isidora's second observation was correcting students' turns through paraphrasing. Extract 26 illustrates the use of this communicative feature

Extract 26 – *Correcting Students' Turns Through Paraphrasing (Isidora) Observation 2*

1. T: *What day is it today?*

2. S1: *Veintisiete de Noviembre [November 27th]*

3. T: *In English, In English*

4. STS: *November*

5. T: *Twenty?*

6. S2: *Six*

7. T: *Seven*

This extract shows how Isidora encouraged the students to answer in L2 in her second turn (*In English, In English*). She then tried to elaborate the student's previous answer by prompting a full answer (*Twenty?*) and finally, correcting the student in her last turn through paraphrasing. It was not clear whether Isidora corrected an error focused on meaning or form because the student may have confused number seven with six, or maybe she thought the date was 26 and not 27.

The next table, Table 40, presents the percentage and number of all students' turns in L2 and the most used communicative features in their turns in both observations<sup>8</sup>.

Table 40

*Percentage of the Most Used Communicative Features in Students' Turns (LS Groups) Both Observations*

Students	Observation	Turns in L2		Giving Predictable Information		Genuine questions		Form-Repetition		Unpredictable	
		Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turn	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%
Ignacia's students	Ob 1	77	50.00%	55	72.37%	0	0.00%	20	26.32%	1	1.32%
	Ob 2	48	37.50%	26	54.17%	3	6.25%	19	39.58%	0	0.00%
Ingrid's students	Ob 1	154	66.38%	126	81.82%	0	0.00%	22	14.29%	4	2.60%
	Ob 2	119	86.23%	15	12.61%	13	10.92%	52	43.70%	36	30.25%
Irma's students	Ob 1	124	52.32%	46	37.10%	0	0.00%	66	53.23%	3	2.42%
	Ob 2	166	65.10%	25	15.06%	0	0.00%	126	75.30%	1	0.60%
Isidora's students	Ob 1	119	40.07%	68	57.14%	1	0.84%%	13	10.92%	22	18.49%
	Ob 2	40	12.31%	35	87.50%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
MLS group	Ob 1	119	52.19%	74	62.11%	1	0.21%	30	26.19%	8	6.21%
	Ob 2	93	50.29%	25	42.34%	4	4.29%	49	39.65%	9	7.71%

As seen in this table, the use of L2 in the turns of the students, on average, was less at observation 2. Ignacia's and Ingrid's students were observed participating in group activities that were more meaningful and appeared to be more attractive and more likely to promote oral interaction in the long term than the activities observed in the first observation. Ignacia, for instance, asked students, in groups, to write an alternative ending to a story they read in the lesson, draw it and then show it to their classmates. This activity was continued in the subsequent lesson as the students required time to think about what they would write and then write it and draw it.

Isidora's lesson involved decontextualised vocabulary in preparation for the last written test of the year. It appeared the decrease of L2 was because the lesson consisted mainly of showing students the content and structure of the test. The group-work activity

<sup>8</sup> Appendix N presents all the observed communicative features in the students' turns. The communicative features in L2 that were used less than 10% in students' turns were not reported in the results because they did not reflect the common oral language used in L2.

already described (Extract 20) however, provided some opportunities for the students to interact.

Only Irma's students increased their use of L2 in their turns, from 124 in the first observation to 166 turns in the second. Fieldnotes suggest that the increase of oral language in L2 may be influenced by the objective of Irma's lesson to enable students to comprehend a reading text. Students were asked to explore and share the concepts and messages of a visual in the text in L2. Students were also requested to share their knowledge about tourist attractions in their own city. Setting up the content of the lesson allowed Irma to engage students in the activity and to encourage students to interact with her orally.

Although the quantity of L2 used in the students' turns varied, all students gave predictable information in response to the teachers' pseudo-questions as they had done in the first observation. However, the function of the question had changed. In the first observation, the four teachers focused on checking students' understanding of vocabulary or grammatical structures in isolation, whereas in the second observation, the questions elicited students' previous knowledge and reading comprehension. For instance, in the second observation Irma introduced a reading comprehension activity by asking students questions about the countries that were involved in the activity

*Extract 27 – Giving Predictable Information (Irma's Students) Observation 2*

1. T: *Where is Sydney? In Great Britain, in Australia or United States of America?*
2. S: *In Australia*
3. T: *In Australia*

This extract shows that Irma has become aware that teaching English is more than teaching the language. In this part of the lesson, Irma encouraged students to develop their general knowledge about countries.



Isidora's students were the only ones to spend most of their turns responding to her pseudo-questions regarding vocabulary of the unit, as they did in the first observation. Isidora did not use any context to review the vocabulary; she only asked students to remember the vocabulary and listed according to the type of food, healthy or unhealthy, in the vocabulary list. Extract 28 illustrates an example of these minimal and short interactions between Ignacia and her students.

Extract 28 – *Giving Predictable Information (Isidora's Students) Observation 2*

1. T: *So, for example, soup /səʊp/ is healthy food or junk food?*
2. S: *Healthy*
3. T: *Healthy. So I am going to write H next to the word soup.*

As seen in this extract, even though Isidora had already taught the unit, and students were supposed to know the vocabulary and the content, she only focused on information recall in her lesson. Isidora's approach provided minimal opportunities for her students to interact, although an exception was the short activity in which students worked in groups. This suggests that the decision to discourage students from interacting orally in L2 beyond their current knowledge had nothing to do with students' lack of linguistic knowledge as some teachers reported in the personal document and questionnaire.

Reacting to the linguistic form of teachers' turns through repetition was the second most communicative feature used by students as an integrated group in the second observation, as it was in the first observation. During the second observation, students repeated information in context in contrast to the first observation where they repeated isolated words. For example, Irma's students repeated after Irma, sentences from a reading text that contain the modal verb "can" as in the following extract:

Extract 29 – *Reacting to the Teachers' Turns (Irma's Students) Through Repetition*

*Observation 2*

1. T: *Repeat after me, the tourist guides can speak English, Spanish and Italian*
2. STS: *The tourist guides can speak English, Spanish and Italian*
3. T: *They can ride horses*
4. STS: *They can ride horses*
5. T: *They can play football very well*
6. STS: *They can play football very well*
7. T: *And they can climb mountains very fast*
8. STS: *And they can climb mountains very fast*

As this extract indicates, Irma exposed her students to L2 in context rather than through isolated words. These data suggest that her traditional instructional approach, in which vocabulary and grammar are learned in isolation, has shifted to instruction that encourages incidental learning in which students learn vocabulary and grammatical structures in context.

Ingrid's students were observed giving unpredictable information during their turns (36 turns) in the second observation, a communicative feature that was rarely observed in the first observation. The provided information involved students presenting "the weather forecast." Extract 30 illustrates this feature

Extract 30 – *Giving Unpredictable Information (Ingrid's Students) Observation 2*

1. S: (Pointing at a map of Chile that was made by the student herself and that is hanging on the wall) *In Arica it is going to be sunny /suni/, sunny /souni/, wind and twenty five degree /diərs/, twenty five degree /diərs/. In Antofagasta, in Antofagasta it is going to be sunny /souni/, wind, twenty, no, thirty degrees /diərs/. In Viña del Mar it is, it is going to /to/ be partly cloudy, wind, and seventeen degrees /diərs/. In Puerto Montt, the weather, in Puerto Montt it is going to be, to be cloudy, wind and ten*

*degrees /diərs/. In Punta Arenas it is, it is going to be rainy, cloudy with ten degrees /diərs/. That is all for today. Thank you for your attention. Bye bye.*

This example shows that Ingrid provided students opportunities to produce information orally and use the content of the unit (weather words and numbers) in context. The fieldnotes revealed that Ingrid was able to provide students opportunities to produce L2 orally and to interact because her school encouraged her to focus her classes on oral communication. Her school did not expect her to assess her students formally through written tests only; she was free to assess them orally. In contrast, the other three teachers' schools required students to sit a traditional test at least once every two months, although they were supposed to support a communicative approach to teaching English. Ingrid's students were also observed asking genuine questions in 13 of their turns, a feature that was not observed in the previous classroom observation. Extract 34 shows an example in which students were providing feedback to their classmates's scripts in groups. None of the students knew how to say a specific sentence in English so they decided to ask Ingrid.

Extract 31 – *Asking Genuine Questions (Ingrid's Students) Observation 2*

1. S: *Miss, How do you say "el clima va a estar templado" [the weather will be mild] in English?*
2. T: *The weather is going to be mild.*
3. S: *Mild*

In this extract, it can be seen that the student uses a formulaic expression to ask Ingrid a question in English. It indicates that students were willing to learn and include vocabulary that was not part of the unit.

During the stimulated recall sessions, the four teachers were able to identify differences in their practices between the first and the second observation. Ignacia and Ingrid

stated that during the second observation some of their students were able to initiate the interaction, particularly by asking questions. Ignacia, for example, stated:

*In the first observation, none of my students were able to ask me, or a classmate a question in English. In the second observation, some of my students asked me some questions in English. That was awesome! I think the key factor that made this result possible was the list of classroom expressions that we studied in the sessions. When I hung the list of expressions for the first time, I taught them the meaning and how to pronounce them. Since then, students have been trying out the expressions by applying them in the different activities that we do*

Ingrid added

*Although students asked questions during the first observation, they did it because I asked them to do it. In contrast, during the second observation, some students were able to ask me questions because they wanted to do it. In a way, I think that students felt the freedom and confidence to ask questions because they were provided with a model (the classroom expressions) that they were able to see every day and try out whenever they wanted.*

In the stimulated recall sessions, the four teachers also acknowledged that putting the interactional patterns that were studied and discussed in the professional learning sessions helped them integrate interaction into their practice. Ingrid, for instance, reported that she set a goal for the second observation following the professional learning sessions. She stated “*My objective was that students were able to use formulaic expressions in order to express orally and also exchange information with others, and they did it in only one month.*” She also planned to introduce the other interactional patterns the following year, saying:

*I could not put into practice all the interactional strategies that we studied in the sessions because the time between the sessions and my second observation was only*

*one month. I will use them next year when the classes start again. If students were able to improve the oral L2 using the interactional strategies that I put into practice in the classroom in one month, imagine how they will improve when I use them all next year. Maybe next year we will be better from March to December. It will be a huge change.*

Isidora realised that, during the second observation, she had given students the opportunity to work in groups, although she admitted students did not behave as well as usual because that particular lesson had been given in the afternoon and English classes were normally in the morning. More activities to enhance oral interaction could not be included, she explained because:

*I have to make sure that students understand the vocabulary, grammatical structures and type of questions that they will be asked in the test. I have to make sure that my students are able to get a good score in the test. I am sorry, but today I could not do more activities that foster students to interact orally.*

The data illustrate the constraints imposed by the conflicts between the pedagogy promoted in the curriculum and assessment requirements. In Isidora's case interactive activities had to give way to a review for the test, which consisted of completing sentences with words in isolation and grammatical structures in present simple tense (I like/she likes). Isidora felt she did not have time to include oral interaction in L2 as she had to ensure students scored well in the written test. In Chile, test scores in the subject English are added to the scores of the other subjects to determine whether students pass or fail the year.

Irma observed more student participation in the second observation compared to the first, and that her students initiated some of the interactions, commenting that, "*Generally, students do not find my class interesting but today there was more participation.*" Irma also acknowledged that, during the second observation, she exposed her students to more

authentic input, that is, instead of listening and repeating isolated words, they listened to and read a text in English. She explained that: *“They still do not speak English or understand too much. But at least I started to talk to them and read in English and thus they have opportunities to listen to English during the class.”* She seemed to be acknowledging the importance of L2 input.

During the stimulated recall session all teachers reported that the learning sessions had influenced their cognitions and teaching practices. All the teachers stated that, although they recalled studying oral interaction strategies at university, they were not taught how to put them into practice, and so rarely used them. The learning sessions gave them opportunities to integrate theory with practice. Irma, for example, claimed that having to justify activities theoretically in the lesson plan for the sessions was really helpful for her. Ignacia, Ingrid and Isidora also found the microteaching simulation and subsequent discussion was crucial to their learning. For instance, Ignacia had had problems getting the attention of all the students in her classroom, but during the recall session she claimed that: *“I do not have that problem anymore. I use the strategy that Isidora used during her microteaching simulation during the sessions and it worked.”*

The next section presents analysis of data from classroom observations of the four teachers who participated in the interview group. Table 41 shows the percentage and number of all teachers’ turns in L2 and the most commonly used communicative features in teachers’ turns in the second observation<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix O presents all the observed communicative features in the teachers’ turns. The communicative features in L2 that were used less than 10% in teachers’ turns were not reported in the results because they did not reflect the common oral language used in L2

Table 41

*Percentage of the Most Used Communicative Features in Teachers' Turns (I Groups) Both Observations*

Participant	Observation	L2 Turns		Unpredictable Information		Predictable information		Pseudo request		Form-Repetition		Message-Repetition		Correction-Repetition		Correction-Paraphrase		Genuine request		Form-Comment	
		Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%
Camilo	Ob 1	71	11.41%	10	14.08%	0	0.00%	8	11.27%	28	39.44%	0	0.00%	6	8.45%	7	9.86%	0	0.00%	5	7.04%
	Ob 2	26	15.95%	3	11.54%	4	15.38%	4	15.38%	8	30.77%	0	0.00%	1	3.85%	3	11.54%	3	11.54%	0	0.00%
Carla	Ob 1	10	7.87%	4	40.00%	0	0.00%	1	10.00%	3	30.00%	0	0.00%	1	10.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	Ob 2	15	15.15%	11	73.34%	0	0.00%	2	13.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	13.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Celeste	Ob 1	196	44.24%	35	17.86%	0	0.00%	28	14.29%	30	15.31%	20	10.20%	2	1.02%	6	3.06%	28	14.29%	19	9.69%
	Ob 2	156	38.05%	30	19.23%	5	3.21%	38	24.36%	23	14.74%	0	0.00%	3	1.92%	8	5.13%	10	6.41%	0	0.00%
Cristina	Ob 1	105	37.37%	19	18.10%	0	0.00%	27	25.71%	12	11.43%	14	13.33%	2	1.90%	6	5.71%	10	9.52%	9	8.57%
	Ob 2	142	36.41%	8	5.63%	2	1.41%	22	15.49%	47	33.10%	0	0.00%	9	6.34%	14	9.86%	7	4.93%	0	0.00%
M Ob 1		96	25.22%	17	22.51%	0	0.00%	16	15.32%	18	24.05%	9	5.88%	3	5.34%	5	4.66%	10	5.95%	8	6.33%
M Ob 2		85	26.39%	13	27.44%	3	5.00%	17	17.14%	20	19.65%	0	0.00%	4	6.36%	6	6.63%	5	5.72%	0	0.00%

It can be seen from this table that the use of L2 increased in Carla's turns and Cristina's turns, by five and 37 turns, respectively but diminished in Camilo's and Celeste's turns, by 45 and 40 turns, respectively. Table 41 shows that although the amount of L2 used by teachers varied, the three most frequently used communicative features observed in the first observation were also observed most frequently in the second observation. These communicative features were giving unpredictable information, reacting to the linguistic form of the students' turns through repetition and requesting pseudo-questions. Individually, it is seen that the percentages of turns for these three features varied according to each teacher.

Giving unpredictable information involved providing students with managerial directives in the turns of the four teachers during the second observation as observed in the first observation. This is exemplified in Extract 32

Extract 32 – *Giving Unpredictable Information 1 (Celeste) Observation 2*

1. T: *Hold on a minute. What you have to do first is, you have to complete. Okay.*

*These are the next sentences. Here, you have to remember the use of can and can't.*

Here, Celeste provided the students with simple instructional input focused on grammar which is considered inappropriate for young students because they do not easily attend to the underlying rules of the language (Shin & Crandall, 2014).

Camilo was the only teacher observed giving unpredictable information for other purposes. He provided unpredictable information in response to a request by a student to let them play instead of starting the lesson. Extract 33 illustrates the feature



Extract 33 – *Giving Unpredictable Information (Camilo) Observation 2*

1. S: *Tío, ¿Cómo se dice estamos jugando en Inglés?* [Teacher, How do you say we are playing in English?]
2. T: *I wanna play (hesitating) I wanna play a game in English* (Student looks at the teacher confused. It seems that he did not understand the translation)

This extract indicates that the teacher did not provide the student with the correct translation of the sentence. The fieldnotes recorded that the student did not understand Camilo's translation and asked another student *¿Qué dijo?* [What did the teacher say?]. Instead of helping the student understand the sentence in English, the teacher commenced the lesson and forgot about the student.

Camilo also used unpredictable information to provide a student with a clue to guess the name of a part of the house. The classroom was noisy and the student was participating in the activity while the rest of the students were playing cards. Extract 34 illustrates the unpredictable information given to the student, the clue to the activity

Extract 34 – *Giving Unpredictable Information (Camilo) Observation 2*

1. T: *Ya, miren pongan atención acá* (Camilo walks towards the whiteboard) [Okay, look and pay attention here]. *¿Qué es lo que será roof?* [What does roof mean in Spanish?]
2. S: *Pasillo* [Corridor]
3. T: (Looking at the student who answered his question) *It is something that covers the house*
4. S: *Escalera* [Stair] (Camilo shows picture of the word) *Techo* [Roof]
5. T: *Techo. Muy bien* [Roof. Very good]

In this extract, Camilo, in his second turn, provided the only student paying attention the definition of a word to be translated into Spanish. As the student did not understand, he provided a picture of the word which the student identified immediately.

As in the first observation, reacting to the students' turns through repetition consisted of repeating students' utterances that included vocabulary or grammatical structures in isolation to indicate whether students had responded correctly. Cristina illustrates the use of this feature in Extract 35, checking whether the students knew how to conjugate the verb to be in present tense, as seen in the extract below

Extract 35 – *Reacting to the Students' Turns Through Repetition (Cristina) Observation 2*

1. T: *Ya. Veamos. [Okay, Let's see] Subject they, verb to be? In negative?*
2. S: *Aren't*
3. T: *Aren't*

Here, Cristina asked students an incorrectly formed question but the student understood it and answered it. The short interaction in L2 between the teacher and the student only focused on identifying a grammatical structure that was practiced out of context.

Requesting pseudo-questions was the third communicative feature commonly used by all the teachers. For instance, Carla asked students pseudo-questions to check if they knew the meaning of the subjects of some sentences in Spanish as illustrated in the extract below

Extract 36 – *Asking Pseudo-Questions (Carla) Observation 2*

1. T: *¿Se acuerdan de lo que era good student? [Do you remember how to say “good student” in Spanish?]*
2. S1: *Buen Estudiante [Good student]*
3. T: *Buen Estudiante [Good student] New book?*
4. S2: *Nuevo libro [New book]*
5. T: *Easy exercise?*

6. S3: *Wenchunwar* (this word does not have any translation. The student was joking)

7. T: *No. Significa ejercicio fácil* [No. It means easy exercise]

In this extract, Carla asked a pseudo-question in L1 in her first turn. As can be seen, Carla's second and third turn involved isolated words understood as questions because the pitch level of Carla's voice went up. The observation data suggest that Carla provided students with scarce input in L2 and the limited use of L2 aimed to ask students to translate words.

Fieldnotes indicate that the interactions were still in control of the teachers. They decided who participated and when predominantly asking those students who raised their hands or sometimes asking them to repeat simultaneously.

Camilo, in the second observation, was observed giving predictable information, requesting genuine questions and correcting students through paraphrasing, communicative features not commonly observed in the first observation. In Extract 37, Camilo was giving predictable information when answering his own pseudo-questions to which none of the students responded.

#### Extract 37 – *Giving Predictable Information (Camilo) Observation 2*

1. T: *¿Cómo se dice verde?* [How do you say green?](Nobody answers) *Green*

As in the first observation, this extract shows that Camilo's turn in L2 was minimal and only aimed to elicit recalled vocabulary.

Although Camilo was observed requesting genuine questions in the second observation but not in the first observation, these genuine questions corresponded to a greeting activity the class had engaged in at the beginning of the lesson. This activity was not observed in the first observation because the school inspector accompanied the researcher to introduce her and, consequently, the greeting was done in L1.

Extract 38 – *Asking Genuine Questions (Camilo) Observation 2*

1. T: *How are you today?(Asking the students as a whole)*
2. S1: *Fine*
3. T: *Are you good, fine? Are you bad or so so?(Asking to the students as a whole)*
4. S2: *So so*

This extract shows that only two students answered the questions intended to be responded to in chorus by the class. Fieldnotes recorded that students were not paying attention to Camilo. As noted previously, most students (with exception of the two students who answered the questions) were playing cards in groups.

Camilo also corrected students' turns through paraphrasing as in Extract 39 in which Camilo was trying to make students understand the meaning of a set of emotions

Extract 39 – *Correcting Students Through Paraphrasing (Camilo) Observation 2*

1. T: *I am sick ¿Qué es lo que es I am sick? [What does “I am sick” mean in Spanish?]*
2. S1: *Circo [Circus]*
3. T: *I feel very bad (acting)*
4. S2: *Cansado [Tired]*
5. T: *No. Enfermo [Sick]*

The extract shows that even though he mimicked the emotions and corrected students through paraphrasing in English, the only two students who were participating were not able to respond correctly. It seems that Camilo gave up and gave them the correct meaning of the word in Spanish. Camilo had pictures of the emotions that he could have used to check that students understood the meaning of the word instead of asking them to give the meaning in L1.

In the second observation, as in the first, Carla corrected students' turns through repetitions when students did not pronounce some vocabulary in isolation correctly as seen in Extract 40

Extract 40 – Correcting Students Through Repetitions (Carla) Observation 2

1. T: *Repeat, new book /nju: bʊk/*
2. STS: *New book /neu bʊk/*
3. T: *New book /nju: bʊk/*

This example shows that some of Carla's few attempts to use L2 in her turns were focused on modelling students how to say vocabulary in isolation and correcting pronunciation. Once again, Carla did not make sure that her students noticed the correction that she made and students did not react to Carla's feedback.

In summary, for the interview group it appears that the nature of oral language in the teachers' second observation still focused on teaching students vocabulary and grammatical structures in isolation. Although L2 in some teachers' turns decreased and in some others increased, and Camilo was observed using communicative features not observed in the first observation, the data indicated little change. Moreover, the teachers' input in L2 to students was minimal and not focused on meaning. Celeste, who used some genuine questions and integrated meaning and form in her lesson during the first observation, spent most of her lesson asking pseudo-questions to check vocabulary and grammatical structures for the written test of the year in the second observation.

Regarding consistencies between cognitions and practices, the grammar-based approach reported by Camilo and Carla was observed in their lessons. In contrast, Cristina's reported communicative approach was not observed since she concentrated all her lesson on teaching explicit grammar and then practicing grammar. Similarly, Celeste, who reported to

follow a communicative approach, spent most of her turns preparing students for a written test by asking them to fill in the gap sentences with grammatical structures or vocabulary.

Table 42 presents the percentage and number of all students' turns in L2 and the most used communicative features observed in both observations<sup>10</sup>

Table 42

*Percentage of the Most Used Communicative Features in Students' Turns (I Group) Both Observations*

Students	Observation	Turns in L2		Predictable		Form-Repetition		Unpredictable	
		Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%	Number of turns	%
Camilo's students	Ob 1	90	23.14%	41	45.56%	40	44.44%	7	7.78%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>26.19%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>63.64%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12.12%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Carla's students	Ob 1	14	17.72%	7	50.00%	6	42.86%	0	0.00%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22.62%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15.79%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>78.95%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Celeste's students	Ob 1	120	48.98%	80	66.67%	5	4.17%	23	19.17%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>37.60%</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>73.63%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
Cristina's students	Ob 1	81	38.39%	40	49.38%	9	11.11%	21	25.93%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>60.37%</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>85.28%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.84%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
MI group	Ob 1	76	32.06%	42	52.90%	15	25.65%	13	13.22%
	<b>Ob 2</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>36.70%</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>59.59%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23.23%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

As seen in this table, the quantity of L2 in Camilo's students and Celeste's students' turns in the second observation decreased by 57 and 29 turns, respectively and Carla's students and Cristina's students' turns increased by five and 82 turns, respectively. Although the amount of L2 in the students' turns varied, the most used communicative features observed in their turns were the same, that is, giving predictable information and reacting to the teachers' turns through repetition. These two communicative features were also the most used in the first observation.

<sup>10</sup> Appendix P presents all the observed communicative features in the students' turns. The communicative features in L2 that were used less than 10% in students' turns were not reported in the results because they did not reflect the common oral language used in L2.

Giving predictable information was the communicative feature most used in students' turns on average. For example, extract 41 illustrates Carla's students responding to her pseudo-questions to check students' understanding about grammar.

Extract 41 – *Giving Predictable Information (Carla's Students) Observation 2*

1. T: *A ver, si acá tengo [Let's see. If I have] "This is ... apple," ¿Con qué preposición tendré que completar? [What preposition do I have to use to complete the sentence?] (Asking students as a whole)*
2. S: *An*
3. T: *(Reacting to the fact that only one student responded) Oye, esto lo hemos trabajado no sé cuantas veces [We have studied this many times]. Cuando empieza con vocal una palabra no puedo utilizar a, tiene que ser an [When a word starts with a vowel I can't use a, it has to be an]*

In this extract, Carla asked a question in L1 and provided students with the wrong information by telling them that *a* and *an* are prepositions rather than indefinite articles; the student's turn subsequently provided minimal predictable information. These data suggest that Carla does not encourage students to participate by providing them with questions in context in order for them to learn grammatical items.

Reacting to the teachers' turns through repetition was the second, and final most used communicative feature by the students based on a group average. Extract 42 illustrates how this feature occurred in Camilo's lesson

Extract 42 – *Reacting to the Teachers' Turns Through Repetition (Camilo's Students)*

*Observation 2*

1. T: *¿Cómo se dice techo en Inglés? [How do you say techo in English?]*
2. S: *Roof /rʌf/*
3. T: *Roof /ru:f/*

#### 4. S: *Roof /rʌf/*

In this extract, Camilo did not provide students with opportunities to listen to L2 even by asking them simple questions. It also shows that the student is unable to repeat the pronunciation modelled by Camilo. This is an example of Dekeyser's argument (2007) that mechanical drills have only a very limited effect on acquisition because "good practice needs to involve real operating conditions as soon as possible, which means comprehending and expressing real, and this necessarily involves a variety of structures, some of which will be much further along the declarative-procedural- automatic path than others" (p. 292).

Summing up, these data indicate that teaching practices of the teachers in the interview group remained focused on teaching grammar and isolated words in English. Even Celeste, the teacher who reported participating in a Ministry of Education CLT professional development course was observed to use mainly an instructional approach, focused on rote and fact-based learning out of context.

#### **6.4 Summary**

This chapter presented evidence of the influence of the two forms of professional learning opportunities on the cognitions and actual teaching practices of the eight teachers by comparing the findings of this chapter with those in the preceding chapter (Chapter 5).

Findings suggested that although the learning sessions conducted in this study were modest and short, they still helped teachers enhance their cognitions about oral interaction and their teaching practices. Findings indicated that the four teachers who were involved in the learning sessions group shifted their cognitions, particularly their theoretical and pedagogical understandings about oral interaction. Teachers' emerging understanding of CLT led them to change their approach to teaching English. Teachers adapted rather than adopted the theories and pedagogical information discussed in the sessions, according to what they thought was appropriate for a particular instance in the classroom. Three of the four teachers



also demonstrated initial attempts to implement their emerging understandings of oral interaction in their actual practices by using some of the strategies that were discussed and practiced in the sessions. The practices of teachers in the interview group, however, barely changed; any changes observed did not involve enhancing oral interaction and communication. For three of the four teachers who participated in the sessions, their attempts to provide students with opportunities to interact orally enabled some students to participate. Such engagement has not been observed during the first observation. For example, in lessons observed at the end of Phase 2, some students initiated the interactions with simple questions.

In the second lesson observed, at the end of the study, all teachers, but one, from the learning session group, presented content through interesting and meaningful topics in context. Previously the focus had been predominantly on vocabulary and on grammatical structures included in the unit. Furthermore, these new activities led teachers to start asking students more meaningful questions that potentially could help students develop thinking skills. For instance, one of the teachers asked students questions about tourist attractions in Santiago to introduce the reading passage that they would read subsequently. These changes in teachers' practices may have been influenced by their emerging awareness of the way in which young students learn a language.

The following chapter synthesises and interrogates the findings of the previous three chapters. It discusses whether the teachers' cognitions and their classroom teaching practices met the expectations of the EFL curriculum in Chile, particularly the use of oral interaction in the classroom, and the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the cognitions and practices of the teachers. These general discussions are framed within the teacher cognition framework and are interwoven with the body of existing knowledge of the underlying literature that structures and informs this study.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Discussion**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The preceding three chapters presented the analysed data that were collected for the two phases of the study into Chilean EFL teachers' cognitions about oral interaction, teaching practices and teacher learning. Chapter 4 presented the findings of the first phase of the study from a questionnaire to gain insights into the existing cognitions about oral interaction of a sample of EFL teachers in public and semi-private schools in Santiago, Chile. The questionnaire, focused on four dimensions representing the broad conceptualisation of teacher cognition (Borg, 2006) was completed anonymously by 95 teachers. The dimensions were (i) teachers' understandings about oral interaction and their own approach to teaching English; (ii) teachers' perceptions about the importance of the four language skills, their confidence to teach these skills, and about the use of L2; (iii) teachers' beliefs about language learning in relation to oral interaction and communication; and (iv) teachers' assumptions about foreign language teaching concerning oral interaction and communication. As noted before, although the research examined these dimensions separately, it is acknowledged that these dimensions are inextricably intertwined in the mind of the teacher (Borg, 2006). These four dimensions of teachers' cognitions became the focus of the second phase of the study to gain further information about the cognitions.

Chapters 5 and 6 presented a synthesis of the findings of the second phase of the study in which eight teachers volunteered to participate. These eight teachers engaged in two different paths in terms of professional learning opportunities and voluntarily assigned themselves to one of the two groups. Four of these teachers participated in professional learning sessions (LS group) while the other four teachers participated in a focus group interview (I group).

Chapter 5 presented the first part of the second phase of the study in which further insights into the teachers' cognitions were gained by complementing data from a questionnaire with data from a focus group interview (I group) and a personal document (LS group). As the questionnaire in Phase 1 of the study was anonymous, this phase re-presented the questionnaire to ascertain, and, hopefully, to extend the responses of these eight teachers and to allow their responses to be examined in relation to their practices. The teachers of both groups were also observed and video-recorded while teaching a lesson to investigate the quantity and quality of L2 oral language and interaction that were used in the classroom.

Chapter 6 reported on the extent to which teachers' learning opportunities appeared to influence the existing cognitions and actual practices of the participants. Data collected using the same instruments at two time points, namely, questionnaire, personal document, individual interview, fieldnotes and classroom observations enabled a comparison of teachers' cognitions and their practices at the beginning and at the end of Phase 2 of the study. In addition, a stimulated recall interview was used to prompt teachers in the learning sessions group, to identify and reflect on their practices which may have changed. The stimulated recall interview (LS group) and individual interview (I group) were also used to give the teachers the opportunity to explain their practices.

This chapter advances the analysis of the findings of the preceding three chapters in order to meet three objectives. The first objective is to discuss the importance of understanding the existing cognitions of EFL teachers about oral interaction and their relation to the teachers' practices in order to inform attempts to implement language curriculum innovations so that they have higher likelihood of success. The second objective is to discuss the existing quantity and quality of oral language and interaction of EFL teachers and young students in Chilean classrooms based on the data. Finally, the third objective involves a discussion of the influence of teachers' professional learning on their cognitions and their

practices with respect to successful implementation of curriculum innovation. In these discussions the data are examined in relation to the theoretical framework and literature which have informed this study. It is acknowledged that, since the study included a relatively small sample and the learning sessions were modest in both extent and duration, the findings and the resultant discussion of them will be treated as tentative rather than conclusive. To achieve the aforementioned objectives, firstly, the chapter presents a summary of the key findings that address the four research questions guiding this study.

## **7.2 Summary of Key Findings**

In examining the relationship between language teachers' cognitions, oral interaction and teacher learning, this study addressed three gaps identified in the empirical literature. The first gap is that current studies (e.g., Borg, 2006, 2015; Wilden & Porsch, 2017) have stated that little is known about language teachers' cognitions and the relation to their practices in the elementary context, specifically, regarding the cognitions about oral interaction (Borg, 2006; Petek, 2013). The second gap is that what EFL elementary teachers actually do in their classrooms has been scarcely investigated (Pinter, 2011; Wilden & Porsch, 2017), especially concerning how oral interaction works and the extent to which they promote it (e.g., Lim, 2003; Osada, 2008; Peng & Zhang, 2009). The third gap is in the scarcity of information about the influence of professional learning opportunities on the cognitions and practices of the teachers in the elementary context (Borg, 2006, 2015; Wilden & Porsch, 2017). In addition, there is little information on the nature of professional learning activities needed to enhance teachers' promotion of oral interaction in the classroom (Thoms, 2012). It is argued in this study that, by focusing on these gaps, there will be a greater understanding of how oral language and interaction in L2 work in the EFL classroom and the cognitions that influence teachers' instructional and pedagogical decisions to promote oral interaction and teaching practices. Furthermore, there will be an opportunity to use these emerging understandings of

what actually occurs in the classroom and of teachers' cognitions to provide teachers with professional learning opportunities that may assist them to create, implement, and increase opportunities for meaningful oral interaction.

In this study, the examination of these concerns was guided by four research questions:

1. What cognitions do Chilean EFL teachers in public and semi-private elementary schools in Santiago hold about L2 oral interaction?
2. What is the quantity and quality of the oral language and interaction that occurs in the classrooms?
3. To what extent are EFL teachers' cognitions reflected in their actual practices?
4. What is the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the cognitions and practices of the teachers?

In terms of Research Question 1, the findings suggested that in general, the cognitions about oral interaction of the EFL elementary teachers in this study negatively influenced the decisions and practices of the teachers to promote oral interaction. These cognitions were also informed by a range of constraints and tensions were found among cognitions.

The findings in both phases of the study confirmed the claims that generally EFL teachers do not understand what oral interaction is (Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Herazo, 2010; Walsh, 2013). From the 95 teachers who participated in Phase 1, only 37.4% of the teachers were able to provide a definition of oral interaction that aligned to the one offered by CEFR. In Phase 2, only half of the participants demonstrated an understanding of oral interaction. In terms of teachers' approaches to teaching English, the findings in Phase 1 suggested that 61.5% of the teachers did not use CLT in teaching English to young students. The findings in Phase 2 confirmed claims from the few studies of elementary contexts that EFL teachers do not understand CLT (Butler, 2005; Carless, 2003). Six of the eight teachers

who were part of the second phase did not know what CLT was. Teachers' lack of awareness of theoretical and pedagogical knowledge of oral interaction and of CLT seemed to have influenced teachers' beliefs, perceptions and assumptions, making teachers less likely to promote oral interaction. Nonetheless, the assumptions of most teachers suggested that they accepted as true that promoting oral communicative skills is central. In Phase 2 of the study, however, teachers reported that they did not promote oral interaction although they knew it was important because they faced pedagogical and institutional constraints in public and semi-private elementary school contexts. These findings suggest that because EFL teachers lacked theoretical and pedagogical knowledge of how to teach for communicative purposes and interaction, they are unable to give lessons that promote oral interaction that could potentially help them establish that such an approach is feasible for elementary school contexts.

Furthermore, in Phase 2, as four of the eight teachers reported that they followed a grammar-oriented approach but they were unable to explain the advantages of choosing this approach, the findings indicate that the cognitions of these teacher participants seemed to be grounded in their experiential knowledge (Meijer, Verloop, & Beijaard, 1999), where a grammar-oriented approach was the norm.

Teachers' perceptions of the importance of the language skills in a typical lesson, as reported in the questionnaire in both phases, suggested that oral interaction was not promoted: most teachers indicated they neither integrated the four skills nor equally combined listening and speaking. In the questionnaire, in both phases of the study, teachers indicated that they used L2 more frequently than their students and that they used L2 more frequently when playing games with students and greeting students. In the focus group interview (I group) and personal document (LS group), however, they reported that they rarely played games with students, instead indicating that questions were the major strategy

that they used to interact orally in L2 with their students. A possible explanation of this inconsistency is that, in the questionnaire, games and greetings were given as examples, of possible activities to use in interacting orally.

In the questionnaire answered in Phase 1 of the study, teachers' beliefs showed that the highest percentage of teachers were unsure whether Chilean people think it is important to speak English. In the second phase of the study, through the questionnaire and subsequent focus group interview and personal document, it appeared that the term "Chilean people" as a category for attributing motivation to speak English in Chile was somewhat non-specific. All but one teacher agreed that young students in public and semi-private schools do not think that it is important to speak English. Teachers' explanations were that the government does not give English the importance it deserves in the curriculum for elementary students. They reported that only students who attend private schools and pay high fees for their education are motivated to speak English.

In the Phase 1 questionnaire, 43% of the teachers were undecided whether written communicative skills were easier to learn than oral communicative skills while another 31.6% reported that written skills were easier. The analysis of the beliefs of the eight teachers in the focus group interview and personal document, similarly, showed that half of the teachers had agreed that written skills were easier than oral skills, one had recorded undecided and the other three teachers disagreed because they considered that both oral and written communicative skills were equally difficult. All of the eight teachers, however, agreed that the receptive skills of listening and reading were the easiest.

In both phases of the study, teachers' assumptions about foreign language teaching concerning promoting oral communicative skills, as reported in the questionnaire, indicated that a lack of objective means to evaluate oral communication hindered teachers from

emphasising such communication. Additionally, 41.9% of the teachers reported that drills and practice were considered meaningful activities to learn English.

The findings of the study indicate that the cognitions about oral interaction and teaching practices of most of the teachers were informed by pedagogical and institutional constraints. The constraints involved few hours of English per week, large size classrooms and students' lack of both knowledge of English and motivation to interact, communicate and learn the language.

Finally, the findings of the study indicate tensions among competing cognitions, a phenomenon also reported by Phipps and Borg (2007, 2009). Despite of the fact that cognitions about oral interaction in general reflected negativity towards the promotion of oral interaction, two assumptions of most teachers found in the questionnaire in both phases suggest that teachers in a way accepted as true that oral communication and interaction are important. Teachers reported that listening and speaking should be the most stressed skills in the lessons and that teachers need to be fluent to teach effectively for communication.

In brief, it is argued in this research study that in general, the cognitions about oral interaction of the teachers negatively influenced the promotion of oral interaction in the classrooms although they assumed that oral interaction and communication were important. This tension among cognitions may likely happen because it appears that teachers' cognitions are not informed by theoretical and pedagogical knowledge of CLT and/or oral interaction that helps them make instructional and pedagogical decisions that actually promote oral interaction. It is argued that this tension does not allow teachers to really prove whether CLT and interaction are feasible in EFL elementary schools contexts in Chile.

Concerning Research Question 2, the examination of the quantity and quality of oral language and interaction revealed that although some teachers frequently used L2, the lessons observed could not be characterised as communicative in the sense that teachers did not seek



to provide students with ample opportunities for meaningful input, output and interaction in L2. Input in L2 only consisted of teachers giving short and simple managerial directives, followed by repeating or commenting on students' preceding turns. Teacher- student interaction in L2 involved teachers asking students pseudo-questions that required minimal and fairly meaningless answers. The answers to the questions were already known by the teacher and were responded by few students or sometimes all students in chorus. In terms of students' output in the exchanges, they mostly used L2 to repeat isolated words given by the teachers.

Finally, it is important to highlight that students never initiated the interactions in L2, which suggests that all the content and, to a lesser extent, topics discussed in the lessons, were chosen only by the teacher.

In response to Research Question 3, which inquired into the existing relationship between teachers' cognitions and their practices, the data show that this varied, according to the teacher and the dimension examined. The reported understandings and beliefs of four of the eight teachers (two in each group) suggested that they did not see the need to promote either oral interaction or communication in elementary schools. These cognitions, it appears, were consistent with their actual practices as oral interaction and communication rarely occurred in their observed lessons. Similarly, the cognitions of other three teachers, who reported to follow a communicative approach were reflected, to a limited extent, in their practices. Interestingly, only the two teachers who knew what CLT involved were able to promote oral communication and to a lesser extent oral interaction in their lessons.

The perceptions of six of the eight teachers of their use of L2 was greater than that observed in the lessons (two teachers of the learning sessions group were the exception). Regarding students' use of L2, reported use of L2 of three teachers of the learning sessions group was lower than their students' actual use, while the reported use of L2 of the other five

teachers was higher than students' observed use. This suggests that most teachers did not have a real sense of the L2 use occurring in the classroom.

From the examination of teachers' assumptions, in Phase 1, 75.60% of the teachers indicated that speaking and listening were the skills they felt they should emphasise the most. Similarly, in Phase 2, all but one teacher reported that oral skills should be the most emphasised. These assumptions, however, were not evident in the practices of all but two teachers, in the lessons observed.

Although teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and use of L2 varied across teachers, all teachers emphasised the same communicative features in their lessons. Six of the teachers also reported that there were constraints that hindered them from promoting oral interaction, such as large classes and students' unwillingness to communicate and interact in English. How these constraints might operate, however, was not able to be observed since the teachers rarely gave students opportunities to communicate and interact orally.

Research Question 4 inquired into the influence of two forms of professional learning on teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and practices. Findings suggested that although the learning sessions conducted in this study were modest and short, they helped teachers enhance their cognitions about oral interaction and their teaching practices. Findings indicated that the four teachers who were involved in the sessions (LS group) shifted their cognitions, particularly their theoretical and pedagogical understandings about oral interaction. Teachers' emerging understanding of CLT led them to change their approach to teaching English. Teachers adapted rather than adopted the theories and pedagogical information discussed in the sessions, according to what they thought was appropriate for their students. The practices of teachers in the interview group, however, barely changed; any changes observed did not involve enhancing oral interaction and communication.

In brief, the findings of the study may be seen as a confirmation of a general claim that in the Chilean context that oral communication and interaction skills are not sufficiently addressed in public and semi-private schools. This evidence also shows Chilean educational experts that students' low results in the standard English tests in Chile may not be only influenced by teachers' disinclination to teach English in English but also by teachers' use of communicative features in L2 in their lessons that do not aim to develop oral interaction.

What this research contributes to the discussion are authentic and real-life descriptions of how oral language and oral interaction in L2 work in EFL elementary classrooms in Chile and potential reasons why oral language and interaction in L2 are rarely promoted. The current thesis presents the argument that teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and teaching young students have influenced teachers not to include oral interaction and CLT in their instructional decisions and pedagogical practices.

The following section focuses on how the teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and its influence on practice reflect, or fail to reflect, the objectives of the Chilean L2 curriculum. This discussion is followed by an analysis of the oral language and interaction in L2 observed in the lessons in comparison with the criteria to interact orally for beginner students provided by the CEFR. The discussion finishes by analysing the way in which teacher learning opportunities in this study influenced teachers' cognitions and their practices in implementing oral interaction and CLT, both of which are required by the most recent curriculum reform in Chile. The discussion is framed within a lens of teacher cognition conceptual framework (Borg, 2006) and is related to the underlying theories and ongoing discussions in the areas of teachers' cognitions, oral interaction and teacher learning.

### **7.3 Existing Teachers' Cognitions About Oral Interaction and their Practices**

There is a collective view that EFL teachers in public school systems, especially in elementary schools, face challenges in CLT teaching which are different from the ones

reported in much of the literature to date (Carless, 2003; Pinter, 2011). However, empirical research that examines teachers' cognitions about communicative and task-based teaching and their challenges in implementing it in elementary school contexts is limited (Borg, 2006, 2015; Candlin, 2001; Carless, 2003). Furthermore, although oral interaction is an important component of CLT, studies that focus on the teachers' cognitions about oral interaction in the elementary context were not located. This study, thus, extends understandings of the cognitions about CLT held by elementary EFL teachers and provides new insights into the influence of teachers' cognitions about oral interaction on the instructional and pedagogical decisions and practices of EFL teachers. The findings of the study also extend understanding of how teachers' cognitions may influence successful implementation of oral interaction and CLT consistent with curriculum innovations.

Oral interaction became central to the aims of the EFL language curriculum for elementary students during the last curriculum reform in Chile. The present study corroborates previous studies that teachers, who are one of the most important agents in the process of implementing curriculum reforms successfully, hold cognitions about teaching CLT to young students that do not facilitate such implementation (e.g., Butler, 2005; Carless, 2003; Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Kirkgoz, 2008). In the following three subsections it will be discussed how teachers' cognitions, prior learning experiences and contextual factors inform and affect teachers' decisions and practices to promote oral interaction.

### **7.3.1 Teachers' cognitions and the relation to their practices.**

The first and potentially most influential dimension of teachers' mental lives found in this study was teachers' understandings about CLT, oral interaction and how to teach young students. The findings of this study corroborate other studies in EFL elementary and secondary school contexts (Canh & Barnard, 2009; Carless, 2001; Díaz, Alarcon & Ortiz, 2015; Sato, 2002; Wang, 2008) in which the teachers reported that they did not follow CLT

although the curriculum innovations, prescribed by their ministries of education, endorsed such an approach. In the questionnaire in Phase 1 of the study only 38.5% of the teachers indicated that they included teaching English for communication. Similarly, in Phase 2 of the study, four of the eight teachers explicitly stated that they did not implement a communicative approach or oral interaction in their lessons, a perception that was clearly reflected in their actual teaching practices.

Teachers' decisions to teach English to young students using an approach other than the one suggested by the Chilean Ministry of Education could have been influenced by their lack of knowledge of what the recent curriculum reform involved and a lack of understanding about what teaching for communicative purposes requires. This was inferred because five out of the eight teachers in Phase 2 explicitly acknowledged that they did not know what CLT involved while another teacher had an inaccurate understanding of CLT.

Regarding teachers' understandings about oral interaction, a lack of a unified definition of oral interaction in the research literature could have influenced the different understandings of oral interaction of the teachers in this study. For example, Ellis (1990) stated that interaction in EFL contexts entails all communication, that it not only involves authentic communication but every oral exchange that is observed in the classroom, including formal drilling. In contrast, other researchers (Council of Europe, 2001; Mariani, 2010) have indicated that interaction is not a synonym for communication, but a part of it (see the Review of the Literature, Chapter 2).

The interchangeable use of the terms oral communication and oral interaction could also have influenced the different understandings of oral interaction because verbal communication is not always equated to oral interaction in the literature and research. McCroskey, Richmond and McCroskey (2006) stated that verbal communication involves a process in which the speaker stimulates meaning through only the use of oral messages. The

authors associated oral interaction with the term “*interpersonal communication*”, in which each participant in the interaction stimulates meaning and also interprets, evaluates, and responds to a message. In contrast, Zhou (2013), in her review of the literature concerning the nature of knowledge to construct a systematic knowledge of EFL classroom interaction, stated that oral interaction equated to verbal communication. She did not explain, however, what verbal communication meant.

The unclear meaning and role of oral interaction in the Chilean language curriculum could also have affected teachers’ understandings of oral interaction. The curriculum does not include a section that explains what oral interaction is and what it involves in the Chilean context. Nor does it state what learning goals are expected for students in terms of oral interaction, or how to assess such interactions (see Chapter 1, section 1.3). The Chilean L2 language curriculum presents learning goals for oral expression that students have to achieve for all school years. The learning goals for Years 5 and 6, which were the years observed in this study, concentrate mostly on communicative activities of production and reception, dealing with them separately rather than in terms of oral interaction. For example, students are expected to reproduce and produce monologues, songs and dialogues to identify and familiarise themselves with English pronunciation, and to express themselves orally in dialogues, presentations or group activities about the topics included in the textbook (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). Although the goals also indicate activities that may lead to oral interaction, such as participating in dialogues with classmates and teachers (Ministerio de Educación, 2012), there is no information about the instructional or communicative goals of these dialogues. In addition, there is no assessment standard found that aligns with the EFL curriculum guiding teachers to implement these goals effectively.

Finally, regarding teachers’ understanding of how to teach young students, the explanations and justifications of teachers’ instructional decisions in the individual interview

(I group) and stimulated recall sessions (LS group) indicated a lack of theoretical and pedagogical knowledge of how to teach English to young students. Most teachers reported that they taught English to young students by focusing on isolated grammatical structures because of institutional and pedagogical constraints. These constraints were reflected in their beliefs that students were not interested in learning English and that grammar-oriented lessons were the only kind of successful activity in their classes. However, literature on how to teach English to young students establishes that an appropriate approach to teaching these students should involve purposeful, engaging, fun and meaningful activities rather than explicit grammar teaching, because young students “are not easily able to attend to the underlying rules that govern language use” (Shin, 2014, p. 555).

This finding about teachers’ lack of knowledge of how to teach young students raises a critical question about the significance of continuing the promotion of teaching English in elementary public and semi-private schools in Chile. The present study indicates that although public and semi-private schools offer young students opportunities to study English, teachers’ pedagogical approaches may not be appropriate to facilitate young students’ L2 development. If teachers are not prepared for teaching young students and they are not offered teacher learning opportunities, they may not become aware of the importance of meaningful interaction and communication in the process of young students’ learning. Furthermore, teachers’ motivation may decline if they think that their students are not interested.

Language teacher educators should integrate theoretical and pedagogical information about curriculum innovations so teachers develop informed reasons for accepting or rejecting such. In this study, four of the eight teachers who participated in Phase 2 indicated they did not agree with top-down imposed curriculum innovations. Their responses may have resulted from the lack of information about the purpose of the reform. The ultimate goal of language

learning opportunities should not be that teachers implement a curriculum innovation because it is established and mandated by the government, but because they become aware that it may facilitate young students' development of L2.

The second dimension in the current study that suggests that teachers were not implementing CLT and oral interaction was teachers' perceptions. In Phase 1 and the beginning of Phase 2, data on the teachers' perceptions about what they do in the lessons indicated that most teachers did not see themselves as including communication and oral interaction. Furthermore, in the focus group interview and personal document, six of the eight teachers reported that they consciously did not equally combine listening and speaking, and integrating the four language skills. These teachers' decisions are potentially detrimental to students' learning because developing oral skills facilitates student oral participation and student talking time (Ellis, 2012; van Hees, 2007; Walsh, 2013). Furthermore, integrating the four skills helps students develop awareness of language and their own growth in the language (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990). In the personal document and focus group interview, four of the eight teachers reported that they chose certain skills that allowed them to teach grammar. This finding suggests that these teachers expect that students learn English "via a conscious process of study and attention to form and rule learning," (Lightbrown & Spada, 1999, p. 38) instead of via a combination of form and meaning as the weak version of CLT suggests. These perceptions were consistent with the grammar-oriented approach that teachers reported to use in teaching English as well as in their observed teaching practices.

Elementary students' demotivation to speak English was considered a challenge for the teachers. All but one teacher in Phase 2 of the study reported they believe young students studying in public and semi-private schools do not like to speak English. These teachers explained that this occurs because students are not interested in learning English and the government is not concerned with motivating students in public and semi-private schools to



communicate in English as private schools do. However, for the students in the present study low motivation may be the outcome of the observed teacher-centred classes focused on grammar explanations and exercises mostly in L1. Activities such as repeating isolated words may not be engaging and meaningful for these students.

Teachers reported that they did not include oral interaction as they had no means of assessing it. It is well established in the literature that without ongoing assessment, learning is unlikely to occur (Cameron, 2001). This reflects the lacuna found in international contexts (e.g., Canh & Barnard, 2009; Sercan, 2013), and in the Chilean language curriculum, that proficiency in English (for teachers and students) is measured through exams that do not test communicative skills. Thus, although communicative language teaching and oral interaction are prescribed, teachers and students may not be motivated to teach or learn, through communication and interaction (e.g., Littlewood, 2007; Nunan, 2003). It is pertinent here to offer an example from New Zealand, where the government has been working with other educational stakeholders in the sector on a curriculum-assessment standard focused on promoting and assessing oral interaction (East, 2011). Initially, the standard “converse” involved teacher–student interviews that tended to lead to “contrived and controlled interactions” (p. 65). This standard was subsequently replaced by a new one called “interact” that aims to assess students’ interaction with one another and have more “open-ended and spontaneous interactions” (p. 65). Although these standards had different aims, according to New Zealand language teachers both standards have pushed them and their students to become interactive communicators in the target language (East, 2011). This illustrates the importance of aligning assessment with curriculum aims.

### **7.3.2 Teachers’ prior learning experiences.**

The findings of this study suggest that another element that negatively influenced teachers to promote oral interaction and CLT was their prior learning experiences. As Lortie (1975)

claimed, all the years that teachers (as students) spend in the classroom observing their teachers, as well as participating in the activities in the course of their schooling, affect their cognitions and how they teach. Four of the eight teachers who participated in Phase 2 of the study, reported they teach English following a traditional grammar-oriented approach, a perception that was congruent with their experiences as language students. As previous studies have found (e.g., Borg, 2006; Littlewood, 2000), and the present study corroborated, teachers' previous experiences as language students seem to exert more influence than their reported cognitions. In the present study specifically teachers' prior experiences seemed to be more important than their assumptions that listening and speaking should be the most emphasised skills to facilitate language learning in students. An explanation could be that the teachers were, in reality, not theoretically or pedagogically prepared to put their assumptions into practice. Six out of the eight teachers who participated in Phase 2 of the study had neither theoretical or pedagogical knowledge of how to teach CLT. However, two teachers were able to explain some fragmented principles of CLT and reported they used CLT in the classroom despite of the fact that their prior learning experiences as students were grammar-oriented.

The next section addresses the nature of the existing oral language and interaction in the EFL elementary classroom.

#### **7.4 The Nature of the Existing Oral Language and Interaction in the EFL Elementary Classroom**

It is known and accepted that young students are encouraged to learn a foreign language when they are engaged in interactions that are meaningful and interesting to them (Shin & Crandall, 2014). However, little is known about how oral interaction operates in elementary school contexts where students have just started to learn a foreign language. Furthermore,

little has been said about what are the expected interactions between the teacher and the students and among students in EFL classrooms.

The present study, as noted in Chapter 2, focused the investigation on the definition of interaction and self-assessment grid of oral interaction for beginner students established by the CEFR (see Chapter 2, subsection 2.3.3 for the definition). The decision was made because the Chilean language curriculum signals this definition as a referent.

The observed lessons in the first part of Phase 2 of this study did not appear to be focused on providing students with opportunities to interact in L2. Despite four of the eight teachers, to some extent, using L2 (from 44.24% to 63.08% of the whole lesson), the main aim of their lessons was to practice vocabulary and grammatical structures in isolation. Similarly, Peng and Zhang's (2009) study revealed that, despite teachers mostly using L2 in their activities, they did not use it to promote classroom interaction but to conduct language drills and to practice pronunciation of words in isolation. As advocated by Kim & Elder (2005), this study's findings support the notion that the quantity of L2 used in the classroom interactions should not be the only criteria for determining the quality of interactions.

Input in L2 predominantly consisted of teachers providing students with short instructions and isolated words and grammatical structures. There is ample evidence that indicates that the early stages of L2 acquisition are lexical in nature (Shintani, 2016) which makes the use of vocabulary understandable. The input, however, most of the time was not in context, which contradicts what literature on how to teach English to young students suggests (Jiang, 2000).

Literature also states that although it is true that students do spend most of the time listening to the teachers (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2006; Shin, 2014), the teachers should not only give students instructions but also provide them opportunities to listen to authentic materials and rich input such as talking, singing, chanting, dramatising dialogues and telling

stories. From the eight teachers, only Celeste enabled her students to be exposed to meaningful input through a story, providing them a model of language, which it is considered essential for young students (Cameron, 2001; van Hees, 2007).

Opportunities to listen to video and audio tapes should also be provided, especially by those teachers who are less confident about their own language proficiency. Nonetheless, in the present study, only three of the eight teachers were observed to provide a listening activity that involved asking students listening to an audio track and identifying specific vocabulary items. Lim's study (2003) which examined the interactional strategies used by a public elementary language teacher with his 10-year-old students in Korea using the COLT scheme, had similar findings. The teacher in Lim's study explained that activities focused on listening were used simply to encourage students to identify and recall fragments of the listening tracks covered by the textbook.

Oral language in L2 used by the teachers and students in the lessons rarely involved negotiation of meaning which is considered an important learning process (Long, 1996). The three elements that are considered central to facilitate this process according to the CEFR self-assessment grid of oral interaction for beginners were not observed in the lessons.

Firstly, according to the self-assessment grid of oral interaction for breakthrough level students (A1), students may be able to interact orally if the other person (the teacher) is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech. The teachers in this study were rarely observed repeating and rephrasing things because they strictly controlled the interactions by deciding who participated and when. They preferably asked meaningless pseudo-questions to students who raised their hands, that is, students who presumably knew the answers and did not require a repetition or rephrase of the questions. Coincidentally or not, the same students always participated. If the teachers did not ask the questions to specific students, teachers asked students to answer them simultaneously. The teachers listened to

different responses but they only paid attention to the correct one. It seemed that teachers sometimes did not know who understood the questions and who did not. Subsequently, the teachers repeated the response out loud to make sure that all students understand which was the correct answer.

Secondly, the self-assessment grid also recommends that teachers should help students formulate questions or what they are trying to say. It appeared that these teachers, however, did not equip their students with negotiation strategies such as classroom language, simple questions and clarification requests that would enable them to initiate interactions or attempt to interact (Shin & Crandall, 2017; van Hees, 2007). The teachers' strict control of the interactions did not seem to help students learn to listen carefully to others messages, respond and collaborate in the interactions because they were not interacting to understand and listen but to practice the language.

Thirdly, although the self-assessment grid suggests that the teachers should provide students opportunities to ask and answer questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, they were rarely observed doing it. Oral interaction between the teacher and students had a particular type of structure known as initiation-response-follow-up (IRF) exchanges (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Asking pseudo-questions was the predominant way in which teachers initiated interactions with students. Such questions are considered beneficial to encourage students, especially beginners, to participate and interact in the classroom (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Nonetheless, the interactions that occurred between the teachers and students primarily had an objective of checking understanding of vocabulary items or grammatical structures out of contexts. This finding of the study is in line with those found in other elementary schools contexts (e.g., Meng, Zhao & Chattouphonexay, 2012; Setiawati, 2012).

The IRF exchanges continue with students responding to the pseudo-question through known responses and subsequently the teacher providing positive feedback via repetition to confirm or comment. Ellis (2012) advised that in EFL contexts, confirmation and understanding through backchannels such as “yes” and “very good” are important in interactions because they help students feel safe and included and, consequently, more confident to participate in the interactions. However, excessive use of these questions does not allow teachers to provide students content feedback that pushes them to continue the interaction.

Corrective feedback (CF) that is considered an important process of learning was observed in the lessons through repetition. Repetition as CF is considered effective when it draws attention to students’ linguistic problems in their utterances (Aranguiz & Quintanilla, 2016; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). However, the teachers who used a repetition of students’ errors did not seem to make sure that their students noticed the linguistic problem evident in the responses because the students who received the correction did not appear to react to the teachers’ feedback.

There is consensus from a number of research studies that teachers fail to facilitate students’ opportunities to interact because the interactional strategies that teachers use do not correspond to the pedagogical goals of the lessons (e.g., Cazden, 2001; Nassaji & Wells, 2000). The present study, however, indicated the opposite because the interactional strategies of six of the eight teachers were consistent with their pedagogical goals. Five of these six teachers, as they were only interested in their students learning both vocabulary and grammatical structures in isolation, appropriately chose the organisation of interaction that aimed to check whether students knew the vocabulary and grammatical structures or to practice them orally. Similarly, another teacher aimed that her students were able to write an invitation to a friend individually, thus oral interaction in L2 was not observed. These

findings suggest that the observed lack of oral interaction arose not from inconsistencies between pedagogic goals and interactional features, but from teachers' personal decisions not to include oral interaction in their lessons. Those two teachers who demonstrated to some extent that they knew what CLT was, were able to implement a short activity that possibly could start preparing students to interact orally.

Overall, the snapshots of classroom observations of this study suggest that the existing oral interaction in EFL elementary school contexts has a specific pedagogical purpose that is not communication-related, especially, oral communication. Thus, it falls short from meeting the expectations of the last curriculum reform in Chile. The next section discusses the extent to which opportunities for professional learning influenced teachers' cognitions and their teaching practices.

#### **7.4.1 Contextual factors and other constraints.**

Six of the eight teachers reported that institutional and pedagogical constraints hindered them from promoting oral communication and interaction in the classroom. Especially noted was that only a few hours of English per week was scheduled; with three hours of English per week it was possible only to study small sets of vocabulary and of grammatical structures and prepare students for English tests. Hunter (2013) similarly claimed that an excessive concern about difficult contextual factors can lead teachers to commit to "unhelpful conservatism" (p. 479) instead of being open to innovations. Three of these six teachers also reported that large class size was another constraint. The size of the classes for two of these three teachers, however, was between 20 to 25 students which is considered a manageable class-size. Only one of the teachers who reported that large classes was a problem was observed teaching 40 students and, in a way, was justified in her concern about the constraint in her lesson.

Students' language ability, the novelty of students to learning English and students' age were constraints that also worried teachers at the beginning of Phase 2. The present study

suggests that most teachers were expecting to teach students who already had some linguistic knowledge of the language so that they would be able to facilitate oral interaction and communication. They were aware, however, that the students were in the two first years of learning English at school. It is interesting to observe that, in explaining their practices, four of the eight teachers included only negative contextual factors and they did not mention the advantages of teaching the way they did at the beginning of Phase 2. This may be because teachers, as the study indicates, lacked the theoretical and pedagogical knowledge or principle regarding their current reported approach to teaching English.

The potential influence of constraints on teachers' decisions and practices regarding promoting oral interaction have been reported in other studies (Consolo, 2000; Eckerth, 2009; Lee & Ng, 2010; Xie, 2010). With respect to a practice that promotes oral interaction, Lee and Ng (2010) and Xie (2010) have suggested that if teachers do not provide students with turn allocation rights, referential questions and feedback focused on meaning rather than on form, all of which offer students more opportunities to participate and contribute in the interactions, it is unlikely that students will become interested in the language and willing to speak. Thus, it can be concluded that, as most of the interactional patterns suggested for motivating students to speak in the classroom were rarely observed in the teachers' practices in this research, it may be that teachers' practices contribute to students' reticence to speak.

Personal constraints such as teachers' limited English proficiency and low confidence in using English as a medium of instructions did not appear to be a main constraint to implementing CLT in the classroom, in the present study as reported in previous studies (e.g., Guilloteaux, 2004; Kim, 2008; Li, 1998). The group of eight participants seemed to report and have mixed levels of English proficiency. Four teachers possessed certified proficiency in English and the other four teachers did not. Classroom observations, however, indicated that they all used the same communicative features in L2, features which were not conducive



to promoting oral communicative or interactional competencies. Thus, the lack of oral interaction in the classrooms was unlikely to be related only to teachers' proficiency in English.

A lack of theoretical and pedagogical knowledge about oral interaction and CLT on the part of teachers appears to be affecting the existing teachers' beliefs, assumptions and perceptions, as well as their practices. As discussed in this chapter, although the current study and previous studies have found that contextual factors, other constraints and teachers' beliefs affect teachers' enhancement of CLT, this study further suggested that teachers' knowledge about oral interaction and CLT is a major barrier. Thus, this study argues that teachers who can theorise their teaching are the ones who can make confident and professionally informed instructional and pedagogical decisions (Timperley, 2011).

In summary, this study has contributed to research on teacher cognition through data that has brought to a conscious level the teachers' existing cognitions about oral interaction and has examined how they aligned to the latest curriculum innovation in Chile. Studies that examine this phenomenon are considered crucial to implementing new curriculum initiatives successfully (Borg, 2015b).

### **7.5 Influence of Teacher Learning Opportunities on Teachers' Cognitions and their Teaching Practices**

The present study enhances understandings of the influence of teacher learning opportunities on the cognitions and practices of in-service EFL teachers. Research studies that explore this influence are limited (e.g., Borg, 2011; Phipps, 2009, 2010), especially concerning elementary EFL teachers (Borg, 2015a; Wilden & Porsch, 2017).

As Borg (2011) has argued, the influence of teacher learning depends on how "the influence" is operationalised. In this study, "influence" implies a complex non-linear process operating on the cognitions and practices of the teachers that varied depending on each

teacher. In this sense, teachers responded to the professional learning session on oral interaction in different and individual ways.

The findings of the study indicate that the teacher learning sessions influenced the cognitions and teaching practices of the teachers, while the focus group interview did not. Borg (2011) stated that it is problematic to make direct comparisons across studies given the diverse context and the variation in research methods. This study also suggests that the characteristics of the participants who are involved in the studies make it difficult to compare studies, although sometimes such studies have been conducted in a similar context. Comparing the findings of the present study with the ones of the few studies found in EFL elementary school contexts was difficult for two reasons. First, the teachers of the other studies from the beginning reported that they used CLT in their lessons. In contrast, most of the teachers of the present study did not. Second, the teachers who were engaged in the other studies were enrolled in formal programmes funded and sponsored by ministries of education or universities. These teachers at the end of the programme would receive a certificate that could allow them to prosper professionally. The teachers in the present study, however, became part of the study because they wanted to learn how to promote oral interaction and help their students interact. In a way, the studies potentially differed in the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of the teachers to participate that is a central variable to understand teachers' changes.

Although the sessions and the sample of the study were small, the study confirms the claims of other studies (e.g., Waters & Vilches, 2001; Zhu & Shu, 2017) that focusing on school-based, context-specific needs can contribute to the uptake of curriculum innovations. As other studies in elementary contexts (Carless, 1998, 2002) have reported, if teachers are to implement an innovation successfully, they must have a sound understanding of the principles of the proposed change. They should also have an understanding of both the

theoretical underpinnings and classroom applications of the innovation. The two teachers in the professional learning sessions group who reported at the beginning of the study that they neither implemented CLT in the classrooms nor knew what CLT was, by the end of the study, reported that they were starting to incorporate elements of the CLT approach and they were able to give an explanation of some principles of CLT. Three of the four teachers also demonstrated that their understandings of oral interaction had become more aligned to the definition of oral interaction provided by CEFR. In contrast, the understandings of teaching approaches of two of the teachers who were part of the interview group were still based on a grammar-oriented approach. And, although the remaining two teachers reported that they used CLT at the end of the study, their practices indicated that their lessons were focused on grammar.

As literature on the influence of teacher learning states (e.g., Borg, 2006; Phipps, 2010), dissemination of innovation, from the facilitators of teacher learning opportunities, through ready-made solutions for predetermined problems is not sufficient to ensure that teachers change their cognitions. In this study, existing cognitions and unquestioned routines with respect to teaching English of teachers in the learning sessions group were challenged by the theories and strategies discussed in the sessions. In that sense, teachers not only made their cognitions explicit but also questioned and doubted those cognitions when faced with “powerful alternative conceptions” (Woolfolk, David & Pape, 2006, p. 728). The learning sessions group teachers were also invited to put the theories and strategies into practice in the microteaching context and then in their own classrooms. The microteaching conducted in this study enabled teachers to interact in L2, to design collaboratively and then implement activities that promote oral interaction, and to examine how activities worked in their own classrooms. Including oral interaction in lesson plans, and planning these lessons in

collaboration, gave teachers the opportunity to experience concrete practice activities in which oral interaction is promoted.

This study corroborates previous findings on teacher learning research that the relation between changes in cognitions and practice is not linear (Borg, 2006, 2015a; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Richardson & Placier, 2001). Teachers of the learning sessions group had to put into practice the theoretical and pedagogical knowledge discussed in the sessions and, once they realised that it worked in their teaching, they reported incorporating it permanently into their lessons.

All the teachers in the learning sessions group reported following some principles of CLT and attempting to promote oral interaction by the end of the study. Nonetheless, their beliefs still reflected concerns about the challenges involved in promoting oral interaction and CLT. In that sense, tensions among cognitions were still observed at the end of the study. Teachers reported that their students still did not like to speak English in the classroom and that oral skills were the most difficult. Now, however, teachers were willing to promote oral interaction through putting into practice some of the strategies that were discussed in the sessions, acknowledging that it was their responsibility to change students' attitudes towards speaking English in the lessons. Similarly, Wyatt (2009) showed that although Sarah, the teacher participant in his study, succeeded in implementing communicative tasks, she remained conscious about the accompanying challenges.

Overall, it is argued that this study serves as a pilot to indicate to the Ministry of Education that providing EFL elementary teachers learning opportunities, in which teachers' cognitions are considered, could facilitate the implementation of the curriculum reform in the Chilean context.

The encouraging findings of the learning sessions indicate that the practices of most of the teachers who participated in the professional learning sessions also shifted towards

more interactive lessons. At the end of the study, oral language in L2 used by the teachers and students in the lessons involved some opportunities for authentic input and oral interaction in L2.

Teachers were able to provide students with more opportunities for comprehensible input – “L2 input that learners can understand with the help of contextual cues, prior knowledge, gestures, etc., even though they would not be able to produce comparable language or even to say exactly how the language itself conveys the meaning” (Spada & Lightbown, 2009, p. 158). One of the teachers also started integrating and developing students’ bottom-up and top-down processing skills. Students listened to a text while they followed it in the textbook, an activity that helps with bottom-up processing. This teacher also asked students to predict information in the text to help them fill gaps in their understanding through using their world knowledge (Pinter, 2006).

Three of the four teachers who participated in the professional learning sessions provided students some opportunities for promoting interaction. This was observed because the three elements that are considered central to facilitate interaction with beginner students were present in the teachers’ lessons at the end of the study.

The first element of the self-assessment grid for oral interaction that was present in the lessons was that teachers repeated questions at a slower rate of speech in the second observed lesson. This phenomenon happened because the teachers began to ask questions that seemed to be more meaningful for the students. Students were observed listening to the questions to be able to understand instead of practicing language in isolation. Working in groups allowed students to have more control of the conversations and collaboratively interact in L2 using the existing and limited linguistic knowledge that they had. The main role of two of the four teachers in group work activities was to keep students on task by reminding them of the goal of the activity, model the task, show them what their expectations

were and answer students' questions when needed (Cameron, 2001; Shin & Crandall, 2014; van Hees, 2007).

A further element of the self-assessment was that teachers helped students formulate questions or what they were trying to say at the end of the study. Three of the four teachers in the learning sessions group provided students with negotiation strategies such as formulaic classroom expressions, questions and clarifications requests that are central to encourage students to interact (Shin & Crandall, 2017; van Hees, 2007). This emerging knowledge affected students' performance in the interactions because students were observed using these negotiation strategies to ask teachers and their classmates simple questions in L2. This suggests that the learning sessions appeared to have a positive influence on teachers' thinking about the role of students as equal contributors to oral interaction (Donato, 2004).

The final element was that most teachers provided students opportunities to ask and answer questions on very familiar topics which were more interesting than producing isolated lexical and grammatical items. The teachers requested students to work in groups and encouraged them to interact with their classmates using the negotiation strategies studied. This opportunity to work in groups, as van Hees (2007, 2011) suggested, allowed students to try out skills of social interaction such as listening carefully to the messages of others, collaborating, and turn taking.

One of the four teacher who participated in the learning sessions group could not translate her cognitions yet into practices as effectively as the other teachers. However, she was at least able to build on her prior implicit theories and make them more consistent, firmer, and more in line with the types of practices she considered appropriate to develop L2. This teacher may have been constrained because of her concerns about the requirement of students' testing. This teacher was observed preparing students for a final test which consisted of multiple-choice options measuring grammatical structures and vocabulary. None

of the four skills was actually tested in an authentic way. In a limited way, it can be said that reading was tested because if students answered correctly, it meant that they understood the instructions, the questions and the multiple-choice options provided in the test. Although the teacher stated that she was obliged to test students in written form, the school did not prescribe the way students should be tested. The data suggest that the teacher constructs tests following a traditional approach and, thus, teachers not only need learning opportunities to teach for communicative and interactional purposes but also in learning to devise tests to examine communication and interaction. If the process of learning to communicate and interact does not involve assessing communication and interaction, learning to do such will be more difficult (Cameron, 2001).

## **7.6 Summary**

The discussion presented in this chapter has highlighted the extent to which teachers' cognitions and their practices reflected the L2 curriculum initially and to what extent the two forms of teacher learning opportunities examined in this study helped the eight teachers facilitate students to interact orally in the classroom and, thus, meet curriculum requirements in relation to CLT. The study provided evidence that van Hees's (2007) interactional strategies of group work, negotiation strategies, implementing meaningful activities and turn-taking influenced positively the promotion of oral interaction in the EFL classrooms. This was suggested when the oral language and interaction that occurred in the classroom of the teachers who were part of the learning sessions group at the end of the study were more oriented to meet the CEFR criteria to assess oral interaction for beginner students.

Teachers are the key to achieving the goal of implementing the array of changes instantiated in L2 curriculum reform into actual practice. However, they cannot be expected to achieve this on their own without support and continued help. Teachers need professional learning opportunities that support them in meeting the expectations of the reforms. In

addition, in order to better align the curriculum with assessment, an assessment standard is required that is consistent with the curriculum reform and that motivates teachers to review their teaching. Although the current L2 curriculum reform argues that receiving extensive L2 input and creating output are important to develop students' communicative competence (and they have been incorporated into the curriculum reform), it seems that the importance of interacting in L2 has been disregarded.

The final chapter of this thesis builds upon and expands the discussion of the findings presented in this chapter by considering the study's implications and limitations. Finally, recommendations for further research directions are provided.



## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach has become the most important component within the language curriculum in Chile since 2012. This approach focuses on creating effective communicators that are able to interpret and negotiate meaning (Savignon, 2005). Although oral interaction is considered fundamental to achieving communicative language learning, there is evidence that oral interaction is rarely promoted in the EFL classroom (e.g., Allahyar & Nazari, 2012; Baleghizadeh & Nasrollahi, 2014; Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Pinter, 2011; Xie, 2010). Studies on oral interaction have attempted to address this problem by describing in some detail the interactional processes of the language classroom. However, it is argued in this study that the missing link to understanding the nature of oral interaction in EFL classrooms, and to improving it, requires a focus on what EFL teachers know, believe and think about oral interaction and how it works in EFL elementary school contexts. While it has been claimed that EFL teachers do not understand what oral interaction is (Hardman & A-Rahman, 2014; Herazo, 2010; Walsh, 2013), little is known about what they know. The Chilean Ministry of Education stated that the reasons for students' poor results in the standardised English tests in 2010 and 2012 was that teachers did not speak English in the classroom. There is, however, little evidence of what actually happens in the EFL Chilean elementary classrooms, so the evidence base for the claim is unclear as is the explanation as to why teachers do not speak English in the classroom. Furthermore, little research has provided empirical evidence of teacher learning and its potential to enhance oral interaction in the EFL classroom (Thoms, 2012).

This present study examined teachers' cognitions about oral interaction, the quantity and quality of oral language and interaction that occurred in the classroom, the relation

between cognitions and teaching practices, and the influence of teacher learning on the cognitions and practices. The purposes of the research were to provide empirical evidence of how L2 oral language and interaction work in EFL elementary classrooms and teachers' perspectives that could potentially explain the nature of oral interaction. Another purpose was to provide teachers learning opportunities that could potentially help them promote oral interaction.

The study's findings provide evidence that a significant number of teachers in both phases of the study did not understand the meaning of oral interaction. The findings also indicate that some teachers in the second phase knew neither what CLT was nor what it involved, suggesting that such a lack of knowledge about oral interaction and CLT may be a reason teachers do not teach English for communicative purposes. Although teachers' assumptions revealed that they were aware that they should teach and develop oral skills, the study indicated that they did not know why or how to do it in elementary classrooms. It is argued in this thesis that, given that teachers' cognitions were not informed by CLT, teachers' instructional decisions and practices did not include interaction and communication. Data from the final part of the study suggest that the relatively modest and short teacher learning sessions, focused on how to promote oral interaction to young students, helped teachers understand the role of oral interaction in teaching young students, and how to implement it, together with CLT. This emerging understanding of oral interaction and CLT appeared to influence teachers' perceptions of what they might do in their lessons and, more promisingly, their actual practices. In this sense, teachers adapted CLT and implemented some of the oral interaction strategies discussed in the sessions, according to what they considered was feasible at that point in time, and included these strategies in their practices. Interestingly, their beliefs still reflected the view that promoting oral interaction and CLT was a difficult challenge.

This chapter addresses the implications of the study and also acknowledges its limitations. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research and the contributions of the study.

## **8.1 Implications**

The present mixed-methods study has implications for the Ministry of Education in Chile. It also has important theoretical and methodological implications for research into teachers' cognition and language teacher learning.

### **8.1.1 Implications for the Ministry of Education in Chile.**

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications for the Ministry of Education. This study offers insights into the potential influence that teachers' existing cognitions have in the success or failure of language curriculum reforms. In particular, this study suggests that it is important to examine EFL teachers' cognitions about oral interaction and CLT, to evaluate whether the teachers are prepared to promote oral interaction, and to determine the assistance they need to meet curriculum expectations.

When the Ministry of Education, using the Education Quality Measurement System, administered standard English tests to measure students' proficiency in receptive skills (listening and reading) in English (Ministerio de Educación, 2010), teachers were seen as mainly responsible for the poor results in the public and semi-private sectors. Stakeholders in charge of analysing the results claimed that the main reason students did not achieve certified proficiency in English was because teachers did not use L2 in the classroom and had low proficiency in English. This study suggests that the explanation for students' achievement in English goes beyond teachers' proficiency in English and their use of L2 in their classrooms.

The study suggests that many EFL elementary teachers do not think that oral interaction is feasible to teach young students because they do not know about CLT or how to teach young students. It appears that EFL elementary teachers do not consider that oral

interaction is important to include in their teaching practices with young students. In Phase 1, most teachers reported that they emphasised the receptive skills of listening and reading and in Phase 2 five of the eight teachers reported use of a combination of skills that do not facilitate oral communication or interaction. An important implication to be drawn from these findings concerns the type of professional learning opportunities that these teachers may need. It is unlikely that teachers will be interested in engaging in professional learning opportunities that focus on oral interaction and CLT or that they will include these two aspects within the content of professional learning if they are asked to choose the content and topics to discuss.

Teachers in elementary schools need theoretical and pedagogical knowledge regarding how to teach young students. This knowledge may help teachers become aware of the importance of oral interaction in facilitating young students' L2 learning. It seems that when teachers understand that young students are more motivated and likely to learn English through meaningful interaction, they may become more willing and interested in learning about oral interaction and CLT.

The data suggest that a review of the language curriculum is needed to examine the role of oral interaction, as well as expectations for the implementation of oral interaction in the Chilean context. It is argued in this thesis that aligning the Chilean EFL curriculum with the CEFR is not enough to help teachers understand the importance of oral interaction, how to promote it and how to assess it. The government should add oral interaction as a fifth language skill within the language curriculum. The government, in consultation with EFL teachers, should establish learning goals that can help teachers be clear about what they need to do. Language curricula should also provide a benchmark for assessing elementary school students' oral interaction which should reflect the intentions of the curriculum.

Finally, the Chilean government is making great efforts to improve language teaching and learning by providing EFL teachers with opportunities to continue their learning abroad, and awarding them grants to pursue higher qualifications. However, EFL elementary teachers in the public and semi-private sector seem to feel unable to cooperate and participate in these initiatives. Although the Ministry of Education is very keen to invite teachers to participate in the projects, most teachers, especially those who work in under-resourced contexts, are reluctant to get involved because they have to invest their time and effort without receiving anything tangible in return. One small step could be made by the Ministry of Education to support researchers to conduct their research successfully by, for example, crediting teachers' participation through official statements of participation and acknowledging their participation within the school community. Such efforts are essential, because the voluntary participation of teachers of English in research is an important contribution to effective English language teaching in Chile.

### **8.1.2 Theoretical implications.**

This mixed-methods study has some theoretical implications. The study, as a whole, makes a contribution to advancing the field of teacher cognition and teacher learning research by focusing on oral interaction, a domain of inquiry that has rarely been studied from teachers' perspectives. First, the study has provided empirical support for using the conceptual framework of teacher cognition proposed by Borg (2006). Outcomes from this research study confirm and extend our understandings that teachers' thinking and practices are guided by a set of personal, practical, systematic and often unconscious cognitions (Borg, 2006) and that it cannot be assumed that all changes in cognitions translate into changes in practices (Borg, 2003b; Kennedy, 1996). Second, the study also confirms that teacher learning is a complex and gradual process of proceduralising aspects of formal and experiential knowledge gained from teacher learning initiatives and classroom experiences mediated by cognitions and

contextual factors (Phipps, 2010). Although the teacher learning sessions were not bottom-up, in the sense that the teachers did not choose the content and topics that were discussed in the sessions, the researcher made sure that the sessions were tailored especially for the teachers' needs. Furthermore, the lack of hierarchy within the sessions seemed to make a difference because teachers felt free to speak and disagree. Furthermore, the changes observed in the teachers' cognitions and their practices were not influenced by a need to pass a course or obtain a certificate. Teachers' change appeared to be influenced only by their motivation to help young students learn English.

### **8.1.3 Methodological implications.**

The study also has methodological implications by providing evidence of the need for both qualitative and quantitative methods in research into teacher cognition. A mixed-method approach enabled data from a large sample of teachers about the cognitions and practices through an anonymous questionnaire while additional insights were gained from a sub group of teachers through a focus group, individual interviews and personal documents. The examination of classroom practices provided evidence of how oral language and interaction work, as well as an opportunity to examine the relationship between teachers' cognitions and practices. The use of open-ended questions to examine teachers' knowledge of CLT and oral interaction better reflects the actual knowledge of the teachers than presenting sets of principles as prompts to examine teachers' knowledge.

The study also confirms the importance of using different instruments to examine cognitions. Questionnaires are unable to make teachers' cognitions explicit, as the questions and range of answers do not necessarily include the full range of teachers' points of view. Focus group and individual interviews, classroom observations and personal documents provide opportunities to corroborate teachers' responses and gain further information.

## 8.2 Limitations

This research study highlights some limitations that have to be taken into consideration in order to understand its contribution. The first limitation addresses a contextual issue. While this study provided a description of a restricted population within a specific setting, it offers an analysis of a contextualised sample to examine the complexities involved. Consequently, any generalisations of the conclusions from this study to other contexts need to be made cautiously.

The second limitation pertains to the number of participants in the study. Despite efforts made by the researcher and the Chilean Ministry of Education, it was difficult to secure a sizeable number of EFL teachers willing to answer the questionnaire in Phase 1 of the study and participate in the second phase. Therefore, the study collected information from a relatively small sample of teachers, given the size of the sampling frame (all teachers of English in elementary public and semi-private schools in Santiago). This limits any attempts to make claims for broader significance of the findings.

Thirdly, the small nature of the case studies and the small amount of participants only enabled the making of tentative claims about the effectiveness of teachers' practices.

Fourthly, the questionnaire used in this study was field tested and used items of two well-known surveys that have been empirically validated. However, the questionnaire was not piloted quantitatively to check its reliability and validity through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses in the context of the study.

Fifthly, claims were not able to be made about the effect of teachers' practices on students' learning in this study.

Finally, the time available for the research procedures placed limitations on the data collected and the robustness of the teacher learning initiative. Firstly, the length of the learning sessions implemented in the study may have been insufficient to establish significant

and sustainable changes in the teachers' practices. Secondly, statements about teachers' practices were based only on two classroom observations. These could provide only partial snapshots of the teachers' practices and, as such, may not represent the range of normal practice. It is therefore acknowledged that the inferences drawn from such observations should be considered tentative.

### **8.3 Further Research**

This study sets a new research agenda in the domain of language teacher cognition, particularly with research into the influence of teacher learning on teachers' cognitions and their teaching practices. The findings in this study suggest that, in order to capture the complexity and nature of oral interaction in the EFL classroom, future research should focus on teachers' existing cognitions of language teaching and learning and their preferred approaches to teaching English and, specifically, oral interaction.

Until now, there have been few studies of EFL teaching in elementary schools by non-native speakers (and very few in Chile) to show what is happening in classrooms and what steps teachers are taking to enhance their practices. Research in such contexts is necessary to provide opportunities to compare and contrast evidence to establish the best way to assist teachers who work in this sector.

This study also sets a research agenda for EFL in the Chilean context. Further investigation of the relationship of teachers' cognitions, oral interaction and teacher learning, with a larger number of participants and a longer timeframe, would strengthen and extend the outcomes from this study. Examining findings from a range of studies will lead to conclusions that are more robust.

Finally, the present study found that using video-recorded classroom observations as a research method constrained the number of participants in the Chilean context. A number of teachers informed the researcher that they were interested in participating in this study, but



withdrew their participation when informed they would be observed and video-recorded teaching in their classroom. The researcher and the director of the English Opens Doors program from the Ministry of Education were informed by an EFL language teacher that, as elementary teachers in Chile lacked subject-matter, theoretical and pedagogical knowledge of how to teach young students, they lacked confidence and would be reluctant to participate in the study.

A potential method that could help researchers to study teachers' practices is asking them to plan their actual lessons and then comparing the lesson plans with their reported cognitions. Once teachers felt more confident about how to promote CLT and oral interaction, it is expected that they would be more open to being observed in their lessons.

#### **8.4 Summary**

To conclude this research, a summary of the contribution of this study to the scholarly community and the Chilean educational context is provided.

This research is one of the few studies to have concentrated on capturing teachers' cognitions about oral interaction. The researcher was able to gain insights into how cognitive, affective, contextual and experiential factors influence teachers' instructional decisions and actual practices. The findings indicate that teachers' practices do not always reflect their cognitions. This study also provides evidence that suggests teachers' lack of knowledge may exert more influence than affective, contextual and experiential factors. This research makes an important contribution by showing how teachers' knowledge affects their beliefs, perceptions and assumptions. Tensions between the competing cognitions of teachers can result in cognitions that are divergent from their practices.

This study and its findings highlight the importance of considering diverse dimensions when examining teachers' cognitions about a specific aspect of SLA or EFL. The research also emphasises the benefits of using different instruments for data collection,

depending on the research purposes, such as including open-ended questions when exploring teachers' cognitions to obtain a more realistic understanding of what they know.

The most important contribution of this research is that it suggests teachers can enhance oral interaction in the classroom when provided with appropriate teacher learning opportunities. It proposes a form of teacher learning that may help teachers meet the expectations of teaching for communicative purposes.

This research has contributed significantly to my own professional learning as a language teacher and researcher, and deepened my understanding of the fundamental role of oral interaction in language learning. Lastly, it has provided evidence that teachers are the best teachers they can be, and, if we make efforts to help them become skilled in teaching for communicative purposes and understand why oral interaction is essential to achieve that young students learn English, the future of language teaching and learning in public and semi-private schools in Chile could be greatly enhanced.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A Questionnaire

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

#### PART 1: INFORMATION ABOUT STUDIES AND EXPERIENCE

Please answer the following questions about you

1. What levels do you currently teach?

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2. How many classes do you teach in each level?

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3. Tick the highest **formal qualification** to teach **English** that you hold.

No formal

Undergraduate degree

Master degree

other e.g. diploma (please, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. If you have **no formal** qualifications to teach English, What preparation did you receive?

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5. How would you describe your **oral** proficiency in English?

Elementary

Low intermediate

Upper- intermediate

Advanced

#### PART 2: ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMME

6. Please indicate and describe the approach you use to teach English at your school

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7. In a typical week of teaching, how much emphasis do you give to the following language skills on a scale of 1 (unimportant) to 5 (critical)?

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Unimportant	slightly important	important	very important	critical
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	1	2	3	4	5

8. How confident do you feel to teach the following language skills of the English curriculum on a scale of 1 (uncertain) to 5 (confident)?

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Uncertain	usually unsure	sometimes optimistic	usually assured	confident
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	1	2	3	4	5

What language do **you** use mostly when...

9. you greet students?

English

Spanish

10. you play games with students?

English

Spanish

11. you provide grammar explanations?

English

Spanish

12. you answer students' questions?

English

Spanish

What language do **your students** use mostly when...

13. they greet you?

English

Spanish

14. they play games in the English class?

English

Spanish

15. they ask you questions?

English

Spanish

16. they group and work in tasks?

English

Spanish



PART 3: QUESTIONS ABOUT ORAL INTERACTION IN ENGLISH

17. Briefly describe up to four strategies that you use to encourage students to speak English

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. What does oral interaction in English mean for you?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PART 4: TEACHERS' BELIEFS REGARDING ORAL INTERACTION IN ELEMENTARY LEVELS

Below you will find beliefs that some people have about teaching and learning through oral interaction. Read each statements and then decide if you:

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree

Please, circle the number that indicates your level of agreement

- 19. It's important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.      1   2   3   4   5
- 20. You shouldn't say anything in the language until you can say it correctly.      1   2   3   4   5
- 21. It is easier to speak than understand English.      1   2   3   4   5
- 22. It is easier to read and write a foreign language than to speak and understand it.      1   2   3   4   5
- 23. Chilean people think it is important to speak English.      1   2   3   4   5
- 24. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.      1   2   3   4   5

25. One problem with emphasising oral communication is that there is not objective means of testing such communication. 1 2 3 4 5
26. Drills and practice do not provide a meaningful context for learning English. 1 2 3 4 5
27. English teachers need not be fluent themselves in order to teach effectively for communication. 1 2 3 4 5
28. Speaking and listening are the skills which we should stress most in our English classes. 1 2 3 4 5

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

## Appendix B Focus Group Interview

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

#### I Introduction:

- a) Researcher introduces herself and asks all of the group members to introduce themselves.
- b) Researcher provides background and ground rules.
  - The focus group is an opportunity to share thoughts and opinions freely.
  - There are not right or wrong answers to the questions, only honest opinions.
  - The audio recording will be used as an extension of the researcher memory in order to show in the study a clear and accurate synopsis of what has been said. As it was established in the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Forms, pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the participants.

#### II Discussion questions

- 1) In your lesson plans, what sorts of activities do you include to enhance oral interaction?
- 2) In your lesson plans, what sorts of activities do you include to help students produce the language?
- 3) How frequently (in percentage) do you think you use L2?
- 4) How frequently (in percentage) do your students use L2?
- 5) What kind of activities do you promote in L2?
- 6) What is the approach to teaching English that you use in your lessons? (using theoretical justification)
- 7) What is CLT?
- 8) Describe a typical lesson in your classroom
- 9) What does oral interaction mean for you? What does it involve?
- 10) Please read these definitions of oral interaction (given by teachers in the questionnaire) and choose one or more than one that represent your way of thinking
- 11) According to most of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire, reading is the most important skill to develop. Do you agree? Why?
- 12) In the questionnaire, teachers considered that they felt most confident teaching reading. Do you agree? Why?
- 13) In the questionnaire, teachers considered that they felt most insecure teaching listening. Do you agree? Why?
- 14) Do you think that Chilean people consider that it is important to speak English? Why?
- 15) Do you think it is easier to read and write a foreign language than to speak and understand? Why?
- 16) Do you think it's important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent? Why?
- 17) Do you think it is easier to speak than to understand English? Why?
- 18) How was your experience learning English at school?
- 19) How was your experience learning English at university?

#### III Closing

## **Appendix C Personal documents**

### **Professional learning sessions**

#### **Discussion session 1 (Personal document 1)**

1. Thinking of a typical English class in your school, what is the role you play in helping students learning English? (taking into consideration the approach and language skills you emphasise in your lessons)
2. Thinking of a typical English class in your school, what is the role that your students play?
3. What is the approach to teaching English that you use in your lessons? (Using theoretical justification)
4. What is CLT?
5. How frequently (in percentage) do you think you use L2 and in which activities?
6. How frequently (in percentage) do your students use L2?
7. What does oral interaction mean for you? What does it involve?
8. Do you think that one problem with emphasising oral communication was that there was no objective means of testing such communication? Why?
9. Do you think that drills and practice do not provide a meaningful context for learning English? Why?
10. Do you think English teachers need not be fluent themselves in order to teach effectively for communication Why?
11. Do you think speaking and listening were the skills which they should stress most in their English classes.
12. Do you think that Chilean people consider that it is important to speak English? Why?
13. Do you think it's important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent? Why?
14. Do you think it is easier to read and write a foreign language than to speak and understand? Why?
15. Do you think it is easier to speak than to understand English? Why?
16. What are your expectations of the professional learning sessions?
17. How was your experience learning English at school?
18. How was your experience learning English at university?

Other comments

## **Professional learning sessions**

### **Discussion session 10 (Personal document 2)**

1. Thinking of a typical English class in your school, what is the role you play in helping students learn English? (taking into consideration your approach and skills you emphasise in your lessons)
2. Thinking of a typical English class in your school, what is the role that your students play?
3. What is the approach to teaching English that you use in your lessons? (Using theoretical justification)
4. How frequently (in percentage) do you think you use L2?
5. What does oral interaction mean for you?
6. Do you think the interactional strategies studied in the course were useful for the Chilean context? Why?
7. Had you studied these strategies to optimise oral interaction before?
8. Had you attempted to put these strategies into practice? How?
9. If you answered “no” in the previous question, did the course help you use the strategies in your own lessons?
10. If you answered “yes” in the previous question, did the course help you optimise your attempts to enhance oral interaction in your lesson?
11. Did the sessions meet your expectations?
12. Do you have any suggestions for a future professional learning opportunity?

Other comments

## Appendix D Sample of Fieldnotes

### Carla (Observation 1)

Carla's year 6 classroom is tidy and organised. It has three rows of double desks with chairs. Students do not have assigned seats so they sit with their favourite classmate. There are not classroom rich stimuli and resources, a classroom bulletin board with information or news related to English. The classroom does not have either audio or technology equipment. There are 24 students in the classroom.

The school inspector knocks the door. He wants to know how many students are in the classroom.

Carla does not greet students and students do not greet Carla.

Carla starts the class. All students listen to her. Carla introduces the objective of the class in Spanish: Today you will be able to recognise the verb to be. Carla wrote two sentences in the whiteboard: I am a nurse/ I am not a nurse. Carla asks students to say the meaning of the sentences. Only one student is able to answer correctly. Carla is upset because students do not remember personal pronouns and professions. She lets students know that she is upset and tells them that they do not remember anything.

Carla is not using the textbook that the Ministry of Education provided students. She writes ten affirmative sentences using the verb to be and asks students to write the negative form of these sentences. Carla spent 5 minutes writing the ten sentences in the whiteboard. She invented the sentences while she was writing them.

A student finished the activity in 4 minutes. Carla checked the sentences in the student's notebook. The student was not able to use the negative form correctly. For that reason, Carla explained all students the use of the negative form of the verb to be in Spanish. Carla became upset because she realised that her students did not remember how to conjugate the verb to be depending on the subject pronoun. After the explanation of the use of the negative form of the verb to be, Carla asked students to write the negative form of the sentences that were written in the whiteboard. She told students that the activity would be evaluated.

For the next 23 minutes, Carla sat in her desk checking the sentences of the students who had finished the activity. Those students whose activities were checked and evaluated started to misbehave. Some students left the classroom without Carla's permission and others threw paper balls.

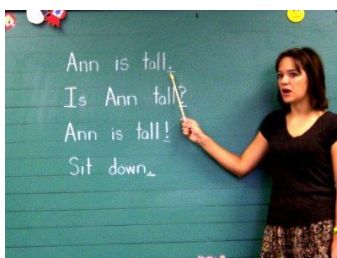
When Carla finished checking and evaluating the activity of all the students in their notebooks, three students volunteered to write the negative sentences in the whiteboard. The rest of the students did not pay attention.

The classroom was untidy and disorganised. Carla asked students to sit down and wait in their desks until the bell rang (15 minutes).

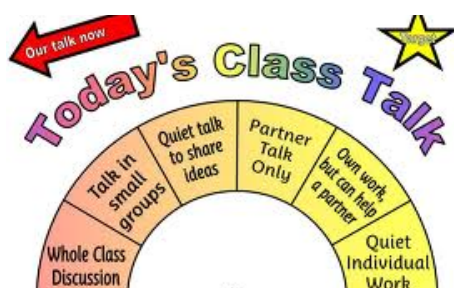
## Appendix E Individual Interview

### INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

1. What do you think it is your role of as a teacher of English in the classroom (taking into consideration the approach and language skills you reported in the questionnaire)
2. Please, look at this image, what kind of role do you think this teacher is playing?



3. What approach to teaching English do you think she is using?
4. What approach do you use to teaching English?
5. What about emphasising oral communicative skills and oral interaction?
6. Look at the following image and tell me what classroom patterns you use the most in your classes and why



7. Look at the following picture and compare it with the type of oral interaction that occurs in your lessons



8. What types of activities do you do in L2?
9. What does oral interaction mean for you?
10. In which types of activities do you emphasise oral interaction? (Using the COLT part A as a reference)

**Thank you.**

## Appendix F Sample of Coding (Individual interview)

Theme	Individual interview
Understanding of oral interaction	<p>Interviewer</p> <p>Now, we are going to talk about oral interaction. What do you think oral interaction is and what does it involve?</p>
	<p>Celeste</p> <p>In Year 5, students have to be able to understand simple things and they have to be able to express their needs too. They need, for example, to ask for clarification of vocabulary they do not know.</p>
Perceptions of what she does in the lessons	<p>Interviewer</p> <p>Regarding language skills, how often do you use them in a typical week of teaching?</p>
	<p>Cristina</p> <p>Ideally, skills that enhance oral communication are the most important. However, I rarely use them because my students do not understand me and they are unwilling to speak English.</p>
Beliefs about language learning regarding promoting oral communicative skills	<p>Interviewer</p> <p>Why do you think that promoting oral interaction is difficult?</p>
	<p>Camilo</p> <p>I think that it is because English is not used outside the classroom. When I studied English in Chile, I learned grammar and vocabulary but I did not learn to speak English. I learned to speak English when I lived in the United States for a year. There, I had the opportunity to use the language.</p>
Assumptions about language teaching in terms of promoting oral communicative skills	<p>Interviewer</p> <p>Do you think that one problem with emphasising oral communication is that there is no objective means of testing such communication?</p>
	<p>Carla</p> <p>It could be. I am not sure because I do not know any means of testing communication. Fortunately, this is not a problem for me because I rarely test oral communication because my students do not speak English at all.</p> <p>And what about the times you have tested oral communication? What do you do?</p>



---

Carla

I ask students to create dialogues. I help them create the dialogues paying attention to the grammar structures and vocabulary. Then, we practice the dialogue to ensure that they pronounce the words correctly and finally they say the dialogues in front of all the students.

---

## Sample of Coding (Focus group interview)

Theme	Focus group interview
Understanding of oral interaction	Interviewer Now, we are going to talk about oral interaction. What do you think oral interaction is and what does it involve?
	Celeste Well, the Ministry wants that students learn an amount of vocabulary and enough knowledge at the end of the year that give them the opportunity to interchange, let's say, daily life or daily activities in a simple way. It is also expected that students have to be able to communicative with other people
Perceptions of what she does in the lessons	Interviewer Regarding language skills, how often do you use them in a typical week of teaching?
	Cristina In my case, I would say that I emphasise listening and reading skills with my students in Year 5 because these skills are easier to learn.
Beliefs about language learning regarding promoting oral communicative skills	Interviewer Camilo, you told me that you do not promote oral interaction in the classroom. Could you please give me some reasons for your decision?
	Camilo I think that it depends on the age of the students. Year 5 students are obliged to study English. They are not interested in learning English. In contrast, students who are studying English at university are motivated. I can do some oral communicative activities with them and the activities work really well. Motivation is the key.
Assumptions about language teaching in terms of promoting oral communicative skills	Interviewer Do you know any means to assess oral communication and interaction recommended by the Chilean language curriculum?
	Carla No. The only activity in which I promote oral interaction and I assess it is through monologues and dialogues. I ask students to memorise parts of dialogues and tell them in front of the class.

**Appendix G Sample of Coding (Stimulated recall interview)**

Ingrid's stimulated recall interview		
First observation	Second observation	Theme
<p>What a heavy experience. I had never been video recorded before. It is not easy to watch a lesson where the person who is teaching is yourself. The only students who participated in the class were the ones I asked them to respond to my questions.</p>	<p>My students were able to use the classroom expressions that we studied and practiced this month to ask me questions regarding the activity in English. The best of this achievement was that I did not ask them to do it. <b>It means that after studying and practicing the classroom expressions during this month, they internalised them and were confident in using them.</b></p>	<p>Principles of teaching interaction and communication to young students</p>

## Appendix H Letter from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics

Committee



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND

Office of the Vice-Chancellor  
Research Integrity Unit

The University of Auckland  
Private bag 92019  
Auckland, New Zealand

Level 10, 49 Symonds Street  
Telephone: 64 9 373 7599  
Extension: 87830 / 83761  
Facsimile: 64 9 373 7432

### UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

17-Dec-2012

#### MEMORANDUM TO:

Prof Judith Parr  
Curriculum & Pedagogy

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 8890)

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled Cognitions of teachers of English as a foreign language in relation to their practices regarding oral interaction in the Chilean context: A professional development intervention.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years with the following comment(s):

1. Please proofread the PISs for teachers – the assurance about participation/non-participation needs to be communicated to them: “[Your principal] has given the assurance that your decision to participate or not will not affect your standing in the school.” The Committee assumes that the researcher has unintentionally copied and pasted this statement from the Principal PIS.
2. At L3 you state that students who do not wish to participate will be asked to go to the computer lab to work with English language software. Please add this explanation to the PIS for students and their parents.
3. The Committee assumes that the emails provided in Spanish are from the Chilean MOE in support of the project. Please clarify if this is the case.
4. As noted in section L3, only half the teachers will get the benefit of the professional development intervention. This is noted at L3. Those teachers receive a portfolio of the

contents (presumably afterwards). Does this mean the teachers who do not undergo the professional development will also receive the portfolio?

The expiry date for this approval is 12-Dec-2015.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC ethics administrators at [humanethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@auckland.ac.nz) in the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: 8890.

*(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)*

Secretary  
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Curriculum & Pedagogy  
Dr Constanza Tolosa Izquierdo  
Mrs Paloma Calderon Avendano

## Appendix I Participant Information Sheets



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland, New Zealand

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET** **TEACHERS OF ENGLISH** **(FOR TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN THE LEARNING SESSIONS)**

Project title: **“Cognitions of teachers of English as a foreign language in relation to their practices regarding oral interaction: A professional development intervention in the Chilean context”**

Name of researcher: **Paloma Calderón**

My name is Paloma Calderón. I am conducting research as part of my doctoral thesis in Education at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

The objective of my study is to establish the efficacy of a professional development intervention for teachers of English currently teaching in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade in public schools. In particular, I am interested in views and practices regarding oral interaction in your classroom. I would like to invite you to participate in my research. The study has the endorsement of the Ministry of Education who has kindly forwarded this Participant Information Sheet.

The study consists of a professional development course. The course will take place in August, 2013. It involves eight sessions (two sessions per week of two hours each) that will be carried out after school hours. The potential benefit of the course is that it will support your professional knowledge of current methodologies to teach English.

In order to study the impact of the course in the teachers' beliefs and practices, you will complete two questionnaires and be observed and video recorded four times. Once the Principals of your school send a confirmation of your participation in the study, I will contact you to give you the first questionnaire and I will arrange the first two classroom observations of your English lessons. The other questionnaire and the other two classroom observations will be arranged after the professional development course finishes.

Your participation in my research is voluntary and you may withdraw participation up to November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

The data collected from this research will be used only for educational purposes. If the information you provided is reported or published, I will use pseudonyms to protect your

identity. The only person who will have access to the data collected will be me. If you are interested, I can send you a summary of the study results when it finishes.

The data collected will be stored in a secure locked cabinet in the researcher's office at the Faculty of Education in the University of Auckland. The Consent Forms will be stored separately in another secure locked cabinet at the Faculty of Education in the University of Auckland. The consent forms will be shredded and the video recordings will be deleted after six years of its collection according to the regulations of the University of Auckland. The principal of the school has given assurance that your decision to participate or not in this project will not affect your standing in the school.

I appreciate your possible cooperation with my research. Please do not hesitate to contact me or either of my two supervisors if you have any questions or concerns.

I look forward to your response.

Paloma Calderón  
E-mail: [p.calderon@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:p.calderon@auckland.ac.nz)

My supervisors are

Professor Judy Parr  
Head of the School  
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy  
Faculty of Education  
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Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street  
Auckland 1150  
Phone 64 9 623 8899 ext 8899  
[jm.parr@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:jm.parr@auckland.ac.nz)

Dr. Constanza Tolosa  
Lecturer  
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy  
Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019, Symonds Street  
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[c.tolosa@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:c.tolosa@auckland.ac.nz)

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 64 9 373 7599 ext. 83711

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS  
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 17/12/12 for 3 years, Reference Number 8890



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland, New Zealand

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
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The study consists of a professional development course for teachers of English currently teaching fifth and sixth grades in public schools. The course will take place in August, 2013. It involves eight sessions (two sessions per week of two hours each) that will be carried out after school hours. The potential benefit of the course is that it supports teachers’ professional knowledge of current methodologies to teach English.

In order to study the impact of the course in the teachers’ beliefs and practices, participant teachers will complete two questionnaires and be observed and video recorded four times. Once the Principals of the schools send a confirmation of their participation in the study, I will contact the teachers to give them the first questionnaire and I will arrange the first two classroom observations of their English lessons. The other questionnaire and the other two classroom observations will be arranged after the professional development course finishes.

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I look forward to your response.

Paloma Calderón

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THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland, New Zealand

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Dear parents/caregivers,

My name is Paloma Calderón. I am conducting research as part of my doctoral thesis in Education at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. I am interested in studying the teaching of English in your child's school.

This letter is to inform you that your child's teacher of English <name of the teacher> has agreed to participate in this project that involves my observation and video recording of four English classes. The school's Principal has also given permission for the study.

The focus of the video recordings is the teacher's work. The students will not be asked to participate in the study, nor will they be the focus of any video recording. Nevertheless, it may be possible that students' images appear in the background. I assure you that the only person that will have access to the video recordings will be me and that the video recordings will be stored securely and destroyed after the research is completed. If you do not give consent to your child to be present when the lessons are video recorded, he or she will be asked to go to the computer lab to work with English language software.

If you have any questions or queries do not hesitate to contact me, your child's English teacher or the Principal of the school <name of the principal>

I would appreciate your consent for your child to be part of the class when the lesson is video recorded. Please, sign the attached Consent Form and return it to your child's English teacher.

Yours faithfully,

Paloma Calderón  
E-mail: [p.calderon@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:p.calderon@auckland.ac.nz)

My supervisors are

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**NEW ZEALAND**

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland, New Zealand

## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: STUDENTS**

Dear students,

My name is Paloma Calderón and I am a student of Education at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. I am interested in studying how English is taught in your school.

This letter is to inform you that your teacher of English <name of the teacher> has agreed to participate in this study. Your Principal has given permission to the study.

I will video record four of your English lessons. You are not asked to participate in the study, but you may be seen in the video. I will be the only person seeing this video which will be kept in a safe place and then destroyed. If you do not want to be in the classroom when your teacher is video recorded, you will be asked to go to the computer lab to work with English language software.

Let me know if you have any questions about my study. If you are OK with me recording your class, please sign the attached Consent Form and return it to your teacher.

Yours faithfully,

Paloma Calderón  
E-mail: [p.calderon@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:p.calderon@auckland.ac.nz)

My supervisors are  
Professor Judy Parr  
Head of the School  
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy  
Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street  
Auckland 1150  
Phone 64 9 623 8899 ext 8899  
[jm.parr@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:jm.parr@auckland.ac.nz)

Dr. Constanza Tolosa  
Lecturer  
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy  
Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019, Symonds Street  
Auckland 1150  
Phone 64 9 623 8899 ext. 48692  
[c.tolosa@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:c.tolosa@auckland.ac.nz)

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The university of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 64 9 373 7599 ext. 83711.



APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS  
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 17/12/12 for 3 years, Reference Number 8890

## Appendix J Consent Forms



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland, New Zealand

### CONSENT FORM TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FOR TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN THE FOCUS GROUP) THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: **“Cognitions of teachers of English as a foreign language in relation to their practices regarding oral interaction: A professional development intervention in the Chilean context”**

Name of researcher: **Paloma Calderón**

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research
- I understand that I am free to withdraw participation up to November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013.
- I agree to be video recorded in the classroom observations. The focus group will be audio recorded and I am not allowed to withdraw any information once provided.
- Pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity.
- I wish/ do not wish to receive the summary of findings.
- I agree not to disclose anything discussed in the focus group.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
- I understand that the focus group will take place after school hours.
- I understand that the Principal of the school has given assurance that my decision to participate or not in this project will not affect my standing in this school.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS  
COMMITTEE ON 17/12/12 for 3 years, Reference Number 8890



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland, New Zealand

**CONSENT FORM**  
**TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**  
**(FOR TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SESSIONS)**  
**THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS**

Project title: **“Cognitions of teachers of English as a foreign language in relation to their practices regarding oral interaction: A professional development intervention in the Chilean context”**

Name of researcher: **Paloma Calderón**

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research
- I understand that I am free to withdraw participation up to November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013.
- I agree to be video recorded in the classroom observations.
- Pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity.
- I wish/ do not wish to receive the summary of findings.
- I agree not to disclose anything discussed in the professional development.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
- I understand that the professional development will take place after school hours.
- I understand that the Principal of the school has given assurance that my decision to participate or not in this project will not affect my standing in this school.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 17/12/12 for 3 years, Reference Number 8890



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland, New Zealand

**CONSENT FORM**  
**SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**  
(FOR TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SESSIONS)  
**THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS**

Project title: **“Cognitions of teachers of English as a foreign language in relation to their practices regarding oral interaction: A professional development intervention in the Chilean context”**

Name of researcher: **Paloma Calderón**

- I have read and understood the details of this research project.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.
- I agree that the researcher may invite one teacher of English as a foreign language in (insert the name of the school) to participate in this research.
- I understand that the research includes video recordings of four English classes.
- I understand that the professional development course will take place after school hours.
- I understand that I may withdraw the school from this research up to November 20th, 2013.
- I give an assurance that the decision of the teachers to participate or not in this research project will not affect their standing within the school.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS  
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 17/12/12 for 3 years, Reference Number 8890



**THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND**  
**NEW ZEALAND**

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland, New Zealand

**CONSENT FORM**  
**SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**  
**(FOR TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN THE FOCUS GROUP)**  
**THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS**

**Project title: “Cognitions of teachers of English as a foreign language in relation to their practices regarding oral interaction: A professional development intervention in the Chilean context”**

Name of researcher: **Paloma Calderón**

- I have read and understood the details of this research project.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.
- I agree that the researcher may invite one teacher of English as a foreign language in (insert the name of the school) to participate in this research.
- I understand that the research includes video recordings of four English classes.
- I understand that the research includes audio recording of the focus group.
- I understand that the focus group will take place after school hours.
- I understand that I may withdraw the school from this research up to November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013.
- I understand that in the focus group teachers are not allowed to withdraw information once provided
- I give an assurance that the decision of the teachers to participate or not in this research project will not affect their standing within the school.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS  
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 17/12/12 for 3 years, Reference Number 8890



**THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND**

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland, New Zealand

**CONSENT FORM  
PARENTS/ CAREGIVERS  
THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS**

**Project title: “Cognitions of teachers of English as a foreign language in relation to their practices regarding oral interaction: A professional development intervention in the Chilean context”**

Name of researcher: **Paloma Calderón**

- I/ We have been given and understood an explanation of this research project.
- I/ We have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.
- I/ We understand that the research will include video recordings of four English classes.
- I/ We understand that the students will not be asked to participate nor will they be identified in any form in the written results of this study.
- I/ We understand that the focus of the video recordings is the teacher’ s work, but students may figure in the background.
- I/ We understand that only the researcher will view the video recordings and they will be stored securely and then destroyed.
- I/ We agree to allow my child to be in the classroom when the teacher will be video recorded.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS  
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 17/12/12 for 3 years, Reference Number 8890



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
NEW ZEALAND

Faculty of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland, New Zealand

**CONSENT FORM  
STUDENTS  
THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS**

**Project title: “Cognitions of teachers of English as a foreign language in relation to their practices regarding oral interaction: A professional development intervention in the Chilean context”**

Name of researcher: **Paloma Calderón**

- I received an explanation of this study.
- I understand this study.
- I understand that four of my English classes will be observed and video recorded.
- I understand that I will not be part of the study.
- I understand that the focus of the videorecordings is my teacher’s work, but I may be seen in the video.
- I understand that only the researcher will view the video recordings which will be kept in a safe place and then destroyed.
- I agree to be in the classroom when my teacher will be observed and videorecorded.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS  
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 17/12/12 for 3 years, Reference Number 8890

## Appendix K Percentage of All Communicative Features of Oral Exchanges Observed in Teachers' Turns (Both groups) Observation 1

Participant	<i>Information gap</i>					<i>Reaction to form/message and incorporation of student utterances</i>													
	Turns in L2	Giving Information		Requesting Information		Message-Repetition	Message-Comment	Message-Clarification request	Form-Comment	Form-Repetition	Correction-Repetition	Correction-Paraphrase	Form-Elaboration request	Form-Correction	Form-Expansion	Message-Paraphrase	Message-Expansion	Form-Clarification request	Form-Elaboration request
		Predictable	Unpredictable	Pseudo request	Genuine request														
Ignacia	<b>47.22%</b>	3.36%	<b>21.01%</b>	<b>25.21%</b>	0.00%	7.56%	3.36%	0.84%	6.72%	<b>15.13%</b>	5.88%	<b>10.08%</b>	0.84%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ingrid	<b>53.14%</b>	2.96%	<b>16.26%</b>	<b>21.67%</b>	2.46%	5.91%	6.90%	1.48%	<b>12.81%</b>	<b>18.72%</b>	3.94%	6.40%	0.00%	0.49%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Irma	<b>49.84%</b>	0.64%	<b>25.64%</b>	<b>10.26%</b>	1.92%	0.64%	0.64%	0.00%	<b>12.18%</b>	<b>17.95%</b>	<b>15.38%</b>	9.62%	0.00%	1.92%	3.21%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Isidora	<b>63.08%</b>	0.00%	<b>17.89%</b>	<b>11.38%</b>	9.76%	8.13%	6.10%	1.63%	<b>10.98%</b>	<b>19.92%</b>	2.03%	6.91%	0.00%	0.41%	2.44%	0.81%	0.41%	1.22%	0.00%
Camilo	<b>11.41%</b>	9.86%	<b>14.08%</b>	<b>11.27%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.04%	<b>39.44%</b>	8.45%	9.86%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Carla	<b>7.87%</b>	<b>10.00%</b>	<b>40.00%</b>	<b>10.00%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	<b>30.00%</b>	<b>10.00%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Celeste	<b>44.24%</b>	0.51%	<b>17.86%</b>	<b>14.29%</b>	<b>14.29%</b>	<b>10.20%</b>	7.65%	2.04%	9.69%	<b>15.31%</b>	1.02%	3.06%	0.00%	0.51%	2.04%	0.00%	1.02%	0.00%	0.51%
Cristina	<b>37.37%</b>	0.00%	<b>18.10%</b>	<b>25.71%</b>	9.52%	<b>13.33%</b>	1.90%	0.95%	8.57%	<b>11.43%</b>	1.90%	5.71%	0.00%	0.00%	1.90%	0.95%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
M LS group	<b>53.32%</b>	1.74%	<b>20.20%</b>	<b>17.13%</b>	3.54%	5.56%	4.25%	0.99%	<b>10.67%</b>	<b>17.93%</b>	6.81%	8.25%	0.21%	0.71%	1.41%	0.20%	0.10%	0.30%	0.00%
M I group	<b>25.22%</b>	5.09%	<b>22.51%</b>	<b>15.32%</b>	5.95%	5.88%	2.39%	0.75%	6.33%	<b>24.04%</b>	5.34%	4.66%	0.00%	0.13%	0.99%	0.24%	0.26%	0.00%	0.13%
M both groups	<b>39.27%</b>	3.42%	<b>21.35%</b>	<b>16.22%</b>	4.74%	5.72%	3.32%	0.87%	8.50%	<b>20.99%</b>	6.08%	6.46%	0.11%	0.42%	1.20%	0.22%	0.18%	0.15%	0.06%



## Appendix L Percentage of all Communicative Features of Oral Exchanges in Students' Turns (Both groups) Observation 1

Participant	<i>Information gap</i>					<i>Reaction to form/message and incorporation of student utterances</i>													
	Giving Information		Requesting Information			Form-Correction	Form-Repetition	Message-Repetition	Message-Paraphrase	Message-Comment	Message-Expansion	Message-Clarification request	Message-Elaboration request	Form-Comment	Correction-Repetition	Form-Clarification request	Correction-Paraphrase	Form-Expansion	Form-Paraphrase
	Turns in L2	Predictable	Unpredictable	Pseudo request	Genuine request														
Ignacia's students	<b>50.00%</b>	<b>72.37%</b>	1.32%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	<b>26.32%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ingrid's students	<b>66.38%</b>	<b>81.82%</b>	2.60%	1.30%	0.00%	0.00%	<b>14.29%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Irma's students	<b>52.32%</b>	<b>37.10%</b>	2.42%	0.00%	3.23%	0.00%	<b>53.23%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.61%	0.81%	1.61%
Isidora's students	<b>40.07%</b>	<b>57.14%</b>	<b>18.49%</b>	0.00%	0.84%	0.00%	<b>10.92%</b>	3.36%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.84%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.20%	2.52%	1.68%
Camilo's students	<b>23.14%</b>	<b>45.56%</b>	7.78%	0.00%	1.11%	0.00%	<b>44.44%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.11%	0.00%	0.00%
Carla's students	<b>17.72%</b>	<b>50.00%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	<b>42.86%</b>	7.14%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Celeste's students	<b>48.98%</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>19.17%</b>	0.00%	0.83%	0.00%	4.17%	3.33%	0.00%	4.17%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.67%	0.00%	0.00%
Cristina's students	<b>38.39%</b>	<b>49.38%</b>	<b>25.93%</b>	2.47%	1.23%	0.00%	<b>11.11%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.70%	0.00%	0.00%	4.94%	0.00%
M LS group	<b>52.19%</b>	<b>62.11%</b>	6.20%	0.32%	1.02%	0.00%	<b>26.19%</b>	0.84%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.21%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.45%	0.83%	0.82%
M I group	<b>32.06%</b>	<b>52.90%</b>	<b>13.22%</b>	0.62%	0.79%	0.00%	<b>25.64%</b>	2.62%	0.00%	1.04%	0.31%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%	0.00%	0.69%	1.23%	0.00%
M both groups	<b>42.13%</b>	<b>57.50%</b>	9.71%	0.47%	0.91%	0.00%	<b>25.92%</b>	1.73%	0.00%	0.52%	0.15%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.46%	0.00%	1.07%	1.03%	0.41%

**Appendix M Percentages of all Communicative Features of Oral Exchanges in Teachers' Turns (LS group) Observation 2**

Participant	<i>Information gap</i>					<i>Reaction to form/message and incorporation of student utterances</i>											
	Giving Information		Requesting Information			Message-Repitition	Message-Comment	Message-Clarification request	Form-Comment	Form-Repitition	Correction-Repitition	Correction-Paraphrase	Form-Correction	Form-Expansion	Message-Paraphrase	Message-Expansion	Message-Elaboration request
L2 Turns	Predictable	Unpredictable	Pseudo request	Genuine request													
Ignacia	<b>30.99%</b>	4.55%	<b>25.76%</b>	<b>24.24%</b>	0.00%	3.03%	1.52%	0.00%	7.58%	<b>13.64%</b>	<b>12.12%</b>	6.06%	0.00%	0.00%	1.52%	0.00%	0.00%
Ingrid	<b>66.83%</b>	5.26%	<b>39.10%</b>	6.77%	2.26%	<b>14.29%</b>	3.76%	2.26%	8.27%	0.75%	7.52%	9.02%	0.75%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Irma	<b>56.13%</b>	3.49%	<b>59.83%</b>	<b>10.48%</b>	1.31%	2.18%	2.62%	0.87%	6.99%	2.62%	2.62%	3.93%	0.44%	1.31%	0.00%	1.31%	0.00%
Isidora	<b>64.69%</b>	0.44%	<b>37.12%</b>	<b>17.90%</b>	1.31%	1.31%	2.18%	0.44%	6.99%	<b>12.23%</b>	0.87%	<b>14.85%</b>	0.00%	2.62%	0.00%	0.44%	1.31%
M	54.66%	3.43%	<b>40.45%</b>	<b>14.85%</b>	1.22%	5.20%	2.52%	0.89%	7.46%	7.31%	5.78%	8.47%	0.30%	0.98%	0.38%	0.44%	0.33%

**Appendix N Percentages of all Communicative Features of Oral Exchanges in students' turns (LS group) Observation 2**

Participant	<i>Information gap</i>					<i>Reaction to form/message and incorporation of student utterances</i>									
	Giving Information		Requesting Information			Message-Repetition	Message-Clarification request	Message-Comment	Message-Expansion	Form-Repetition	Correction-Paraphrase	Form-Clarification request	Form-Expansion	Form-Correction	Correction-Repetition
	L2 Turns	Predictable	Unpredictable	Pseudo request	Genuine request										
Ignacia's students	<b>37.50%</b>	<b>54.17%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	6.25%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	<b>39.58%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ingrid's students	<b>86.23%</b>	<b>12.61%</b>	<b>30.25%</b>	0.00%	<b>10.92%</b>	0.84%	0.00%	0.00%	0.84%	<b>43.70%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.84%	0.00%
Irma's students	<b>65.10%</b>	<b>15.06%</b>	0.60%	0.00%	0.00%	4.22%	0.60%	0.60%	1.81%	<b>75.30%</b>	0.00%	1.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.60%
Isidora's students	<b>12.31%</b>	<b>87.50%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.50%	0.00%	5.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.50%	0.00%	2.50%	0.00%	0.00%
M	50.29%	<b>42.33%</b>	7.71%	0.00%	4.29%	1.89%	0.15%	1.40%	0.66%	<b>39.65%</b>	0.63%	0.30%	0.63%	0.21%	0.15%

## Appendix O Percentages of all Communicative Features of Oral Exchanges in teachers' turns (I group) Observation 2

Participant	<i>Information gap</i>					<i>Reaction to form/message and incorporation of student utterances</i>									
	L2 Turns	Giving Information		Requesting Information		Message-Repetition	Message- Comment	Form-Comment	Form-Repetition	Correction-Repetition	Correction Paraphrase	Form-Correction	Form-Expansion	Message-Paraphrase	Message-Elaboration request
		Predictable	Unpredictable	Pseudo request	Genuine request										
Camilo	<b>15.95%</b>	<b>15.38%</b>	<b>11.54%</b>	<b>15.38%</b>	<b>11.54%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	<b>30.77%</b>	3.85%	<b>11.54%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Carla	<b>15.15%</b>	0.00%	<b>73.34%</b>	<b>13.33%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	<b>13.33%</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Celeste	<b>38.05%</b>	3.21%	<b>19.23%</b>	<b>24.36%</b>	6.41%	8.33%	6.41%	7.69%	<b>14.74%</b>	1.92%	5.13%	0.64%	1.28%	0.65%	0.00%
Cristina	<b>36.41%</b>	1.41%	<b>5.63%</b>	<b>15.49%</b>	4.93%	5.63%	0.00%	9.86%	<b>33.10%</b>	6.34%	9.86%	0.70%	2.82%	3.53%	0.70%
M	26.39%	5.00%	<b>27.44%</b>	<b>17.14%</b>	5.72%	3.49%	1.60%	4.39%	<b>19.65%</b>	6.36%	6.63%	0.34%	1.03%	1.05%	0.18%

**Appendix P Percentages of all Communicative Features of Oral Exchanges in Students' Turns (I Group) Observation 2**

Teacher	Information gap				Reaction to form/message and incorporation of student utterances				
	Giving Information		Requesting Information		Message-Repetition	Message-Comment	Form-Repetition	Correction-Paraphrase	Form-Expansion
	Predictable	Unpredictable	Pseudo request	Genuine request					
Camilo's student	63.64%	9.09%	0.00%	3.03%	9.09%	0.00%	12.12%	0.00%	3.03%
Carla's students	15.79%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	78.95%	5.26%	0.00%
Celeste's students	73.63%	8.79%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	2.20%	0.00%	6.59%	1.10%
Cristina's students	85.28%	6.13%	0.00%	1.23%	1.23%	0.61%	1.84%	2.45%	1.23%
M	59.58%	6.00%	0.00%	1.06%	4.50%	0.70%	23.23%	3.58%	1.34%